



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
SERVICES



# Housing Unlocked: Zoning & Development Designators 101

February 11, 2026

# How to Participate



? Zoom Comments/Questions? Send message using Q&A feature



Submit Comments/ Questions  
During the Meeting

**Use the Q&A feature  
at the bottom of your screen**

# Agenda



A Intro / Project Background (10 minutes)

INTRO

B Zoning & Development Designators 101 (30 min)

ZONING

C Next Steps (5 minutes)

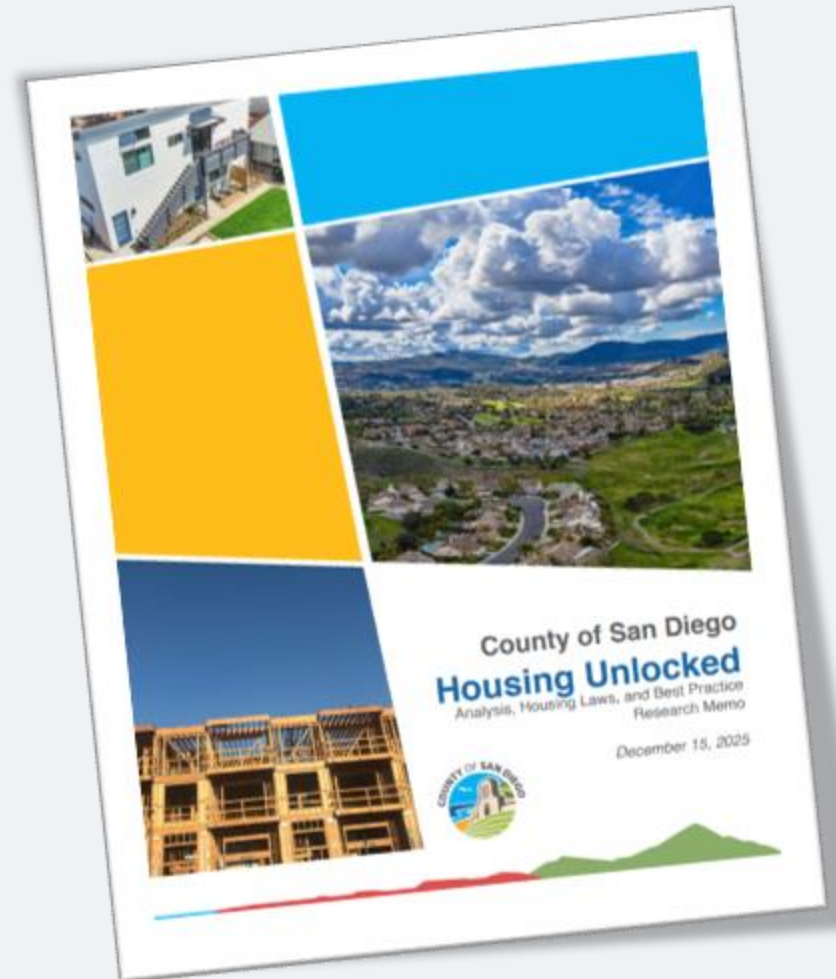
NEXT



# The Path to the Designators

## County efforts to meet housing needs:

- State established housing goals
- County General Plan (GP)
  - 6th Cycle Housing Element and Implementation Plan
    - *"Housing Unlocked"*
- County Zoning Ordinance (ZO)
  - **Development Designators**



# General Plan and Zoning Ordinance



## County General Plan

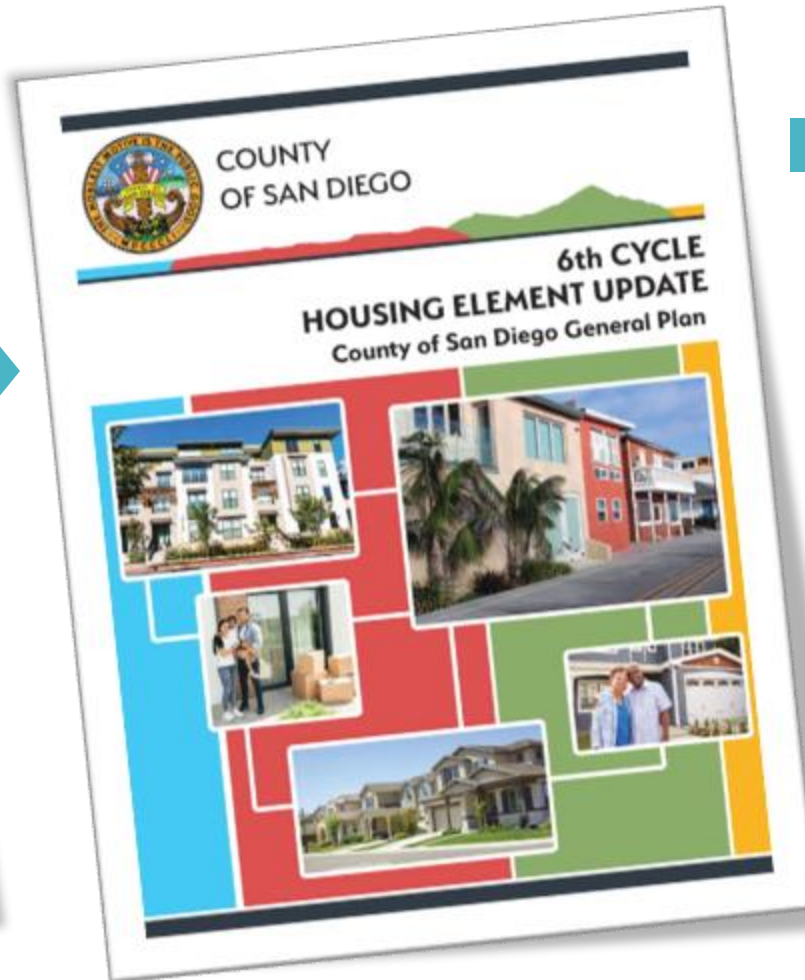
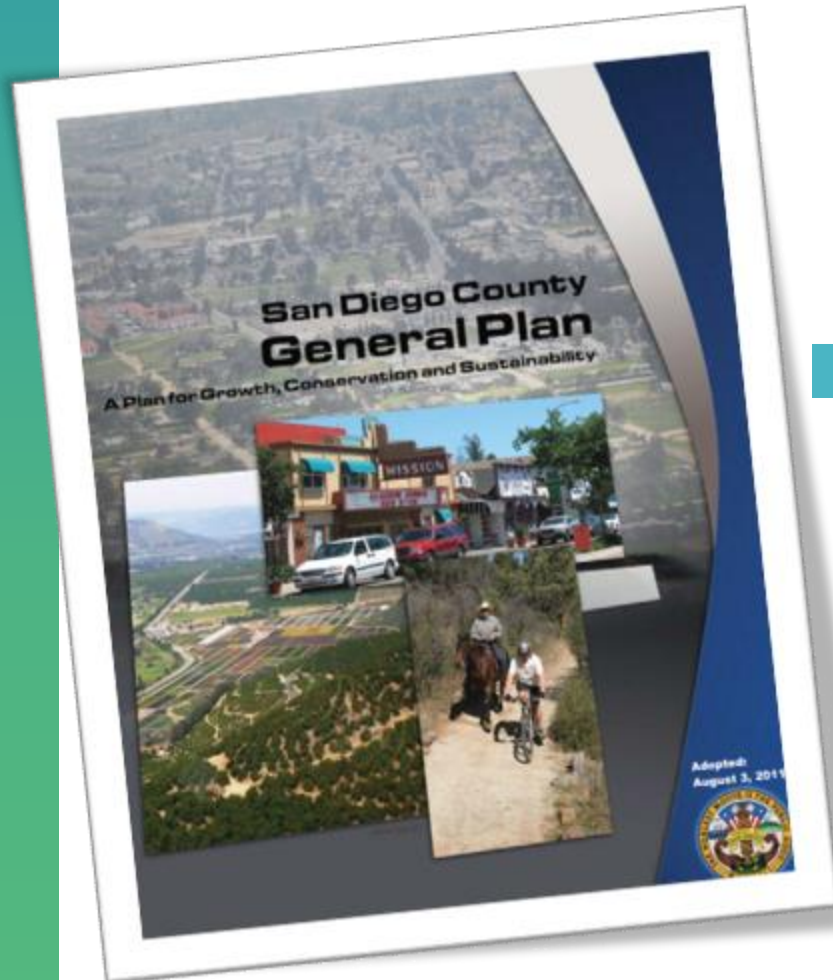
Regulates land use and  
maximum density  
(dwelling units/acre)



## County Zoning Ordinance

Specifies more detailed  
requirements for building  
housing through  
Development Designators

# Housing Element



Implementation  
Plan



Update the Zoning  
Ordinance



Housing  
Unlocked

INTRO



# What is Housing Unlocked?

- ✓ **Housing Unlocked IS a Zoning Ordinance Amendment project:**
  - Analyze the Development Designators
  - Remove barriers within the Zoning Ordinance
  - Consider best practice and alternative zoning options
  
- ✗ **It is NOT a General Plan Amendment:**
  - Realizing existing General Plan densities
  - Not a separate EIR



# Why We Are Reviewing the Zoning

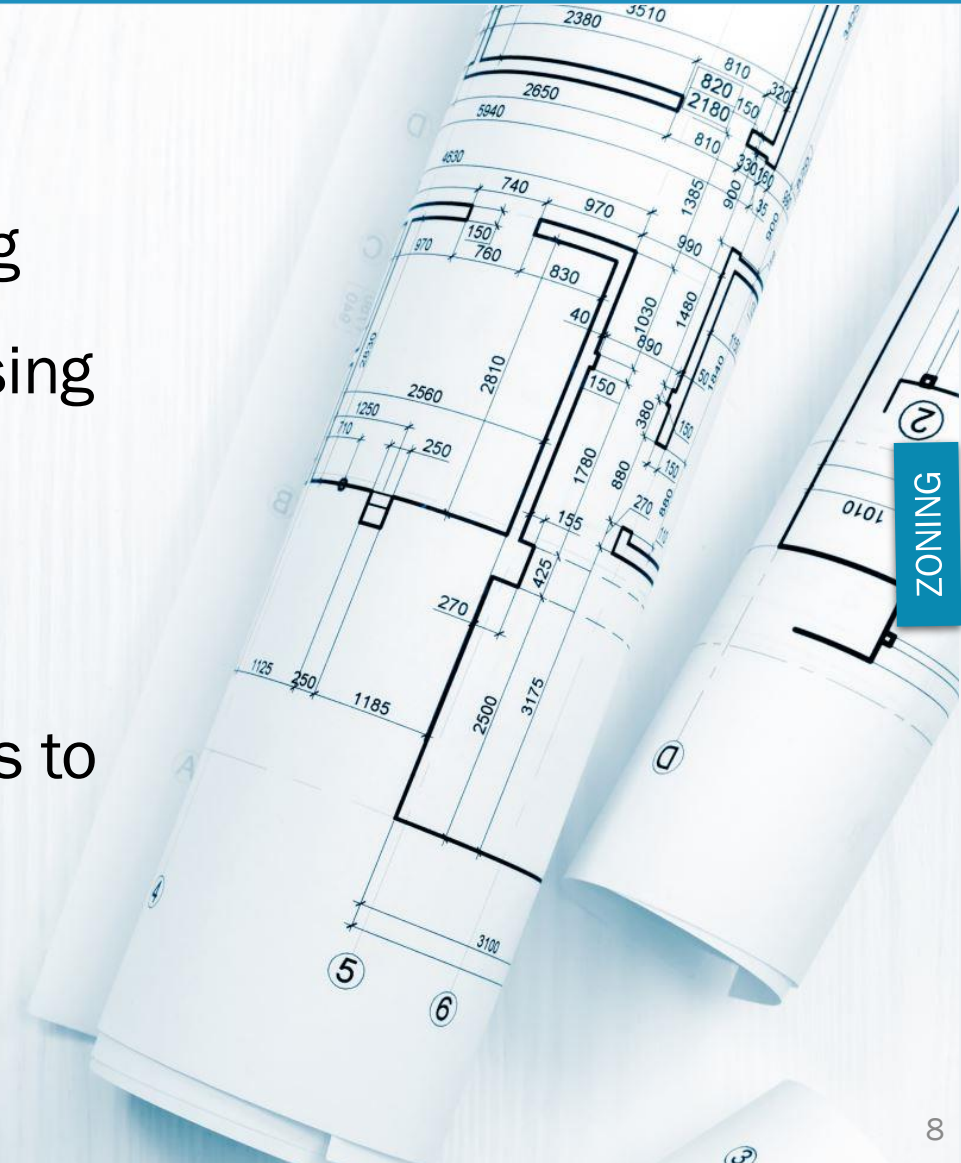


## Housing Unlocked:

- Project to explore options and make zoning changes to make it easier to "unlock" housing as envisioned by the General Plan

## Development Designators:

- Review of specific development regulations to help create more flexible and attainable housing options





# What are the Development Designators?



County Zoning  
Ordinance

ZONE		
USE REGULATIONS		RS
ANIMAL REGULATIONS		Q
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS	Density	-
	Lot Size	6000
	Building Type	C
	Maximum Floor Area	-
	Floor Area Ratio	-
	Height	G
	Lot Coverage	-
	Setback	J
	Open Space	-
SPECIAL AREA REGULATIONS		-

Image displays an  
example zone box  
with common  
development  
designators

# How to Participate



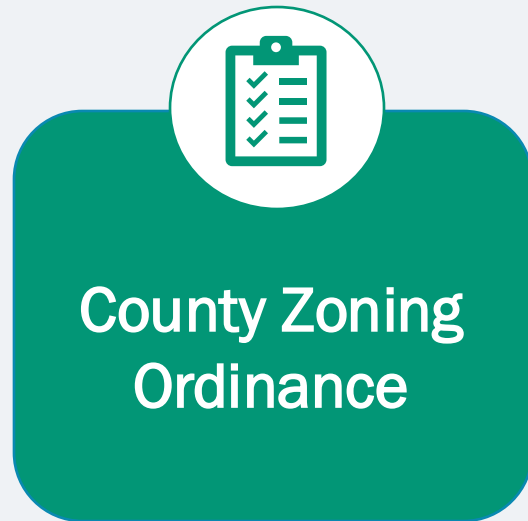
? Zoom Comments/Questions? Send message using Q&A feature



Submit Comments/ Questions  
During the Meeting

**Use the Q&A feature  
at the bottom of your screen**

# What are the Development Designators?



ZONE		
USE REGULATIONS		RS
ANIMAL REGULATIONS		Q
DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS	Density	-
	Lot Size	6000
	Building Type	C
	Maximum Floor Area	-
	Floor Area Ratio	-
	Height	G
	Lot Coverage	-
	Setback	J
	Open Space	-
SPECIAL AREA REGULATIONS		-

Image displays an example zone box with common development designators



# Designator 101 - Residential Density



SEMI-RURAL – 1 du/ac



VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL – 4.3 du/ac



VILLAGE RESIDENTIAL – 7.3 du/ac

## Description

**Maximum Density** is the **highest number of houses allowed in a specific area** by the General Plan (GP) or by the Zoning Ordinance (ZO).  
Density is shown in number of dwelling units per acre (du/ac).



# Designator 101 - Building Type

Single Family  
Detached (B – N)

Duplex (E – R)

Triplex (G – V)



ZONING

## Description

Permitted **Building Type** is the **type of homes which are allowed in a specific area** by the Zoning Ordinance (ZO). Which types of homes are allowed where is detailed in ZO Section 4310 Schedule A.



# Designator 101 - Building Height



\*Image displays 'F'  
Designator:  
Max height: 30'  
Max stories: 3

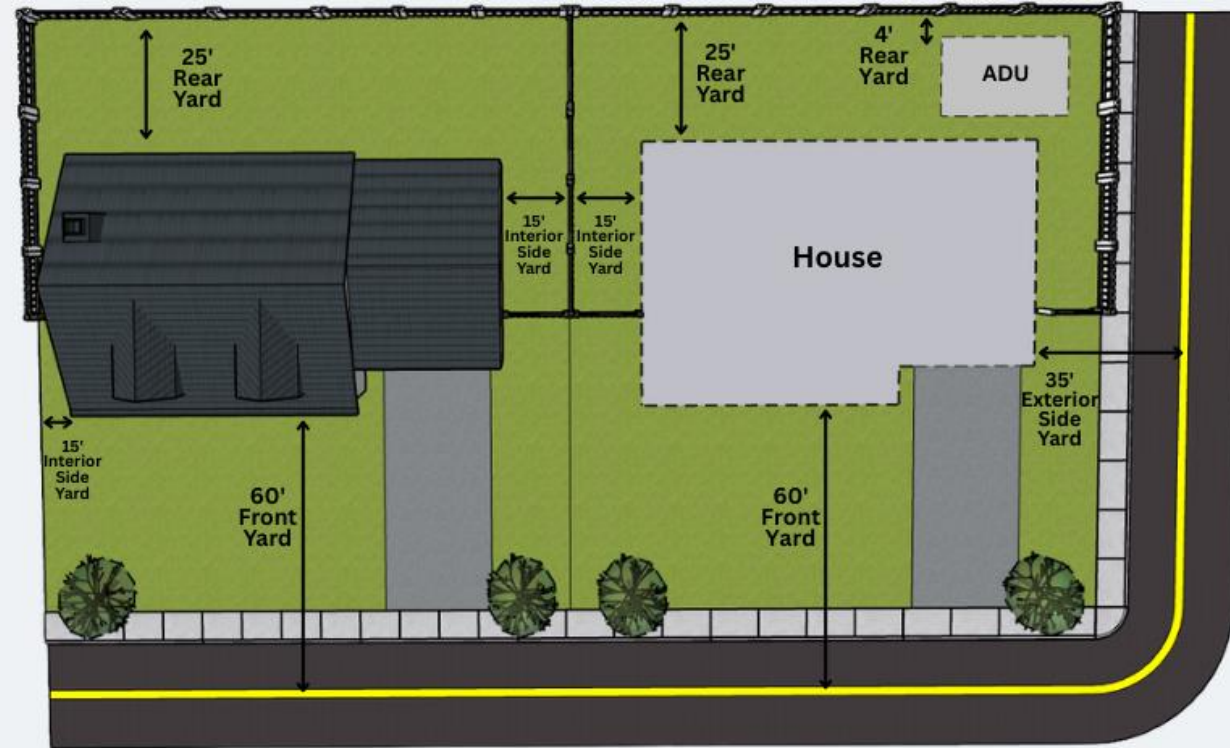
## Description

The **Building Height** designator determines both the **tallest height and maximum number of stories allowed for houses** or other buildings in a specific area. Building height and story requirements are detailed in ZO Section 4610 Schedule B.





# Designator 101 - Setbacks



\*Image reflects  
'C' setback  
designator

## Description

**Minimum Setback** is the required **amount of space between a house and a street or lot line**. The setback designator has different requirements for the smallest amount of space allowed for the front, side, and rear yard. Required setbacks are detailed in ZO Section 4810 Schedule C.



# Designator 101 - Minimum Lot Size



This example illustrates how minimum lot size standards apply.

The three yellow-green lots depict the minimum lot size requirement (6,000 sq ft).

The two dark green lots (15,000 sq ft) exceed the minimum lot size, therefore are acceptable lot sizes.

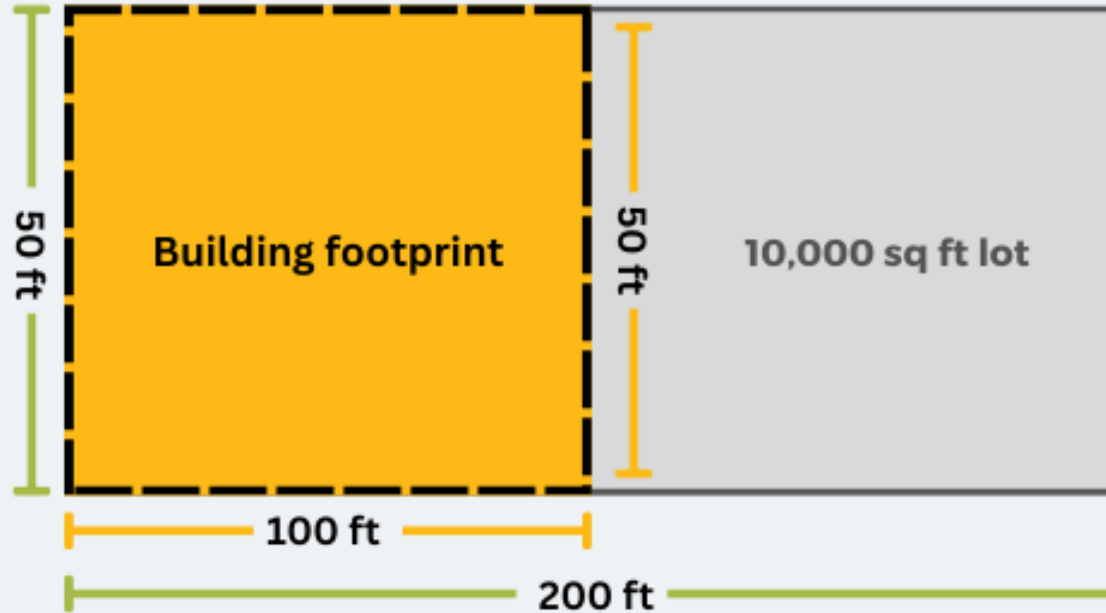
The two red lots (3,000 sq ft) are below the minimum lot size and would not be permitted for development .

## Description

**Minimum Lot Size** is the **smallest amount of area** that **lots or building sites must meet before** they may be **developed**. This designator aligns with the County's Subdivision Ordinance.



# Designator 101 - Lot Coverage



$$\text{Lot Coverage} = \frac{\text{Area of building footprint}}{\text{Total area of the lot}} \times 100$$

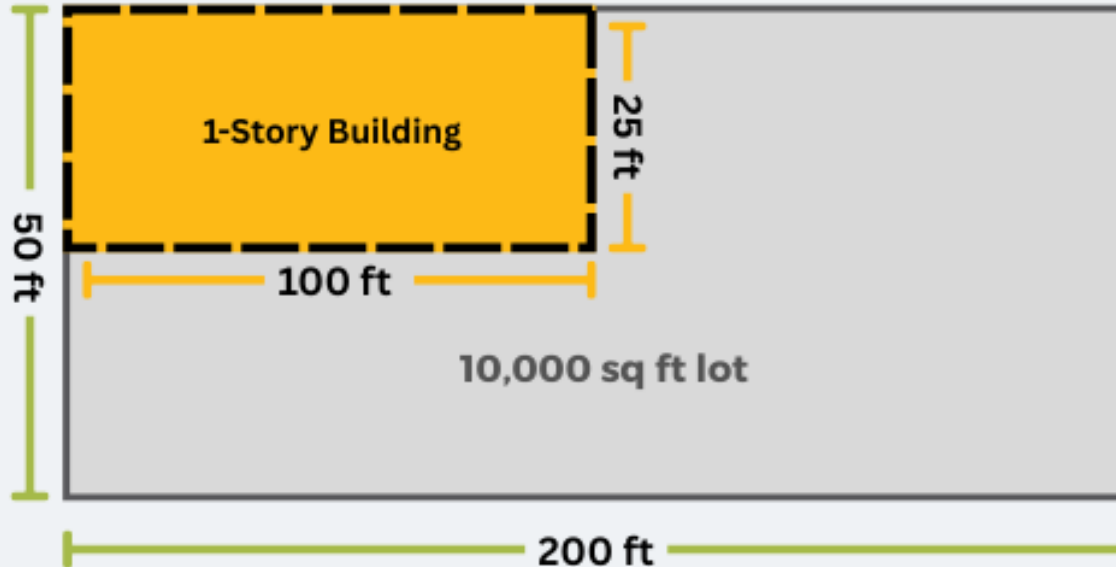
$$\text{Example} = \frac{100\text{ft} \times 50\text{ft}}{200\text{ft} \times 100\text{ft}} \times 100 = 50\% \text{ Lot Coverage}$$

## Description

**Maximum Lot Coverage** is the **largest amount of area of the lot or building site which can be covered by buildings.** The Lot Coverage designator controls how large a building(s) footprint can be within a development.



# Designator 101 - Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



$$\text{Floor Area Ratio (FAR)} = \frac{\text{Total floor area of building}}{\text{Total floor area of lot size}}$$

$$\text{Example} = \frac{100\text{ft} \times 25\text{ft}}{200\text{ft} \times 50\text{ft}} = .25 \text{ FAR}$$

## Description

**Maximum Floor Area** is the **largest allowed floor area of individual buildings**.

**Maximum Floor-Area Ratio (FAR)** is the **largest allowed ratio** comparing the **total floor area of all buildings** on the lot **to the size of the land** they are built on.



# Designator 101 - Open Space



## Description

**Minimum Open Space** is the **smallest usable open space area** allowed for **residential developments** with three or more dwelling units per lot. Open space requirements are detailed in ZO Section 4910 Schedule D.



# Designator 101 – Discussion

## What we are hearing so far:

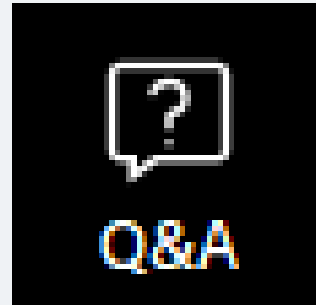
- Update the zoning categories to better align with the General Plan vision.
- Have more flexible building types allow for different types of housing.
- Review height and story limits to allow design flexibility.
- Review setbacks to provide for more buildable space.
- Reducing or removing the minimum lots size to expand housing options.
- FAR can limit building types and creative design solutions.
- Additional types of "open space" (green or accessible rooftops) should be allowed.



# How to Participate



? Zoom Comments/Questions? Send message using Q&A feature



Submit Comments/ Questions  
During the Meeting

**Use the Q&A feature  
at the bottom of your screen**

# Project Phasing



## Housing Unlocked

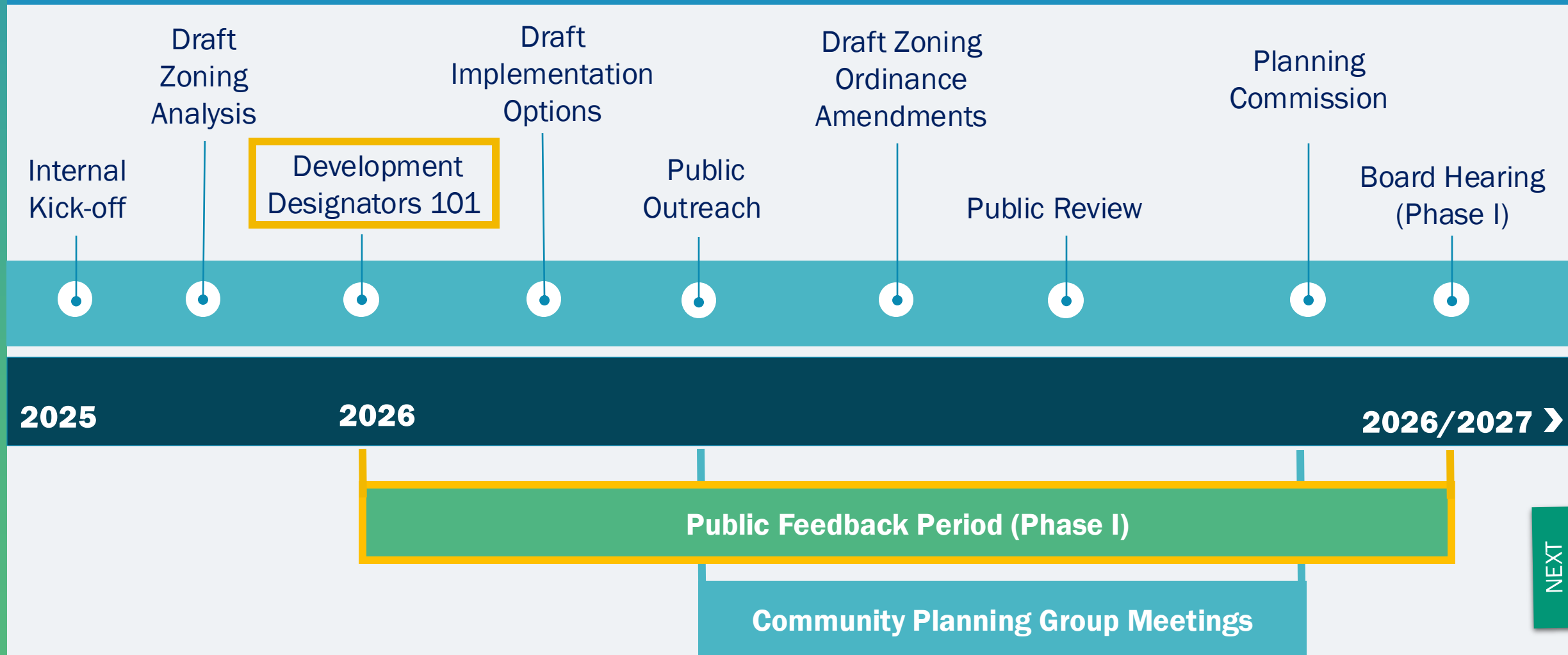
### Phase I (2026)

- Most immediate impact
- Easier ordinance updates
- Board priorities

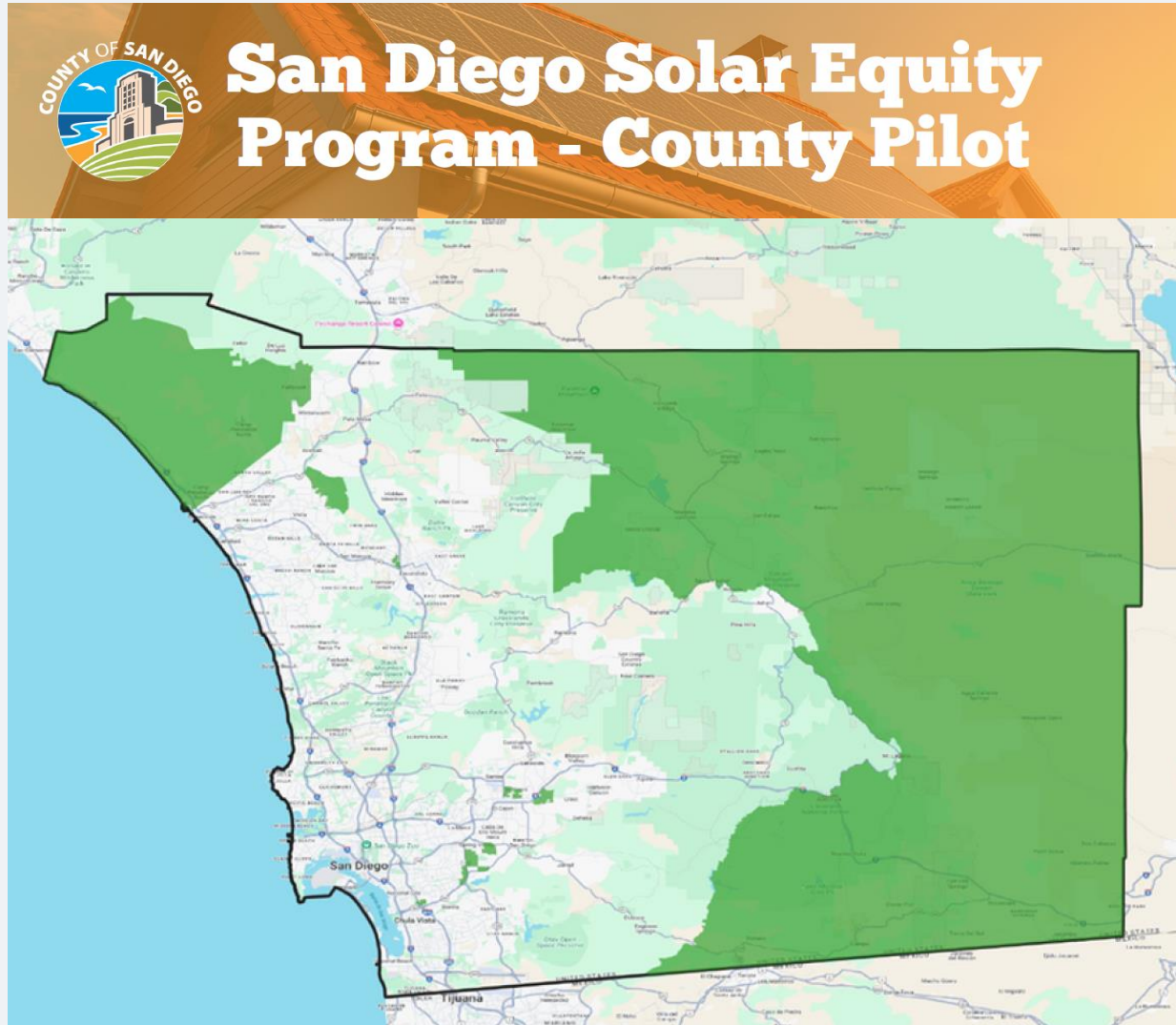
### Phase II (2027)

- Achieve long-range goals
- Longer update process

# Project Timeline



# San Diego Solar Equity Program – County Pilot



## Benefits of Going Solar



Save on your monthly energy bill



Increase clean and safe energy from solar power



Boost your home's value



Visit our website at <http://bit.ly/3JwMtQa>

Family Size	Income Limit
1	\$109,850
2	\$125,550
3	\$141,250
4	\$156,950
5	\$169,500
6	\$185,050
7	\$194,600
8	\$207,150



# Thank you!

Visit our website:

<https://tinyurl.com/Housing-Unlocked>

Share more feedback:

Email: [PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov](mailto:PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov)

Phone Number: (858) 505-6677