



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES



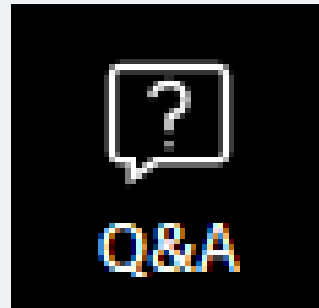
Housing Unlocked: Options to Reduce Zoning Constraints on Housing Development

March 11, 2026

How to Participate



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



Submit Comments/ Questions
During the Meeting

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Housing Unlocked Outreach

Zoning & Development Designators 101 Webinar (2/11/2026)

- Introduction of Housing Unlocked project and a review of the current Development Designators

Housing Unlocked Engage Page

- All project information, documents, and meetings
- Sign up for e-notifications for project updates



Housing Unlocked

The County is working to create more housing options in unincorporated communities.

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[View More](#)

Agenda



A Intro / Project Background (10 minutes)

INTRO

B Zoning Solutions (30 min)

OPTIONS

C Next Steps (5 minutes)

NEXT

General Plan and Zoning Ordinance



County General Plan (GP)

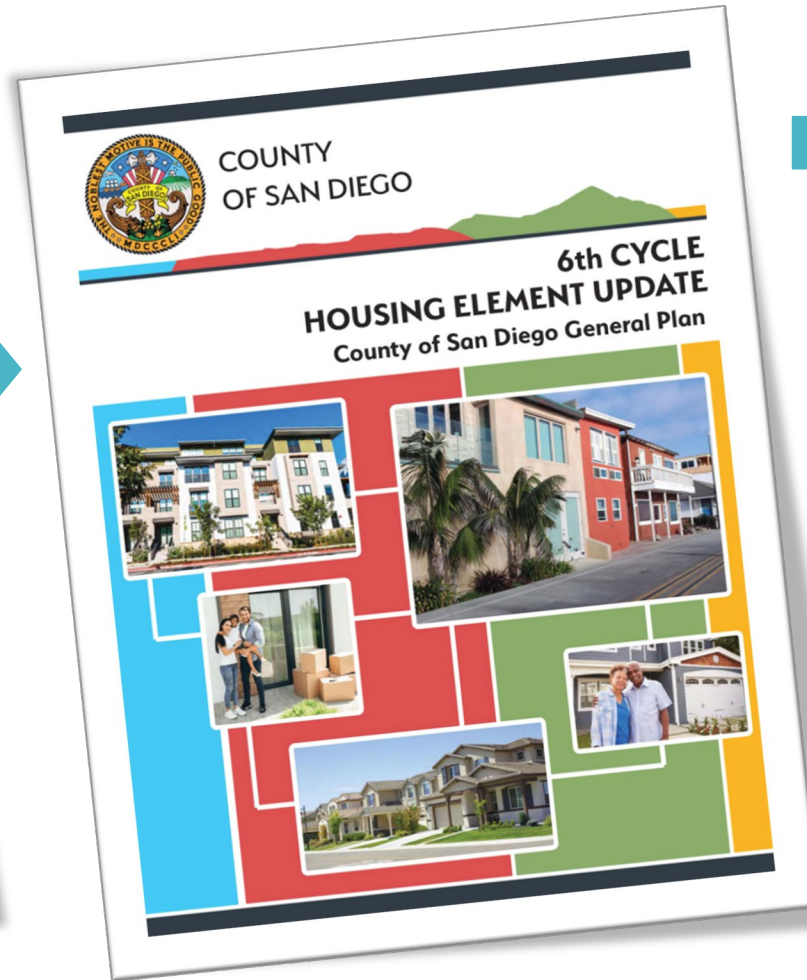
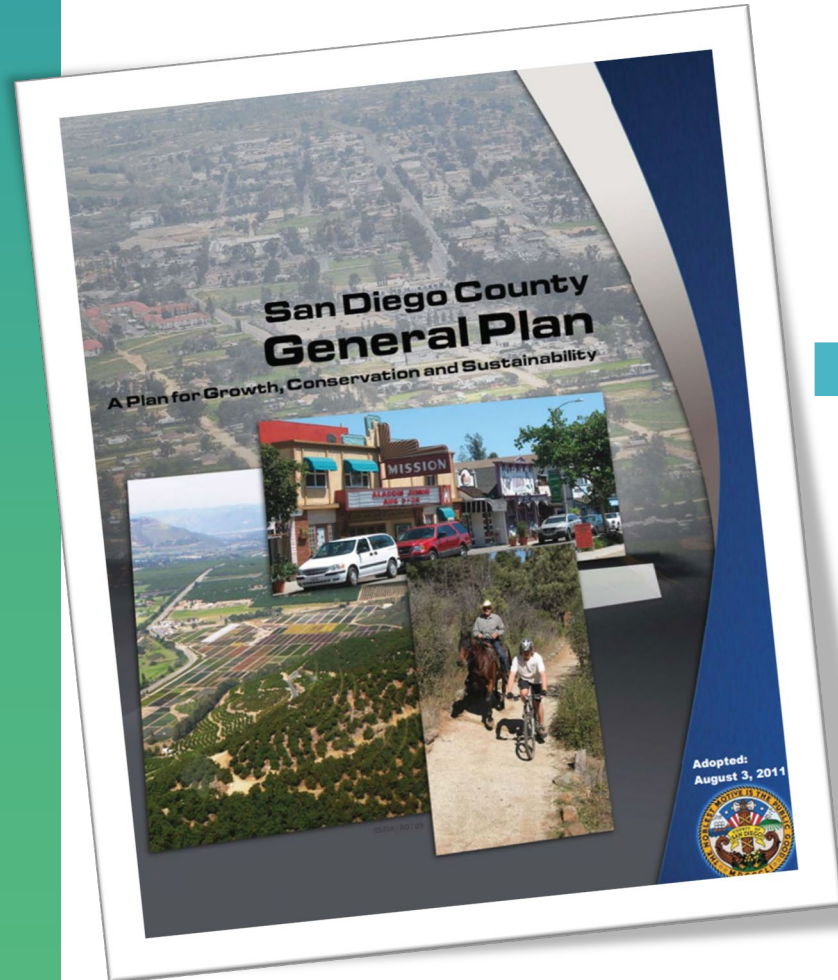
Regulates land use and
maximum density
(dwelling units/acre)



County Zoning Ordinance (ZO)

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 Zoning Ordinance and Development Designators
- Better align the Zoning Ordinance with the General Plan
- Consider best practice and alternative zoning options

✗ It is NOT a General Plan Amendment:

- Realizing existing General Plan densities
- Not a separate EIR



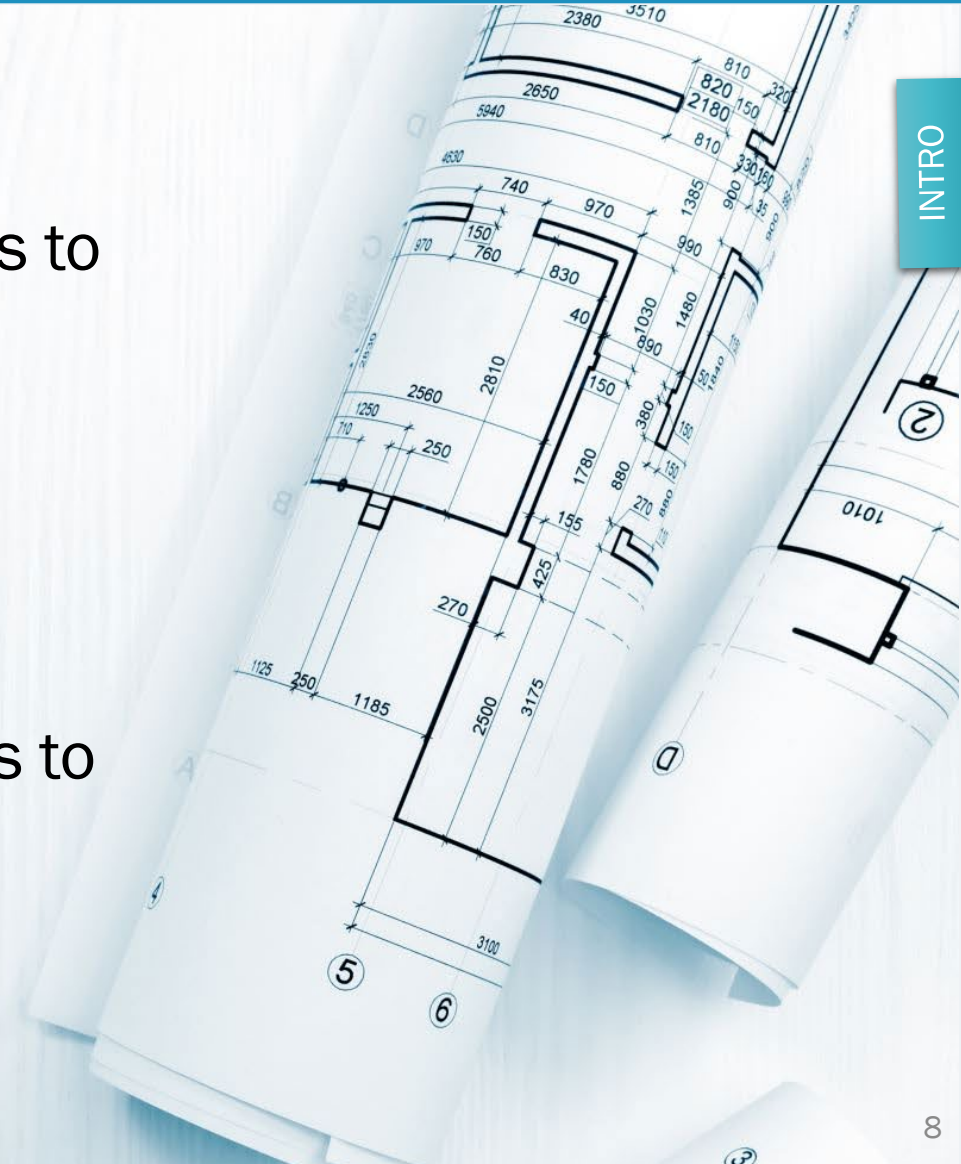
Why are we reviewing Zoning?

Housing Unlocked:

- Exploring solutions through zoning changes to make it easier to "unlock" housing as envisioned by the General Plan

Development Designators:

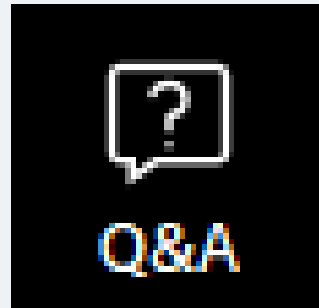
- Review of specific development regulations to create more flexibility for development to produce more attainable housing options



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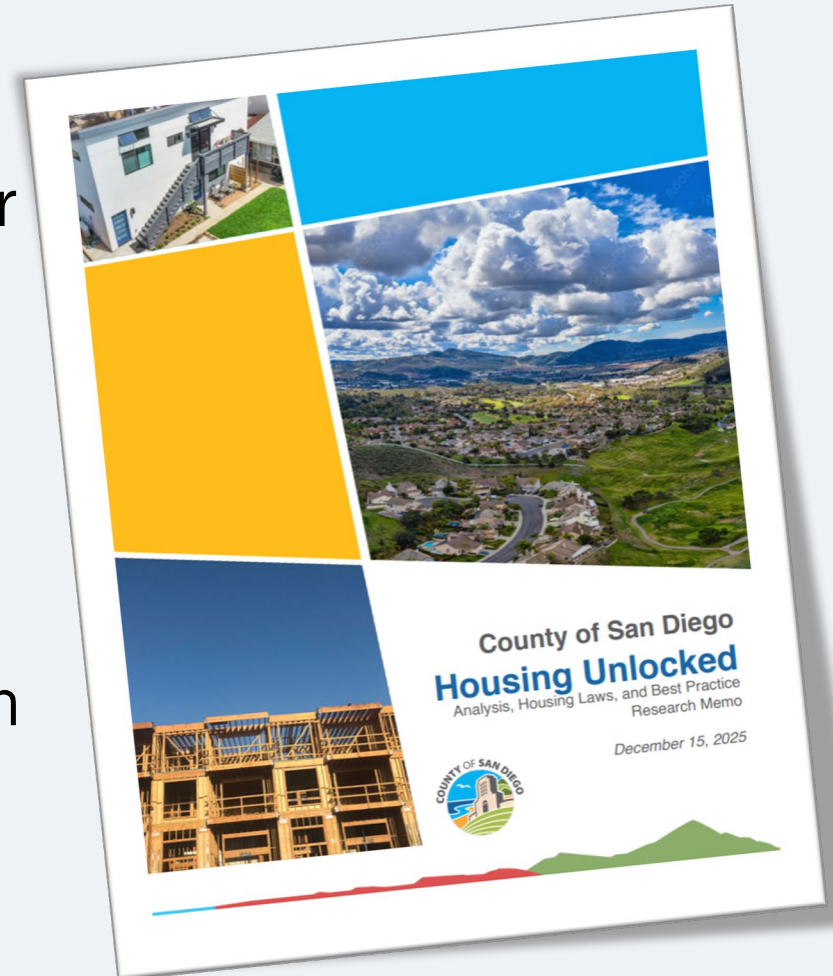
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Housing Unlocked Analysis

Consultant and Staff Review:

- Existing County policies and procedures for inconsistencies
- General Plan (GP), Housing Element (HE), and Zoning Ordinance (ZO)
- Relevant state laws and housing legislation
- Best practices and comparisons of related housing programs and ordinances





Implementing HE Programs

Zoning Solutions to Implement Housing Element Programs

Considerations:

- Complexity of changes to the Zoning Ordinance
- Effectiveness of changes to implement the General Plan
- Alignment with best practices & state guidance



Phase I – HE Programs

Five Programs and One Board Directive:

- **3.1.3.A – Zoning Ordinances & Development Designators**
(Building Height, Building Type, Setbacks, Max FAR, Open Space, P Designator)
- **3.1.1.C – ZO Amendments to Achieve Max Density**
- **3.1.1.D – Diversity of Land Use and Build Types**
- **Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOW)**
- **3.1.1.K – Expand Checklist Exemptions**
- **3.3.2.A - Group Homes of 7 or More**





Program 3.1.3.A

Zoning Ordinance & Development Designators

- Building Height
- Building Type
- Setbacks
- Max Floor Area Ratio (FAR)
- Open Space/P Designator

Example zone box with common 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 | - | |



3.1.3.A - Building Height



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

OPTIONS

Consideration

Remove limit on stories while maintaining existing height regulations.



3.1.3.A - Building Type

Single Family
Detached (B – N)

Duplex (E – R)

Triplex (G – V)



OPTIONS

Consideration

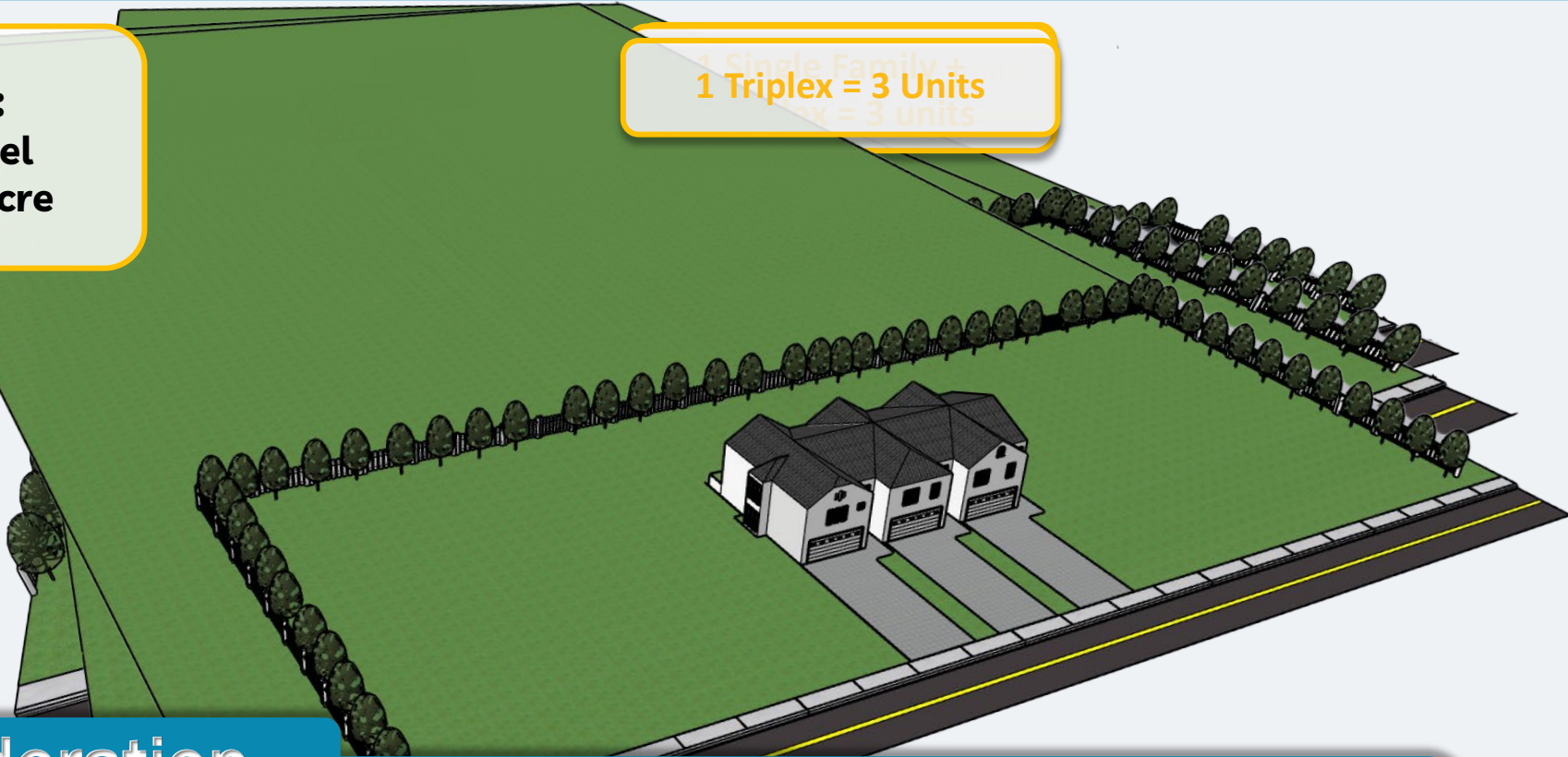
Allow additional building types while maintaining existing densities.



3.1.3.A - Building Type

Example:
1-acre parcel
3 units per acre

1 Single Family +
1 Triplex = 3 units

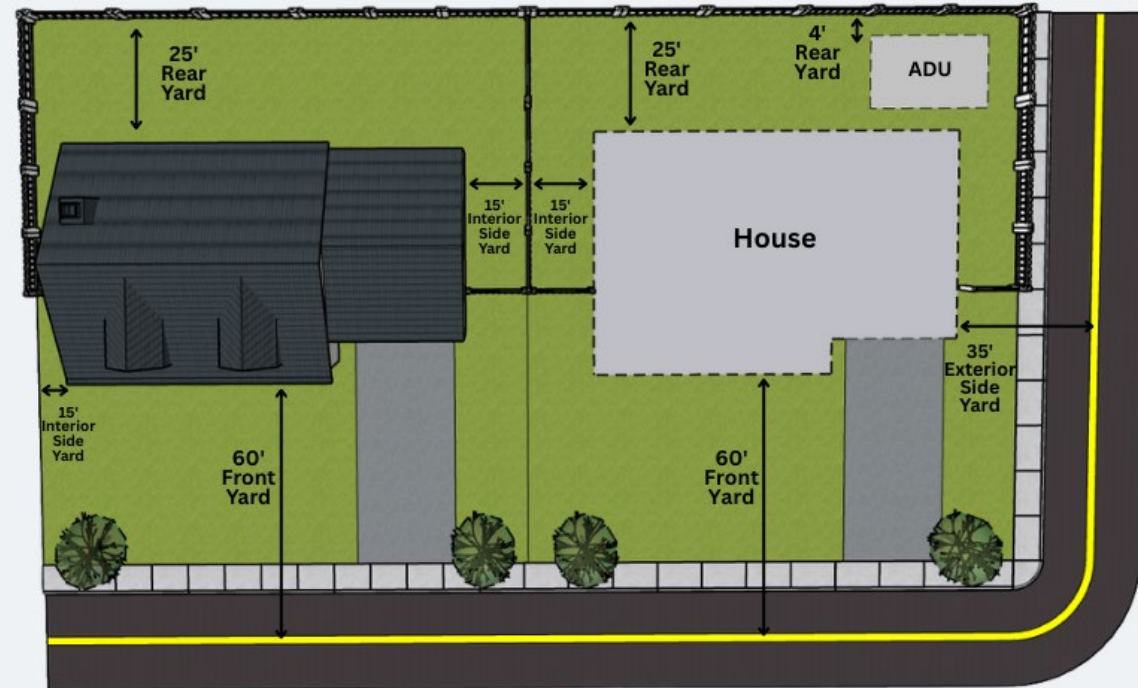


Consideration

Allow additional building types while maintaining existing densities.



3.1.3.A - Setbacks



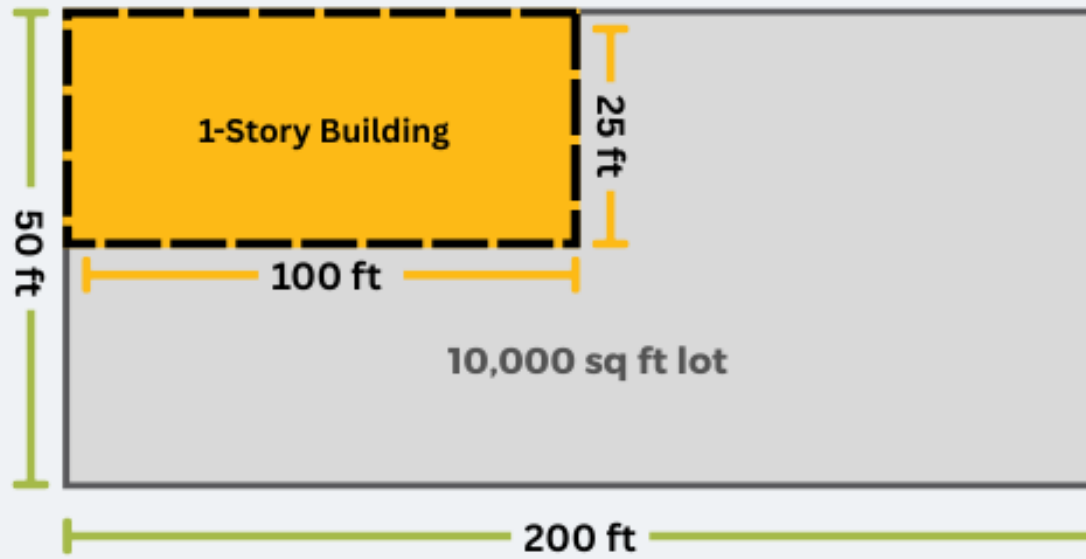
***Image reflects
'C' setback
designator**

Consideration

Reduce or remove setbacks between main buildings and rely on existing building and fire codes.



3.1.3.A - Floor Area Ratio (FAR)



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

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

Consideration

Exempt residential garages from FAR calculations.



3.1.3.A - Open Space

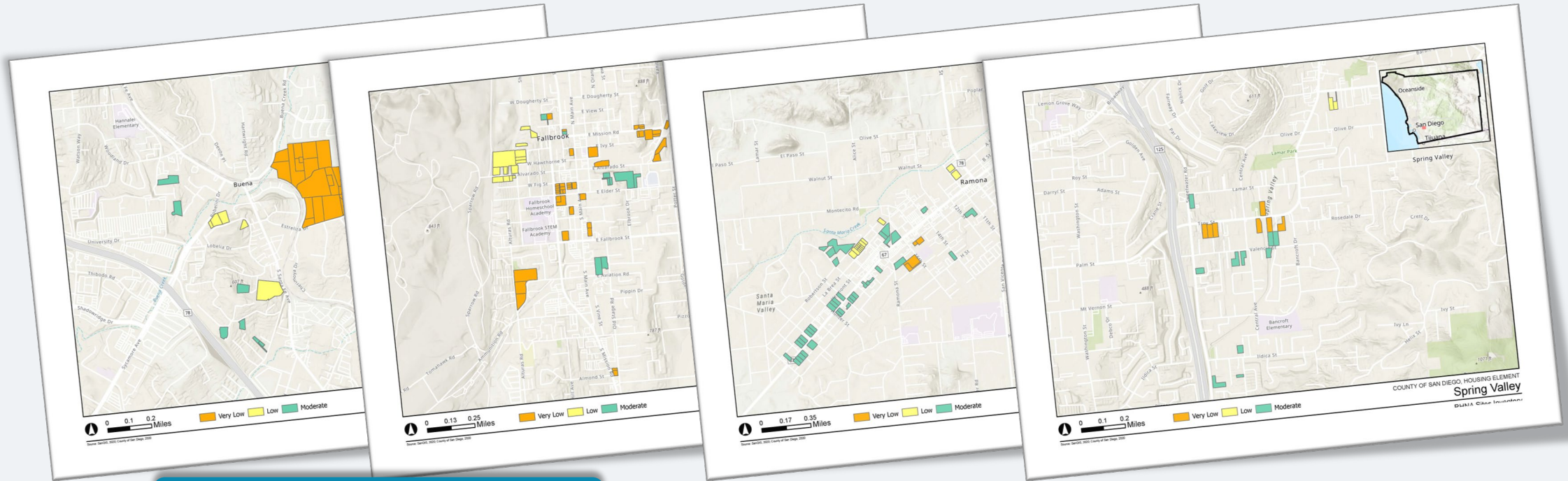


Consideration

Allow usable group open space on rooftops or within setbacks.

P-designator: Same as above and allow modifications of open space requirements in Planned Developments.

Program 3.1.1.C – Achieve GP Density



Consideration

Require certain residential housing sites (e.g. RHNA sites) to build to at least 70% of the density provided by the General Plan.

Program 3.1.1.D – Diversity of Use/Type



Consideration

Acknowledge new and emerging building technologies like prefabricated and 3D printed construction.



Tiny Homes on Wheels (THOW)



Consideration

Codify the existing Board Directive that allows THOW as primary and accessory uses.

Program 3.1.1.K – Checklist Exemptions



Consideration

Same exemption process with expanded exemptions for certain code enforcement cases.

Better promotion of existing maps and checklists to assist applicants.



Program 3.3.2.A – Group Homes



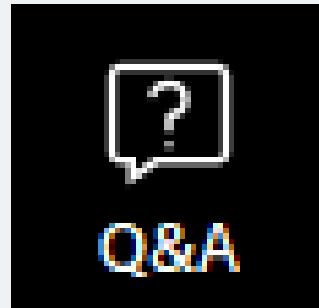
Consideration

Streamline a reasonable accommodations approval process for group homes of seven or more persons.

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Project Phasing



Housing Unlocked

Phase I (2026)

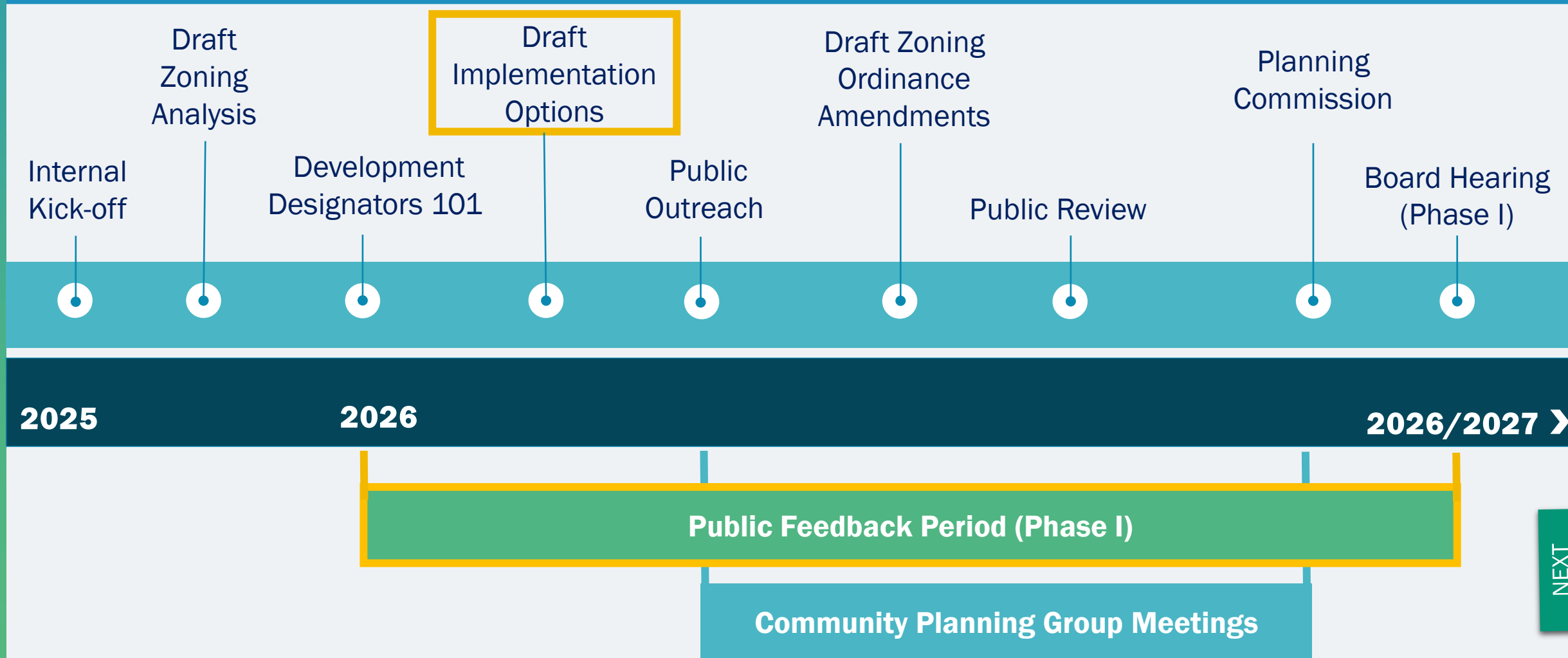
- Most immediate impact
- Quicker update process
- Agency & Board priorities

Phase II (2027)

- Achieve long-range goals
- Longer update process



Project Timeline



NEXT



Thank you!

Visit the Housing Unlocked Engage Page:

<https://engage.sandiegocounty.gov/housing-unlocked>

Share more feedback:

Email: PDS.LongRangePlanning@sdcounty.ca.gov

Phone Number: (858) 505-6677