

**CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA**  
**COUNCIL POLICY**

**CURRENT**

SUBJECT: AFFORDABLE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

POLICY NO.: 600-27

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 20, 2017

**BACKGROUND:**

Over the past decade, new housing development has not kept pace with job or population growth, resulting in housing costs that have increased at a much faster rate than income levels. Many diverse interests recognize the correlation between the availability of affordable housing, the quality of life of our residents, and the continued economic vitality of our City. Evidence has shown that the cost of delivering new housing units can be greatly impacted by government processes. Uncertain timelines and exhaustive permit review make it harder to quickly and inexpensively develop quality housing stock.

Additionally, studies have shown that construction practices greatly impact our environment. The built environment consumes over 40 percent of total energy produced in this country and there remains the constant need to conserve finite resources and ensure that development practices are sustainable. Sustainable and energy efficient homes not only help protect the environment, but they also assist in keeping operating costs low in the long run, which helps achieve housing affordability.

The City has undergone several process improvements and adopted policies and strategies that have helped promote housing construction and encourage sustainable building practices. However, more can be done, specifically in the area of reducing unnecessary regulations and streamlining reviews for affordable housing and sustainable development projects.

**PURPOSE:**

To establish a policy for expediting and streamlining the permit review processes in order to promote more affordable housing and sustainable development.

**POLICY:**

- A. Revise codes and regulations to help expedite permitting processes and remove unnecessary barriers in order to increase the supply of affordable housing and sustainable development projects.
- B. Create and implement a permit priority program that accelerates the discretionary and ministerial permit review times for new development projects that add to the City's overall affordable housing and sustainable building stock.

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1. City review times for discretionary permits under this policy should be 50 percent faster than standard project reviews, at least 80 percent of the time.
  2. City review times for ministerial permits under this policy should be 25 percent faster than standard project reviews, at least 80 percent of the time.
- C. The following are project types that the Council finds eligible for expedited review and permit process streamlining pursuant to this Council Policy upon payment of any applicable fees.
1. Development projects that incorporate into the project design a percentage of housing dedicated for very low and low income families pursuant to the standards established by the U.S. Housing and Urban Development and workforce housing. Development projects that elect to pay in-lieu fees to satisfy any affordable housing requirement would not be eligible.
  2. Residential or mixed-use development projects located within Transit Priority Areas as identified in the City's Climate Action Plan.
  3. Residential, commercial, or industrial development located within the San Diego Promise Zone, as defined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.
  4. Development projects that incorporate sustainable design and materials that exceed State code requirements.
  5. Program and legislative changes that further implement the City's Climate Action Plan.
- D. The City supports local, state and federal legislation that promotes or allows affordable housing, sustainable development, conservation of natural resources, and energy efficiency technology.
- E. The City shall actively promote and advertise the permit priority program, and any code and regulation modifications consistent with this Council Policy, in an effort to raise awareness and encourage use.

**HISTORY:**

Adopted by Resolution R-251516 – 03/31/1980  
Amended by Resolution R-257053 – 08/24/1982  
Amended by Resolution R-284238 – 07/05/1994  
Amended by Resolution R-298001 – 05/20/2003  
Amended by Resolution R-311256 – 10/20/2017