

City Oceanside City Manager's Office SB-79 Update

January 14, 2026

Item 18

SB-79 Summary

- Authored by Sen. Scott Wiener and signed into law by Gov. Newsom on October 10, 2025
- Legislation becomes effective July 1, 2026
- Upzones land in close proximity to major transit stations throughout the state – allowing housing developments of up to 65-95 feet, often with the option of ministerial approval.
- Densities can range up to 100-120 units per acre plus density bonuses
- MPOs (e.g., SANDAG) are required to publish implementation maps
- Cities can adopt their own local alternative plans in lieu of SB-79

Key Definitions

- "Light rail transit" includes streetcar, trolley, and tramway service. "Light rail transit" does not include airport people movers.
- "Heavy rail transit" means a public electric railway line with the capacity for a heavy volume of traffic using high-speed and rapid acceleration passenger rail cars operating singly or in multicar trains on fixed rails, separate rights-of-way from which all other vehicular and foot traffic are excluded, and high platform loading.
- "Commuter rail" means a public rail transit service not meeting the standards for heavy rail or light rail, excluding California High-Speed Rail and Amtrak Long Distance Service.
- "Light Rail" and "Heavy Rail" definitions likely do not apply to Oceanside

Key Definitions

- “High-frequency commuter rail” means a commuter rail service operating a total of at least 48 trains per day across both directions...
- “Very high frequency commuter rail” means a commuter rail service with a total of at least 72 trains per day across both directions...

Note: Sprinter currently operates with 34 trains in each direction, or 68 trains total on a typical weekday.

The Sprinter line is technically neither a commuter rail line or light rail transit service. Rather, it's considered a “hybrid” line which is undefined in the legislation.

Summary

TOD Stop Type	Dist. from Stop (TOD Zone)	Standards for Project
Tier 1: Major transit stop, heavy rail transit, or very high frequency commuter rail	1/4 mile from stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Height: 75 ft or 95 ft if adjacent to stop • Max Density: 30 - 120 units per acre (u/a) plus any density bonus or 160 u/a if adjacent to stop • FAR: 3.5 or 4.5 if adjacent to stop • Additional concessions
	1/4 - 1/2 mile from stop in city with population at least 35,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Height: 65 ft • Max Density: 30 - 100 u/a plus any density bonus • FAR: 3 • Additional concessions
Tier 2: Not Tier 1 major transit stops served by light rail transit, high-frequency commuter rail, or bus rapid transit	1/4 mile from stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Height: 65 ft or 85 ft if adjacent to stop • Max Density: 30 - 100 u/a plus any density bonus or 140 u/a if adjacent to stop • FAR: 3 or 4 if adjacent to stop
	1/4 - 1/2 mile from stop in a city with a population at least 35,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Max Height: 55 ft • Max Density: 30 - 80 u/a plus any density bonus • FAR: 2.5 • Additional concessions

Local Alternative Plan

- Cities are able to develop their own local TOD plan in lieu of SB-79
- Such plans need to accommodate the same build out capacity envisioned by SB-79
- Must be approved by HCD (July 1, 2026)

Next Steps

- City staff has initiated work on a local alternative plan through SANDAG technical assistance program
- Pending Clean-up Legislation (Wiener)
- City will likely be seeking legislative relief from certain deadlines or additional clarifying language

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