



August 18, 2025

The Honorable Scott Wiener
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 8620
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 79 (Wiener): Transit-Oriented Development
Notice of Opposition**

Dear Senator Wiener,

The City of Upland is writing to express our strong opposition to SB 79 (Wiener), which disregards state-certified housing elements and bestows land use authority to transit agencies without any requirement to align development standards with local general plan and zoning requirements.

SB 79 doubles down on the recent trend of the state overriding its own mandated local housing elements. This latest overreaching effort forces cities to approve transit-oriented development projects near specified transit stops — up to seven stories high and a density of 120 homes per acre — without regard to the community's needs, environmental review, or public input.

Alarming, SB 79 overrides local general plans by granting transit agencies unlimited land use authority over properties they own or control through a permanent easement as of January 1, 2026, if located within a half mile of a transit stop. These agencies would be permitted to establish objective development standards, including height, density, and design, without being subject to local zoning, general plans, or traditional public planning processes. This represents a significant shift in land use authority away from cities and counties, raising concerns about transparency, public accountability, and long-term alignment with community-led planning efforts.

While the City of Upland appreciates SB79's inclusion of an alternative transit-oriented development plan, as currently drafted, the local government has the option to do this through an additional analysis in the local government's housing element or through the adoption of an ordinance with approval from the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). In the AB 650 Senate Appropriations Analysis, HCD has determined that it will cost \$11.1 million annually and 52 new staff positions to provide more clarity in the housing element review process. Thus, SB 79 would add additional requirements for state review, increasing workloads, and making it more likely that local governments will not get their housing elements or ordinances approved promptly.

SB 79 allows residential developments located within one-quarter to one-half mile of major transit stops to access streamlined entitlements, overriding existing local zoning standards. Specifically, SB 79 would have a significant impact on the City of Upland's Historic Downtown area because of its close proximity to the Upland Metrolink station.



City of Upland

Mayor's Office

This is a historic and a mixed-use area allowing for residential densities up to 55 dwelling units per acre. Increasing the housing density up to 120 dwelling units per acre in this area would substantially strain existing aging infrastructure, such as utilities and roads. For example, Southern California Edison's infrastructure in this area is undercapacity and results in many outages throughout the year in the Downtown area. Also, within the one-half mile radius of the Metrolink station there are hundreds of historic homes that date back to the late 1800's to early 1900's. SB 79 would increase the allowable height from 55 feet to 75 feet which would substantially change the community character of the historic Downtown area and the surrounding community.

Upland's Planning Department has spent years and several hundreds of thousands of dollars to create a Housing Element, including the inclusion of a Transit Overlay District, that not only answers all the State HCD requirements, but also creates more affordable housing in our high resource areas and protects our community from needless densification. SB 79 undermines the City's efforts and makes them meaningless.

While the City of Upland recognizes the state's interest in increasing housing near transit, we remain concerned that this measure advances significant development entitlements without requiring any corresponding affordability.

The City of Upland remains committed to meeting its housing obligations and supporting a diverse range of housing options across income levels. However, we are strongly concerned that SB 79 will lead to the over-concentration of market-rate development along transit corridors without safeguards to ensure equitable outcomes and in such a manner that fails to support local flexibility, decision-making and extensive public engagement.

For these reasons, the City of Upland respectfully opposes SB 79 (Wiener).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bill Velto".

Bill Velto,
Mayor, City of Upland

Cc: Senator Sasha Renee Perez
Senator Eloise Reyes
Assemblymember John Harabedian
Assemblymember Michelle Rodriguez
Laura Varela, Regional Public Affairs Manager (Lvarela@calcities.org)
League of California Cities (cityletter@calcities.org)