

# Accelerate housing production by streamlining development review

## What is development review?

Development review is the process by which a city or county examines a development application to check if it complies with the zoning code.

## What's the challenge?

Many cities have rules for residential development that are discretionary, or require subjective interpretation. The inherent uncertainty of discretionary review leads to fewer small-scale local developers from building or innovating since they can't afford to take on this risk.

## What's the solution?

Streamline development review for small-scale development applications to reserve discretionary review for large projects or specific uses that need public input to arrive at the appropriate outcomes. Replacing subjective standards with objective standards gives small-scale builders confidence and predictability in the application process so that they can focus on bringing more homes to the market.

### Discretionary (subjective) review



### Streamlined (objective) review



## Community benefits

- Reducing costly delays in the permitting process can translate into lower rental or purchase prices for residents.
- Removing discretionary review for small-scale projects provides transparency and predictability for neighbors about what can be built nearby.
- Simplified tools like allowing different kinds of homes by-right make the process user-friendly and easy to understand.
- Streamlined review enables planning staff to complete reviews more efficiently, leaving more time and energy for long-range planning efforts with community-wide impact.



## Places to Study

**South Bend, IN**  
Providing preapproved building plan sets for infill development

**Sacramento, CA**  
Allowing ADUs by-right

**State of California**  
Senate Bill 35 requiring ministerial approval for multifamily housing

## Scan for More



NAHB Guide to  
Regulatory Barriers

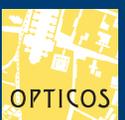


Image: Townhomes in Hercules, CA approved under a form-based code