

SB 478 will stop the misuse of floor area ratio and minimum lot size requirements that prevent the construction of multifamily buildings in areas already zoned to allow them

What is floor area ratio and why does it matter?

- Floor area ratio restrictions control how large a building can be, based on the size of the parcel of land.
- The floor area ratio of a property is the total floor space in a building divided by the entire lot. For example, if a lot has a floor area ratio of 1.0 it means a developer can build a one story building over the entire lot, a two story building over half the lot, or a three story building over a third of the lot.
- Floor area ratios that are set unnecessarily low can make it nearly impossible to build, even in areas that are zoned for multifamily housing.

EXAMPLE: The city of Del Mar restricts floor area ratio to .35—meaning the building's total floor space can take up only 35% of the total lot size. For example, a 2000 square foot lot would only be allowed to have a duplex that is 700 square feet total—350 square feet per home. Setting a floor area ratio this low effectively prevents multifamily housing from being built in areas zoned for it.

What is a minimum lot size requirement and how does it impact housing?

- Minimum lot size requirements identify the smallest lot that can legally be created within a local jurisdiction.
- If the minimum lot size is large (in some areas as much as an acre) a builder must pay for a much larger piece of land than is needed—discouraging or preventing development.
- These excessive requirements are often implemented in jurisdictions that are unwilling to build their fair share of housing in order to make it too expensive to build new homes.

EXAMPLE: In Monte Serrano the minimum lot size for a duplex is 14,520 square feet. That means the required cost to buy the land to build a duplex would be \$540,000 per home.

SB 478 will prevent abuses of floor area ratio and minimum lot size requirements that block needed housing and instead set uniform, common-sense standards

- SB 478 will establish a 1.5 floor area ratio standard for land zoned for missing middle housing (between 2 and 10 homes). This will help ensure multifamily housing can actually be built in areas that zone for it.
- The bill sets a minimum lot size for 2-4 home parcels and a separate, sustainable minimum lot size for 5-10 home parcels. Setting these reasonable standards will help local governments meet their new Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) goals and prevent back door practices designed to block multifamily housing.

VOTE YES ON SB 478