



## HOUSING, COMMUNITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

### Highlights

### March 27, 2026

#### **ATTENDANCE:**

Members: Leslie Castelano (Chair); Jorgel Chavez (Vice Chair); Murray Anderson; Jose Luis Barajas; Scott Behrendt; Art Bishop; Evan Branning; Lee Butler; Alexxiss Diaz; Tanya Doby; Darin DuPont; Marilyn Ezzy-Ashcraft; Rebecca Flynn; Jon Fugitt; Terry Hines; Andrew Jared; Lisa Kaplan; Janet Keo Conklin; Belle La; Mark Lazzaretto; Kari Leon; James Mai; Patricia Matthews; Stacey Mattina; John Miki; Ed Miranda; Juan Munoz-Guevarra; Debra Porada; Kelly Purvis; Kelly Ramirez; Rocky Rhodes; Alysson Snow; Thomas Soule; Niroop Srivatsa; Julie Testa; Maureen Toms; Stephanie Vargas; Brad Waller; Mark Waronek; Scott Webb

Cal Cities Partners: Clayton Miller

Staff: Brady Guertin, Legislative Advocate  
Waleed Hojeij, Policy & Legislative Affairs Analyst

#### **I. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Leslie Castellano, who welcomed members and thanked them for their continued engagement in advancing Cal Cities' housing and economic development priorities. Vice Chair Jorgel Chavez provided additional remarks, emphasizing the importance of collaboration as the Legislature moves into a critical period for housing and land use policy decisions.

#### **II. Public Comment**

Chair Castellano opened the floor for public comment. No public comment was provided.

#### **III. Affordable Housing Development in Orange County**

Todd Cottle, Principal at C&C Development, provided an overview of affordable housing development trends and challenges in Orange County. The presentation focused on the realities of project financing, rising construction costs, and the importance of public-private partnerships in delivering housing. Mr. Cottle highlighted that while demand for affordable housing continues to grow, feasibility remains a key barrier, particularly when layered with additional regulatory or land-use requirements. He emphasized that certainty in the entitlement process and access to funding sources are critical to ensuring projects move forward. Committee members engaged in discussion around how state policies impact project feasibility at the local level and the need for tools that support both housing production and economic viability.

#### **IV. Legislative Agenda**

##### AB 1674 (Ahrens) – Food Affordability Act

Brady Guertin presented AB 1674, which would establish the Food Desert Elimination Grant Program and require local governments to ensure that housing developments in designated food deserts do not reduce site capacity for grocery stores without mitigation.

Committee discussion focused heavily on the intersection of housing production and economic development. Members raised concerns that requiring mitigation, such as dedicating space or funding for grocery stores, could increase development costs and unintentionally reduce housing feasibility. One member noted that “this looks better as a grant or economic development program rather than a mandate within housing law,” while another emphasized that grocery store viability is driven by “rooftops,” meaning that adding barriers to housing development could undermine the very goal of attracting grocery stores to underserved areas.

Additional concerns included the lack of clarity around definitions of “food desert,” the potential fiscal implications given the state's budget deficit, and whether the program would meaningfully address underlying economic challenges. Staff also noted that a similar proposal had previously been vetoed due to concerns about creating an unfunded program.

The policy committee recommended an oppose unless amended position on the measure by a vote of 21-20.

##### AB 1738 (Carrillo) – Remote Inspections

Brady Guertin presented AB 1738, which would require local governments to offer remote inspections for certain building permits by July 1, 2027, while allowing discretion for follow-up in-person inspections.

Members expressed openness to the flexibility offered by remote inspections and appreciated the measure's intent to potentially save local governments money and staff time, while others raised concerns about implementation, liability, and fire, life, and safety issues. Some committee members expressed concerns that the liability protections in the measure were questionable due to previous experience with liability issues in their local jurisdiction, despite legal protections, while others expressed concern that the state was infringing on local government's ability to determine what kind of inspections were best for their jurisdiction. A motion was made for a position of Support if Amended on the measure with proposed amendments to narrow the type of inspections that could be done remotely, while a substitute motion was made to oppose the measure.

The committee voted in support of the substitute motion to recommend an oppose position on the measure by a vote of 29-11.

##### AB 1914 (Schiavo) – General Plan Elements: Childcare

AB 1914 would require local governments to incorporate childcare considerations into multiple general plan elements when updating two or more elements concurrently.

Staff reviewed with the committee the recently passed laws requiring multiple general plan element updates over the next few years and summarized the discussions in the Cal Cities Community Services Policy Committee, which had voted the previous day to recommend a support if amended position on the measure.

Committee members acknowledged the importance of addressing childcare access but raised concerns about adding new mandates to an already complex general plan process. Members emphasized the need for flexibility and cautioned against requirements that could increase administrative burden without providing funding or state support for implementation. Some committee members explained that state law is not needed if cities wish to incorporate childcare into their general plans, and therefore, it would be an unnecessary unfunded mandate for local jurisdictions. A motion was made to recommend a support if amended position on the measure with the amendments to follow what the Community Services Committee had recommended. A substitute motion was made to oppose the measure.

The policy committee voted in support of the substitute motion and recommended an oppose position on the measure by a vote of 26-14.

#### **V. State Legislation, Budget, and Regulatory Update**

Staff provided a comprehensive update on key legislative, budget, and regulatory developments impacting housing, land use, and economic development. The update included an overview of major legislative deadlines, noting that policy committee hearings are underway and that the Legislature is approaching critical deadlines for both fiscal and non-fiscal bills in the coming weeks.

Staff also highlighted a range of housing and land use measures currently under consideration, including proposals related to housing element implementation, transit-oriented development, adaptive reuse, density bonus law, and permitting processes. Across these measures, staff emphasized a recurring theme of increased state involvement in local land use decision-making, particularly through additional mandates, expanded ministerial approvals, and limitations on local discretion.

#### **VI. Adjourn**

**Next Meeting (Virtual):** Friday, June 5, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.