

July 2, 2026



San Diego City Council
City of San Diego
202 C St.
San Diego, CA 92101

Re: General Plan Maintenance Fee

Dear Honorable City Councilmembers:

On behalf of the Building Industry Association of San Diego ("BIA"), I respectfully submit the following comments opposing the proposed changes to the General Plan Maintenance Fee. The BIA represents the 25,000 local professionals who plan, design, build, and deliver housing throughout our region. Our members are committed to creating homes, supporting economic opportunity, and helping meet San Diego's housing needs. We offer these comments based on our members' direct experience navigating the policies, regulations, and costs that affect housing production and our shared goal of increasing housing opportunities for San Diegans.

We recognize that the GPMF helps fund the Planning Department and its work. Many of these planning efforts are directly beneficial to our industry, and require significant research, outreach, and resources dedicated to policy and program development. Thoughtful planning is essential to maintaining San Diego's quality of life and supporting our long-term growth.

Furthermore, we appreciate the Council's direction to capture the complexity of projects versus a one-size-fits-all approach. This is a sound suggestion that would more accurately reflect the time and attention required by staff on any given project.

With that foundation set, we are concerned that the proposed rate of the surcharge increase will further add to the cumulative cost burden already placed on housing production in San Diego. Over 11% is significant enough to warrant additional thought, especially as benchmarked against other jurisdictions where high costs to build are noted. While any individual fee increase may appear modest in isolation, the development industry continues to experience what many stakeholders describe as a "death by a thousand cuts" by a steady accumulation of fees, surcharges, regulations, and processing costs that ultimately increase the cost of delivering housing.

Additionally, since its consideration at Land Use & Housing, members have raised concerns about the manner in which the fee is collected and at which point in the process. The potential

for redundancy and repeat charges speaks to the earlier points of our industry's sensitivity to the simple fact that raising fees raises costs.

These costs do not exist in a vacuum. They are ultimately reflected in higher housing prices and rents for San Diego residents. At a time when housing affordability remains one of the City's most pressing challenges, we ask the City to consider whether additional housing-related fees are consistent with the City's stated goals of increasing housing supply and reducing barriers to development.

We are also concerned that stakeholders are being asked to pay more while many of the planning reforms most needed to support housing production and economic growth continue to be deferred into future work programs. Important initiatives, including reforms related to historic preservation processes and other regulatory improvements intended to streamline development, have faced significant and repeated delays. As a result, applicants are being asked to contribute additional funding without a corresponding commitment to timely implementation of the policies and reforms that would improve certainty, efficiency, and housing production.

This proposal asks the housing industry and future residents to pay more while receiving less in terms of tangible progress on long-standing planning priorities. Before increasing the GPMF surcharge, the City may review current work plans and associated goals to ensure that additional funds will in fact accelerate the implementation of priority planning initiatives associated with increasing homebuilding.

We respectfully urge the City to further study the proposed surcharge increase, and identify the mechanics of the collection and administration of these funds. In the meantime, we urge the City to focus on advancing overdue regulatory reforms and identifying ways to reduce rather than increase the cost burden associated with housing production. For further discussion on this matter please contact Stefanie Benvenuto at 714.336.6536.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aimee Faucett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Aimee Faucett
President & CEO
Building Industry Association of San Diego