



BuildSD



December 8, 2025

President Cody Petterson
Board of Education
4100 Normal Street, Room 2231
San Diego CA 92103

SUBJECT: San Diego Unified School District Redevelopment Efforts

Dear President Petterson and Members of the Board of Education:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we write to urge you to maximize the number of units constructed as part of the San Diego Unified School District's (SDUSD) redevelopment efforts. The San Diego Unified School District has a unique opportunity to support its employees, the community, and the broader region, and ought to take all measures possible to maximize this benefit.

1. San Diego is experiencing an acute housing crisis.

We are experiencing a nationwide housing crisis. This shortage is especially acute in San Diego, which is short 90,000 units.¹ This lack of available units drives up prices. The median household in the City of San Diego pays \$2,303 a month in rent.² An individual would need to earn \$92,120 a year to comfortably afford rent in San Diego. Many SDUSD teachers and employees do not earn this wage.

2. SDUSD should seek to maximize the impact of this redevelopment effort.

The School District's decision to make district-owned properties available for housing development is a promising first step towards supporting employees and families. We applaud SDUSD for recognizing the severity of the housing crisis and recognizing that addressing this crisis is critical to ensuring that students and staff thrive. With that said, the magnitude of the housing affordability crisis demands transformative action. The redevelopment decisions taken by SDUSD today will exist for a hundred years and significantly shape the surrounding community. SDUSD ought to maximize this opportunity and pursue the development of the most possible homes at all five sites, for the

¹ Andrew Keats, "San Diego's Housing Shortage Explained in One Chart", Axios, January 9, 2024, available at <https://www.axios.com/local/san-diego/2024/01/09/san-diego-housing-shortage-chart>.

² CBS 8 Staff, "Rental prices drop in September; San Diego remains 11th highest in the U.S.", CBS 8, September 30, 2025, available at <https://www.cbs8.com/article/news/local/rental-prices-drop-san-diego-remains-11th-highest/509-f0dc49e5-8b13-4542-9468-fa9bca9a6f1e>.

benefit of the surrounding community and SDUSD employees. In practical terms, this means choosing proposals that fully utilize the tools available under state and local laws to build as many homes as feasible on these rare public sites.

3. The Brucker Property is perfectly primed for urban redevelopment.

The Brucker property presents a unique opportunity for redevelopment, for which the District must take full advantage. The parcel is situated at the center of the Hillcrest, University Heights, and North Park neighborhoods. These neighborhoods enjoy vibrant culture, compact land uses, and robust transit connections. A redevelopment project in this prime location should include as many homes as possible and contribute to a mixed-use neighborhood. Deciding to develop this project below maximum possible development capacity would mean choosing to allow fewer families to reside in a vibrant and accessible neighborhood.

Given this site's central location and mobility options, this development has the potential to transform not just the Uptown area, but the broader region. The current transit network includes the 215 Mid-City rapid bus line, which connects future residents to San Diego State University and Downtown San Diego. As such, SANDAG has projected significant population and economic growth in the area.³ Smart growth at this site is key to the region's future, and should be developed with this front of mind.

4. SDUSD must take this opportunity to build a better future for more San Diegans.

This redevelopment effort is an opportunity for the San Diego Unified School District to support its employees and better the broader community for decades to come. As SDUSD makes decisions about what the development will look like, the district must think about the future it wants to build. We urge SDUSD to prioritize dense mixed-used projects to build a vibrant future for more San Diegans.

Sincerely,

Aria Grossman
Policy Manager
Circulate San Diego

Samuel Sharp
Co-Founder
BuildSD

Leif Gensert
Vice President
RideSD

Dante Golden
Senior Director of Policy
San Diego Housing Federation

Chloé Lauer
Executive Director
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition

Anthony Dang
Policy and Community Outreach
Manager
Climate Action Campaign

David Rabinovich
Board President
California High School Transit Alliance

³ San Diego Association of Governments, 2025 Regional Plan Appendix F: Regional Growth Forecast with Sustainable Communities Land Use Pattern (May 2025), available at <https://www.sandag.org/2025rpappendixf>, last visited December 2, 2025.