

# SB79

## Historic Resources in Transit-Oriented Development Zones

Conference Takeaways to the Santa Clara Historic and Landmark Commission  
Jun 2026

# Agenda

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## **SB79 Overview**

What these bills do and why they matter to historic preservation

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## **Local Impact Assessment**

Transit tiers, at-risk properties, and Santa Clara's historic inventory

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## **Case Studies**

Strategies from Riverside, San Francisco, San Diego, and Los Angeles

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## **Commission Discussion**

Potential action items for our commission and city council

# SB79 Overview: Issues for Historic Homes

## The Challenge

Streamlined approval bypasses local review

- Density mandates override local protections
- Historic districts may not be exempt
- Demolition easier under by-right development
- Non-designated historic resources at risk
- SB 79 becomes effective statewide July 1st 2026

## Tier Definitions

### Tier 1 (0.5 mile radius)

Heavy rail, subway, or 72+ trains/day

100 du/ac minimum, 65 ft height (8-9 stories)

**Caltrain, BART extension: Santa Clara Station**

### Tier 2 (0.5-1 mile radius)

Light rail, BRT, 48+ trains/day

60-75 du/ac, 65 ft height

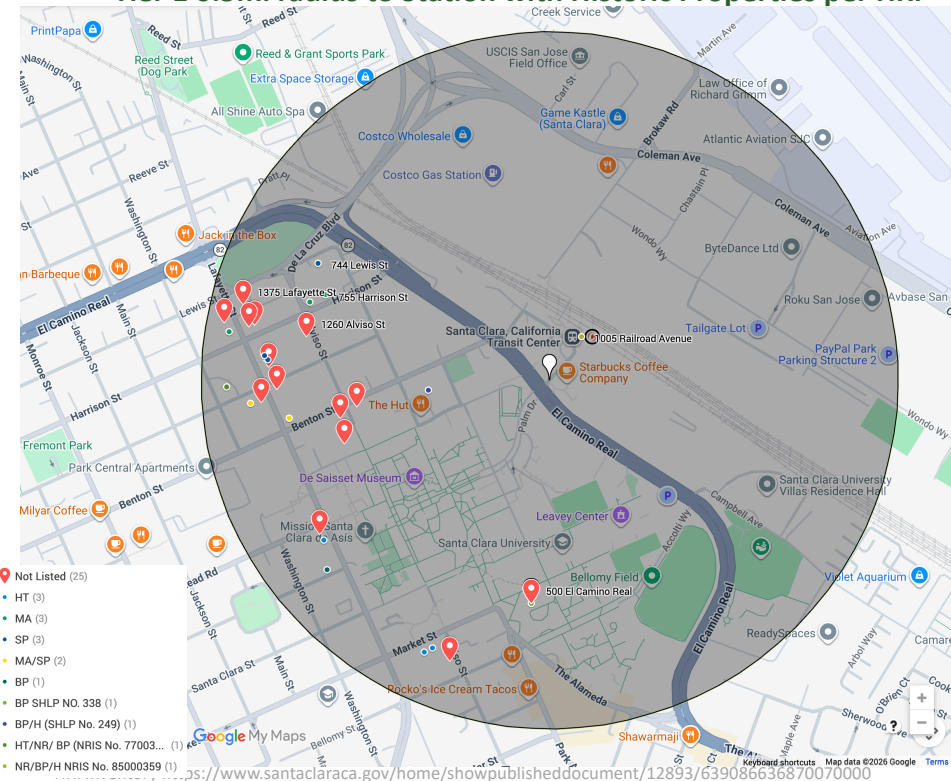
None relevant for Santa Clara

*Both tiers dramatically expand housing requirements and make adaptive reuse of historic buildings difficult and demolition profitable.*

# Santa Clara Historic Properties at Risk

## 41 HRI entries in Tier 1 Zone

### Tier 1 0.5mi radius to Station with Historic Properties per HRI



Protection Level	Count	Properties
<b>No Designation listed</b>	<b>25</b>	536 Alviso St, 1081 Alviso St, 1072 Alviso St, 1260 Alviso St, 801 Franklin St, 500 El Camino Real (12)(SCU), 1193 Lafayette St, 884 Lafayette St, 891 Harrison St, 895 Harrison St, 908 Fremont St, 1231 Lafayette St, 1375 Lafayette St, 1338 Lafayette St
<b>Mills Act</b>	<b>5</b>	1115 Lafayette St, 936 Fremont St, 755 Harrison St, 1309 Alviso St, 925 Harrison St
<b>Small Plaque</b>	<b>3</b>	744 Lewis St, 1245 Lafayette St, 1267 Lafayette St
<b>Bronze Plaque</b>	<b>1</b>	St. Clare's Church
<b>State Register</b>	<b>2</b>	Santa Clara Woman's Club (Adobe), Santa Clara Mission Church
<b>National Register of Historic Places</b>	<b>1</b>	Santa Clara Railroad Depot

The undesignated properties have **ZERO** local or state protection and face streamlined demolition approval under SB79 Tier 1 (100 du/ac mandatory density).

# Case Studies: How Other Cities Protect Historic Resources

## San Francisco

- ***Proactive Citywide Cultural Resources Survey***
- Historic landmark designations for highest protection
- Design standards for additions to Category A properties
- Local housing bonus program as state law alternative

## Los Angeles

- Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZs)
- Mills Act property tax incentives program
- **Demolition Notification Ordinance** for 45+ year buildings
- **SurveyLA database** of identified historic resources

## San Diego

- Expanded **historic district surveys** before major transit-area rezoning.
- Used Historic Resources Board designations to establish legal protection prior to redevelopment pressure.
- Paired **transit growth with adaptive reuse** and rehabilitation incentives to keep historic buildings economically viable.

## Riverside

- Certified Local Government (CLG) status
- Title 20 Cultural Resources ordinance
- **Certificates of Appropriateness** required
- **Historic District** Design Guidelines

# Commission Discussion

Opportunities	Discussion
Complete HRI mapping	Which resources are most vulnerable?
Evaluate districts and ordinances	Are current protections sufficient?
Coordinate planning	Should additional districts be considered?

*Key Principle: We can advance both historic preservation AND housing goals with smart local policy—they are not mutually exclusive.*

# Sources & Resources

## State Housing & Preservation

SB 79 – Abundant & Affordable Homes Near Transit: <https://sd11.senate.ca.gov/>

SB 35 Extended (SB 423): <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>

CA Office of Historic Preservation: <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/>

## City Resources & Programs

Santa Clara General Plan Section 8.9: <https://www.santaclaraca.gov/>

San Francisco Preservation: <https://sfplanning.org/heritage-conservation-element>

LA Conservancy: <https://www.laconservancy.org/>

San Diego SOHO: <https://www.sohosandiego.org/>

Riverside Historic Preservation: <https://riversideca.gov/cedd/planning/historic-preservation/>

## Best Practices & Tools

National Trust for Historic Preservation: <https://www.nthp.org/>

Mills Act Information: <https://www.nthp.org/resources/preservation-law/mills-act-property-tax-incentive>

Certified Local Government Program: <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/programs/CLG>