

**COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026**

MINUTE ORDER NO. 25

SUBJECT: RESTORING HOMEOWNERSHIP FOR SAN DIEGANS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

Homeownership has long been a cornerstone of economic stability and upward mobility in the United States, yet in the County of San Diego, the traditional “American Dream” of owning a home is becoming increasingly unattainable for many young and moderate-income families. As of 2025, according to the California Association of Realtors, only 13% of San Diego County households can afford to purchase a median-priced home. Persistently high home prices, stagnant wage growth, limited housing inventory, and escalating interest rates have combined to push homeownership out of reach for a significant portion of the local population.

In San Diego County, the median price of a home has hovered near or above the million-dollar mark, placing ownership well beyond the financial grasp of most households. As a result, only a small fraction of residents earn enough to afford the monthly mortgage payments required for a median-priced home. This dynamic disproportionately impacts first-time buyers-particularly younger adults and moderate-income families-who face steeper barriers in saving for down payments, qualifying for competitive loans, and successfully navigating a tight and increasingly competitive housing market.

The limited ability to purchase a home has broader implications for economic mobility, workforce retention, community stability, and long-term financial security. When families are priced out of homeownership, they face increased cost burdens in the rental market, reduced stability, and diminished opportunities to build wealth or remain rooted in the communities they serve.

Today’s action directs the Chief Administrative Officer to conduct a feasibility study of establishing a County-funded and County-administered pilot program to support first-time homebuyers in the unincorporated area. Owning a home is more than a financial milestone, it represents stability, dignity, and a foundation on which families can build their future.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR JIM DESMOND

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a County-funded and County-administered pilot program to support first-time homebuyers in the unincorporated area, and to report back to the Board within 120 days. The feasibility analysis should include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Opportunities for public-private partnerships, including collaboration with financial institutions to secure better terms for program applicants.
 - b. Potential down payment assistance funding.
 - c. Interest rate buy-down options to improve mortgage affordability.
 - d. Eligibility criteria designed to complement, and not duplicate, the two first-time homebuyer programs currently administered by the County-the Down payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program and the Moderate Income Down payment Assistance Program.

- e. An indication of how many first-time homebuyers any proposed budget can assist.
- f. Include safeguards and risk mitigation strategies for the County's financial investment.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The rising cost of homeownership in San Diego County disproportionately impacts young adults and working families. Establishing a County-administered pilot program to support first-time homebuyers would advance housing equity by creating new pathways to homeownership for moderate-income households in the unincorporated area. This effort aligns with the County's commitment to dismantling barriers to opportunity and providing all residents a fair chance at long-term financial security and community stability.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPACT STATEMENT

The proposed feasibility study supports several County of San Diego Sustainability Goals, including providing just and equitable access to housing, enhancing economic opportunity, and promoting the long-term well-being of residents. Increasing homeownership opportunities contributes to regional sustainability by fostering stable communities, reducing displacement, and encouraging local investment. This pilot program would support social and economic sustainability while aligning with the County's broader housing, climate, and quality of life goals.

FISCAL IMPACT

Funds for this request to conduct a feasibility study are included in the Fiscal Year 2025-26 Operational Plan based on existing staff time in Housing & Community Development Services funded by existing General Purpose Revenue. The Chief Administrative Officer will return to the Board with future related recommendations to implement a pilot program, including any associated funding needs and/or staffing impacts for the Board's consideration. There will be no change in net General Fund cost and no additional staff years associated with today's recommendation.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ACTION 25.1:

Noting for the record this item was heard on March 25, 2026; A motion was made by Supervisor Desmond, for the Board of Supervisors to take action as recommended.

(This motion failed for lack of a second.)

ACTION 25.2:

ON MOTION of Supervisor Lawson-Remer, seconded by Supervisor Aguirre, the Board of Supervisors took the following actions:

1. Directed the Chief Administrative Officer to evaluate the feasibility of establishing a County-funded and County-administered pilot program to support first-time homebuyers in the unincorporated area, and to report back to the Board within 90 days. The feasibility analysis should include, but not be limited to, the following:
 - a. Opportunities for public-private partnerships, including collaboration with financial institutions to secure better terms for program applicants.
 - b. Potential down payment assistance funding.
 - c. Interest rate buy-down options to improve mortgage affordability.

- d. Eligibility criteria designed to complement, and not duplicate, the two first-time homebuyer programs currently administered by the County-the Down payment and Closing Cost Assistance Program and the Moderate Income Down payment Assistance Program.
 - e. An indication of how many first-time homebuyers any proposed budget can assist.
 - f. Include safeguards and risk mitigation strategies for the County's financial investment.
2. Directed the Chief Administrative Officer to include in the County's Legislative Program opposition to federal policies that increase the cost of housing construction in San Diego County, including Trump administration tariffs on construction materials, as well as opposition to U.S. military or economic actions that disrupt energy markets and construction materials supply chains, such as U.S. actions targeting Iran and Venezuela.
 3. Additionally, direct the Chief Administrative Officer to include in the analysis the impact of geopolitical conflicts and tariffs on inflation, energy costs, construction costs, and local housing market.

AYES: Aguirre, Lawson-Remer, Montgomery Steppe
NOES: Desmond
ABSENT: Anderson

State of California)
County of San Diego) §

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Original entered in the Minutes of the Board of Supervisors.

ANDREW POTTER
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors



Signed
by Andrew Potter