

LIMITATIONS ON DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Government Code § 65913.11



INTRODUCTION

As part of the Building Opportunities for All Housing package (2021), Government Code section 65913.11 sets limitations on floor area ratio (FAR) and lot coverage standards that can be imposed on housing projects of 3 to 10 units within multifamily or mixed-use zones. The section specifies minimum FARs and supersedes local lot coverage standards that physically preclude projects from achieving the minimum FARs allowed by state law.

KEY PROVISIONS

Applicability

This section applies to a legal parcel or parcels that meet either of the following criteria:

- ▶ **If in a city:** City boundary includes some portion of either an urbanized area or urban cluster as designated by the United States Census Bureau, or
- ▶ **If in unincorporated area:** Parcel(s) is wholly within the boundaries of an urbanized area or urban cluster as designated by the United States Census Bureau.

Minimum Floor Area Ratios

For housing development projects in multifamily or mixed-use zoning districts, local agencies cannot impose an FAR development standard less than the following:

- ▶ 1.0 FAR for projects with 3 to 7 units, or
- ▶ 1.25 FAR for projects with 8 to 10 units.

Example	Minimum FAR	Minimum Total Floor Area
▶ 3,000 sf parcel ▶ 5 units proposed	1.0	3,000 sf <i>Average 600 sf per unit</i>
▶ 8,000 sf parcel ▶ 8 units proposed	1.25	10,000 sf <i>Average 1,250 sf per unit</i>
<i>sf = square foot or square feet</i>		

The Housing Law Fact Sheets provide an overview of existing laws which the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) has statutory authority to enforce. The fact sheet does not constitute legal advice but is intended to be a resource for local agencies and decision-makers within California, including members of City Councils, Boards of Supervisors, and Planning Commissions.

Limitations on Lot Coverage Maximums

The local jurisdiction must also waive the lot coverage requirement if it would preclude the housing development project from achieving the minimum FAR allowed by statute. Lot coverage typically refers to the portion of a site that contains the footprint of a building or a building projection (e.g., bay windows), or is covered by a roofed structure (e.g., covered porch).

Example	Max. Lot Coverage	Applicability of Lot Coverage Requirement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 5,000 sf parcel ▶ 5 units proposed 	40%	If the applicant proposes a 5-unit, single-story 5,000 sf development on a 5,000 sf parcel (1.0 FAR, 100% lot coverage), the local agency must waive the 40% maximum lot coverage requirement to allow the project to achieve the minimum FAR of 1.0.

RECENT LEGISLATION

Floor Area Ratio and Lot Coverage Standards

[SB 478](#), Weiner (2021); amended Gov. Code, § 65585 and added Gov. Code, § 65913.11.

SB 478 prohibits a local agency from imposing a floor area ratio limit lower than 1.0 for developments of 3 to 7 units, or 1.25 for 8 to 10 units.