

The last two IDO (Integrated Development Ordinance) amendment packages (in 2023 and 2025) made ‘casitas’ permissive in R-1 zones and created large swaths of upzoning along centers and corridors. Has this fixed our housing crisis? Not yet. Created affordable housing? Nope. Continuing to change the zoning rules just makes life less clear and predictable for residents, developers, and investors. Last year I wrote several pieces about the Kool-Aid of Upzoning...

At City Council on Monday, October 5th, O-26-61 passed on a 5/4 vote. A package of four bills, sponsored by Councilor Dan Lewis, was labeled the **“Better Neighborhoods Package”**. Another ordinance, O-26-60, regarding unequal increasing of appeal fees, was deferred until October 19th. The two Memorials (regarding defining ‘standing’ at the state level) passed.

According to the sponsor, O-26-61 *“would remove the city-recognized authority of coalitions of neighborhood associations to appeal approved projects. Individual neighborhood associations would retain their voice and become even more empowered, placing influence back in the hands of the communities most directly affected.”*

The **“Better Neighborhoods Package”** of bills presented a magical narrative of transparency, accountability, and clearer standards. It did a great job of somehow convincing supporters that it would create affordable housing.

What is **not said is that it dramatically revises** the Neighborhood Association Recognition Ordinance **with no Committee review or public input**. When the NARO was last revised alongside the adoption of the Integrated Development Ordinance, there was a lengthy, robust neighborhood engagement process. This re-write happened in 2 weeks, again, with no committee or public input. Other consequences not mentioned in conversations about **“Better Neighborhoods”** include:

- **Removal of recognition also removes notification.** During a project application, the Office of Neighborhood Coordination provides contact information for required NAs and Coalitions. The IDO Table 6-1-1: Summary of Development Review Procedures clearly defines who needs to receive what type of notification and/or meeting.
- **The decline in the number of NAs has been significant.** Because of O-26-61, thirteen westside and valley Neighborhood Associations may lose recognition and would have to remove their County residents (often just across the street) from their boundaries. And, according to the ONC, there are **155 additional “unrecognized” entities**: NAs, business/community groups, and HOA’s that receive notification thru their Coalition contacts.
- Making the contact information publicly available—instead of by request thru the ONC—is **effectively doxing volunteers** who do the extra hard work of disseminating information.
- Removing § 14-8-2-9 DEVELOPER RESPONSIBILITIES in its entirety topples the final domino of **requiring developers to act with diligence and good faith...** And clearly says what some Councilors think about their constituents...

Clearly the intent of O-26-61, along with O-26-60, M-26-1 and M-26-1, is to further marginalize neighborhood associations—completely out of existence—to placate private equity concerns.

The Mayor should veto O-26-61.