

Methods, sources, and verification

Excerpted verbatim from Coastal Opportunity and Housing Access in San Diego, San Diego Fair Housing Lab, August 2026.

Sources. U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Decennial Census and American Community Survey five-year estimates. California Department of Housing and Community Development, Opportunity Map and Neighborhood Change methodologies. California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, CalEnviroScreen 5.0. Housing production from the City of San Diego's Housing Element Annual Progress Report filings to the State, geocoded to census tract. San Diego Municipal Code sections 132.0401 through 132.0404, 132.0501 through 132.0505, and 132.1301 through 132.1306. City of San Diego Planning Department memorandum of July 15, 2022. San Diego Unified School District enrollment data.

Universe, and why two tract counts appear. Household measures cover the 311 census tracts within the City of San Diego that carry the household characteristics this report uses. Production rates use a wider denominator of 322 tracts, because production counts construction rather than households and a tract can build homes without meeting the household screen. Every geography here therefore carries two tract counts. Coastal San Diego is 60 tracts on the household universe and 62 on the production universe. The Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone is 51 and 53. Both numbers in each pair are correct, they are different instruments, and they are not meant to agree. Every figure names which one it uses.

Geographies, kept distinct. Three appear in this report and they are not the same. Community planning areas are the City's own neighborhood boundaries. The Coastal San Diego is a sixty-tract grouping created for this analysis and is not an official boundary. The Coastal Height Limit Overlay Zone is a City zoning geography defined in the Municipal Code. Every figure names which one it uses.

Production records, and how they were matched. Production comes from the City's Housing Element Annual Progress Report filings to the State, geocoded to census tract. Of the records in scope for the current cycle, 99.987 percent matched a tract. Two did not, and both are above-moderate-income accessory dwelling units roughly seven miles inland, outside every geography this report examines.

Permitted and completed. Production figures are permitted homes unless a figure says otherwise. Where completions appear, a home counts toward a cycle because the project's own permit was issued in that cycle, not because construction happened to finish inside the cycle window. Completions attributed to permits issued before 2018 fall outside this data's permit-tracking window and are reported as their own category rather than dropped.

Below the regional median. This is an income category defined by the State, not a synonym for deed-restricted affordable housing. The category is broader, and a home can fall inside it without carrying any restriction on its price or its term. Where a home named in this report is deed-restricted, the report says so.

Rates built on small counts. Where a rate rests on a single-digit number of homes, the count appears beside it. La Jolla's below-market production rate rests on seven homes, and a single ordinary project would move it substantially.

Figures for the year 2000. These are harmonized to current census tract boundaries and are fractional before rounding, so a percentage change will not always reproduce exactly from the rounded counts as displayed.

Dollar figures are nominal. No dollar figure in this report is adjusted for inflation. Ratios that divide one 2000 figure by another, such as the price-to-income multiple, are unaffected by that. Percentage changes in income, rent and home value between 2000 and the current period are nominal changes and should be read as such.

Margins of error. Changes reported here are tested against the Census Bureau's 90 percent margins of error, aggregated across constituent tracts as the root sum of squares. Where a change does not clear its own margin, this report says so and states what the data supports instead of the change. Two properties of those margins are worth stating plainly. The 2000 endpoint is Census 2000 SF3, the long-form sample, so it carries its own sampling error and every margin given here is a floor rather than a ceiling. And harmonizing 2000 figures to current tract boundaries introduces a further uncertainty that cannot be characterized from this data at all; its only knowable property is that it widens these intervals rather than narrowing them.

Verification. Every figure here was checked against the database independently of the writing, and no figure was checked by the same pass that produced it. Where a check found a figure that could not be reproduced, or a comparison whose basis was not stated, the correction was made at source and the figure re-derived before it appeared in this report.