

# Morning Report: Inside Faulconer's Plan to (Kinda) Axe Height Limits

[\*Voice of San Diego\*](#)

[December 6, 2019](#)



Mayor Kevin Faulconer delivers his 2019 State of the City address. / Photo by  
Adriana Heldiz

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Mayor Kevin Faulconer made waves this year when he pledged to eliminate height limits for new development near transit stations as part of a plan to attack the city's housing crisis.

He has now [unveiled the broad strokes of how he'd do that](#), and while the policy in practice isn't nearly as sweeping as his last State of the City speech suggested, it's also not likely to be quite as controversial.

The plan, which city planners outlined to a City Council committee Thursday, would let developers opt into a new program aimed at increasing development near transit stations, in exchange for certain community benefits.

Developers would need to commit to making 10 percent of the homes in their project reserved for low-income people, and another 10 percent for people with moderate incomes, while also agreeing to build some community-serving space as part of the project, like a plaza or pedestrianized walkway.

In exchange, the city would waive restrictions on building heights and the number of total homes they can build in the project. They'd still have restrictions on how many total square feet they could build, but they could make buildings theoretically as tall as they want, with as many homes as they could fit, within that square footage. They'd also get to required city fees by the square foot, rather than per home. The city hopes both changes would incentivize developers to build smaller, and therefore cheaper, apartments. They'd also get a faster and easier approval process for the project.

But developers wouldn't be able to build it near any transit station. Rather, it would only be available within a half-mile of stations with decent frequency, and

only on properties that are already zoned to allow multi-family development. Single-family neighborhoods would be exempt.

## **Sherman Is In (for Real, Apparently)**

Republican City Councilman Scott Sherman is officially running for mayor. The District 7 City Councilman who has [literally counted down the days](#) until he leaves office said he decided to jump into the race to put the spotlight on the need for increased homebuilding, reduced development regulations and fees and more effective solutions for homelessness.

“The conversation I would bring forward wouldn’t happen if I wasn’t in the race, so that’s one of the things that is compelling me to do this,” Sherman [told the Union-Tribune](#). “What I believe government should be needs to be discussed.”

It won’t be an easy battle for Sherman, the first major Republican to throw a hat in the ring.

Registered [Democrats dominate](#) in the city and Sherman’s decision to run comes just 90 days before the March primary.

Until now, Democratic Assemblyman Todd Gloria and Councilwoman Barbara Bry have been the front-runners in the race.

Sherman is hoping to shake things up.

“The other candidates have been campaigning for over a year, but the future of San Diego is too important,” Sherman wrote in a statement. “When the candidates running to fix the problems we face are the same people who created the problems, something needs to change. That’s why I’m running.”

## **Council Committee Approves Community Planning Group Reforms**

San Diego has been dinged by both an audit and a grand jury report on the policies governing its community planning groups, volunteer neighborhood boards that can weigh in on developments near them.

Now, a city task force has brought forward a set of proposals aimed at making them more representative of the neighborhoods they represent, more democratic in nature and more transparent and accountable.

The Council's land use and housing committee approved the reforms with some changes Thursday, teeing up a vote of the full Council next year.

Some of the changes include having CPG members file financial disclosures with the city, eliminating requirements some boards have imposed about the number of meetings one must attend before running for the board and including a distinct category for renters to be represented on the boards.

## **There's a Serious Problem in Bonita Vista High School's Band Department**

An assistant band teacher at Bonita Vista High School has pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a student, NBC 7 reports. This marks the second band teacher at the school to plead guilty to a crime involving sexual abuse of a student.

Earlier this year, we reported the story of how band teacher [Jason Mangan-Magabilin sexually groomed and abused](#) Gabriel Huerta when Huerta was a student at the school. Mangan-Magabilin pleaded guilty to two felony counts and was sentenced to a year in jail.

- In our latest San Diego Explained segment with NBC 7 San Diego, VOSD's Kayla Jimenez and NBC 7's Catherine Garcia describe the process to [report potential abuse](#) in public schools.

## **SDSU Gets \$15 Million for New Stadium**

San Diego State University officials announced Thursday that the university has received a \$15 million donation from philanthropist Dianne Bashor to help fund a multi-use stadium in Mission Valley.

“While she never attended San Diego State University, she is known for her generous community support and her gift reflects the close relationship between the San Diego community and San Diego State University,” SDSU President Adela de la Torre said of Bashor.

The total amount of money raised for the stadium is now close to \$30 million.

“This gift will be the lead gift to the construction of the multi-use stadium as well as academic facilities and laboratory space for over 15,000 new students that need and demand a seat in the CSU system,” said Adam Day, chairman of the CSU board of trustees.

Day said the donation would also lead to housing for students, faculty and staff, and the creation of thousands of jobs.

## **What to Know About the New International Test Data Results**

New international testing data revealing how U.S. students stack up against their counterparts around the world have inspired lots of headlines – and disappointment – this week.

In this week’s Learning Curve, Will Huntsberry [highlights a couple bright\(er\) spots](#) in the new data and notes that San Diego Unified is outperforming most other urban school districts in the nation on another test.

He also notes some two very big caveats on San Diego Unified’s comparative performance.

## **News Nibbles**

- Rep. Duncan Hunter isn't done. He voted three times in the House of Representatives Wednesday. Then he got a letter [telling him to stop](#). The House has a rule that a member of Congress can't vote until they are re-elected *after* being convicted of a crime like the one he pleaded guilty to this week. (Roll Call)
- A city plan to expand Miramar Landfill [took another step forward](#) this week. (Union-Tribune)
- At County Supervisor Jim Desmond's request, fellow supervisors next week will [consider tweaking](#) the language of a ballot measure that would require a public vote on large housing projects in unincorporated areas. (Union-Tribune)
- The future of the North Park's annual Toyland Parade, set for this weekend, [is unclear](#) after more than 50 years. (Union-Tribune)

*The Morning Report was written by Lisa Halverstadt and Andrew Keatts, and edited by Sara Libby.*