



# The San Diego Union-Tribune

SUNDAY

\$2.77  
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## OUTCRY GROWS OVER BUILDING GRANNY FLATS

City Council member proposes repealing some San Diego rules

BY DAVID GARRICK

Growing outcry over granny flat construction in some San Diego neighborhoods has prompted city officials to propose rolling back some recent policy changes that have made San Diego's rules among the least restrictive in California.

Critics who say the city's granny flat rules are too lenient are calling the recently proposed rollback from Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera a good start, but they say it won't prevent some property owners from destroying neighborhood character by building multiple

granny flats in one backyard.

Ardent proponents say that granny flats — which city officials call accessory dwelling units or ADUs — are the cheapest and fastest way to solve San Diego's housing crisis. They say Elo-Rivera's new proposal is an overreaction to a problem that isn't widespread and probably never will be.

People on both sides of the issue agree that how the city balances its incentives to build granny flats with its restrictions on them will likely affect the look and feel of many San Diego neighborhoods for decades to come.

Elo-Rivera is proposing a series of complex adjustments to city granny flat rules that aim to increase their availability to low-income tenants and to prevent

SEE GRANNY FLATS • A7

## STATE ZONING LAW CHANGE COULD ALTER S.D. SUBURBS

Senate Bill 9 allows lot with single-family home to be turned into up to four units

BY PHILLIP MOLNAR

A law recently signed by Gov. Gavin Newsom could potentially change what San Diego County has looked like for nearly a century.

About half of all housing in San Diego is traditional, single-family homes but the governor's action in mid-September could alter that. There are nearly 400,000 single-family lots in San Diego County that could be transformed into a property with up to four homes based on the law, according to University of California Berkeley research.

Senate Bill 9 allows a property owner to take their single-family property, split it in two and put up three additional homes.

This has the potential to change the look of many San Diego communities — from Chula Vista to Scripps Ranch — to much denser neighborhoods and provide much-needed housing.

The bill's author, Senate President Pro Tempore Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, is confident the legislation will create housing in the state, which has faced severe shortages and skyrocketing prices.

Some housing analysts caution it might not be as impactful as people think. The law assumes a homeowner wants to split their lot, which might require a demolition of their home and a lot of money to build new structures.

It's hard to predict how homeowners will react, but Nathan

Moeder, principal with San Diego real estate analysts London Moeder Advisors, said the new law is unlikely to put a noticeable dent in housing supply. The biggest reason? The law requires a homeowner to make the changes, not a developer, making it unlikely your average San Diegan is ready to spend half a million dollars — or likely more — to split a lot and build new housing.

Many homeowners across San Diego County, many of whom have owned single-family homes for decades, are furious that their neighborhoods could be jammed up with a bunch of new housing. Some critics have called it “the death of the suburbs.”

SEE ZONING • A6



JARROD VALLIERE U-T

Gov. Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 9, which allows more units to be built on single-family lots. Meanwhile, the outcry over granny flat construction is increasing.

## MOTHER, 2-YEAR-OLD DIE AFTER FALL AT PETCO PARK

Police investigating incident have not yet determined whether it was an accident

BY LORI WEISBERG & GARY ROBBINS

A woman and her 2-year-old son died late Saturday afternoon after they fell from the third level of Petco Park, just as thousands of baseball fans were heading inside for a Padres game, San Diego police said.

The woman, 40, and the boy were pronounced dead at 4:11 p.m., about 20 minutes after police were alerted to the incident, said homicide Lt. Andra Brown.

The pair fell from the third level concourse — the equivalent of six stories high — to Tony Gwynn Drive below, Brown said. While efforts were made to resuscitate the woman and child, it quickly became apparent that neither had survived the fall, she said.

Their names were not released; both lived in San Diego. Police said the child's father was at the ballpark when the deaths occurred.

Police said it remained unclear if the fall was accidental or intentional.

Brown said investigators understand that there may have been a number of people in the concourse area who might have more information, which, she said, could potentially “give the family some peace.”

“Our hearts obviously go out to the family, but also to the people who here could potentially be traumatized who saw this,” Brown said. “It's a horrible, horrible thing. That's why we're giving it a very serious look.”

The incident horrified fans

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NELVIN C. CEPEDA U-T

Sandra Mendoza (center) and Elizabeth Castro (left) canvass a Spring Valley park offering information and distributing bags filled with various items from spare batteries to hand sanitizer.

## TESTIMONY DISCLOSES WHAT CITY WASN'T TOLD ABOUT DEAL

Exec acknowledges Ash St. transaction involved millions in payments to individuals

BY JEFF MCDONALD

Five years ago next month, as San Diego's elected officials considered leasing the former Semptra Energy headquarters at 101 Ash St., then-Councilmember Todd Gloria asked the city's top real estate expert why they weren't buying the property outright.

The Real Estate Assets Director at the time, Cybele Thompson, said the timing of the deal made a direct purchase all but impossible. She then invited Jason Wood of Cisterra Development, the city's would-be landlord in the complicated deal, to explain further.

“Cisterra can maintain the rent presented to you today, if approved today,

### U-T WATCHDOG

despite the rising interest rates, and this structure affords the city a win-win,” Wood told the council, reading from a prepared statement as he answered Gloria's question.

“Everything is lined up for this to become a reality, and any delay or attempt to renegotiate could seriously jeopardize that transaction and the savings that the city would secure,” he said.

That explanation satisfied Gloria, who quickly made a motion to approve the contract.

But according to hours of sworn testimony the Cisterra executive gave in a deposition on Sept. 14, Wood did not disclose many facts about the Ash Street transaction when he addressed the City Council in 2016.

Some of the details Wood acknowl-

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## SAN DIEGO VACCINATION RATES RISE AMONG LATINOS

Community groups have made concerted effort to inform residents and curb COVID-19 infections

BY DEBORAH SULLIVAN BRENNAN & ANDREA LOPEZ-VILLAFANA

About six months ago, San Diego's health and community advocates were sounding alarms over soaring rates of coronavirus infections in largely Latino neighborhoods, especially in South County.

Hoping to stem the spread of COVID-19, officials and community groups dispatched neighborhood representatives door-to-door to educate residents about wearing masks, testing, and finally, vaccines.

Now there are signs that their efforts are working. Vaccination


rates show Latinos in San Diego County are over-represented among people fully vaccinated against COVID-19 compared to most racial or ethnic groups.

About 68 percent of Latinos in the eligible age groups were fully vaccinated as of last week, county statistics show, compared with about 66 percent of Asians, 59 percent of White residents and 42 percent of Black San Diegans.

That's a reversal from earlier this year when COVID-19 shots were first rolled out. Last March, Latinos made up nearly half of the county's residents who were sickened by the novel coronavirus, but

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### SUNDAY UNION-TRIBUNE INDEX

Books **E6**  
College scores **D9**  
From the Archives **B2**

Lottery **A2**  
Markets **C4**  
Television **E14**

Travel **E15**  
Weather **A22**  
Wheels **D11**

In Local:  
Editorials  
Obituaries

In Marketplace:  
Crossword  
Dear Abby

