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DIVISION OF CODES AND STANDARDS
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AB 529 ADAPTIVE REUSE WORKING GROUP
REQUEST FOR INFORMATION TEMPLATE GUIDELINE

The following guideline is intended to facilitate stakeholder feedback to HCD's Request for Information (RFI) on adaptive reuse. In order to ensure feedback can be organized and accurately reflected in HCD's findings, please fill out a separate form for each individual recommendation that you are proposing. Responses are due by *5:00 pm PST on December 5, 2024*.

Respondent Information

Providing the following personal information is voluntary and you may leave these sections blank if you would like to remain anonymous. While the name of an organization, entity, or agency may become part of the public record and be included with the published responses to this RFI, please note that the personal information (name, email contact information) of individuals (i.e., natural persons) will not be disclosed or published with the responses and will not become part of the public record, except as authorized or required by law. However, you have the option of consenting to HCD disclosing and/or publishing your name when posting your response/comment as indicated below. If you would like to be added to HCD's list of interested stakeholders who may be contacted as this development process pertaining to the identification of challenges and opportunities for adaptive reuse within the scope of AB 529 continues and progresses, please also indicate your preference in the section below.

Name	Scott Terrell
Organization/Entity/Agency or Affiliation	AIA California
Public Email Contact Information	Scott Terrell <sterrell@aiacalifornia.org>
Add to Contact List	☒ Yes or ☐ No

☒ (OPTIONAL) I consent to HCD disclosing and/or publishing my name when posting my response/comment to this RFI.

Please provide Areas of Interest in Adaptive Reuse Report/Development Process:

General area AIACA interest in Adaptive Reuse Report/Development Process
- Provide information on issues related to the architectural design of adaptive reuse projects
- Gather key feasibility analysis data, approaches, techniques, and analysis that can be shared with our 11,000 design professional members
- Provide subject matter expertise and information regarding health, safety, and welfare issues related to the built environment

Response

Assembly Bill 529 includes specific issue areas that the working group may consider. Which of these does this specific response fall into? Please select a response from the following Area of Interest:

- ☐ 1. Energy and Insulation Upgrades
- ☐ 2. Fire-rated Assemblies
- ☐ 3. Water and Sewer Piping
- ☐ 4. Energy infrastructure, including individual utility meter upgrades
- ☐ 5. Habitability
- ☒ 6. Any other local or state building requirement that may render the conversion or reuse of an existing building financially infeasible for residential uses

What are the opportunities that help support adaptive reuse related to the topic selected above?

Adaptive reuse of commercial buildings for new residential use always requires some level of risk equivalency assessment. The roughly 500 local building departments across California are not all equipped to make these case by case assessments, and inconsistency across the state in how these issues are handled increases cost, reduces project feasibility and reduces development interest from qualified parties statewide. Expertise developed in a project type in one jurisdiction, cannot be reliably transferred to another jurisdiction, even if in the same geographical area.

What are the challenges to adaptive reuse related to the topic selected above?

California, as a home rule state, permits each of the 500 plus building officials to interpret and apply the code individually. There are no mechanisms to have a 'state wide' code interpretation made that are functional.

When local risk evaluations are made to support adaptive reuse of commercial to residential projects, these determinations are typically not made available for review or research, so the development community statewide cannot benefit from advances that may occur in a single jurisdiction. This compartmentalization of review, interpretation and application of code alternative means and methods results in a lack of transfer of knowledge among code officials as well as the broader landscape of stakeholders in the development of adaptive reuse housing in California. This in turn increases uncertainty and timelines, and reduces

Proposal

If you are proposing - specific amendments to the building standards, or other related health and safety standards, please fill out the boxes below.

Suggested Amendments or Description

The building code in California should have a simple and clear mechanism for appeals and code interpretations, which should be published, indexed and maintained as an online reference resource available to design professionals.

This could be accomplished by simply modifying the current provisions for code appeals - which is not a functional or helpful process currently as evidenced by the fact the appeals process has been used only 'one or twice' in the last decade according to the CBSC. A working interpretation and appeals process would result in an online database of researched determinations, such as that produced and maintained by the State Fire Marshall's office. There are state level resources for the building code in other jurisdictions such as Oregon that have been effective in reducing risk and uncertainty, which is

Rationale for Proposal

California faces a severe housing shortage, and building codes are among those factors which have driven up housing cost leaving many residents struggling. Variations between different jurisdictions is a significant contributor to the negative impacts on adaptive reuse, as the many code interpretations these projects typically require are very localized at present, with no state level voice or opinion.

Simultaneously, many urban areas across the state have seen a decline in the utilization of office, retail and other buildings due to shifts in use and work patterns. To address these

Economic Impact of Proposal

Describe if and how this proposal will impact any of the following:

Will this proposal impact housing costs?

YES

If yes:

Describe the annual cost for each housing unit:

This proposal would reduce housing cost by creating greater clarity and certainty, which is particularly important for adaptive reuse conversion of commercial building to residential.

Will this proposal impact businesses and / or employees?

YES

If yes:

How many businesses would be impacted?

Hundreds to thousands statewide of business could benefit from the increased economic and development activity associated with this proposal, with particular

Describe the types of businesses impacted.

All businesses associated with the building industry would benefit from increased adaptive reuse activity.

What would be the initial and annual ongoing costs to businesses impacted?

Businesses impacted would have lowered costs due to reduced uncertainty, lowered barriers to development, and faster approvals that occur when requirements are more clear at the start of a the project delivery process rather than late in the process

Would this proposal impact small businesses?

YES

If yes:

How many small businesses would be impacted?

Hundreds to thousands statewide

What would be the initial and annual ongoing costs to businesses?

Lowered costs for businesses involved in project delivery for adaptive reuse housing projects.

Will this proposal have an impact on jobs or occupations?

YES

If yes:

How many jobs will be created?

Hundreds to thousands statewide

How many jobs will be eliminated?

None

Describe the types of jobs or occupations impacted.

Jobs throughout the building industry, design and engineering professions, development, and vendors and producers of materials and systems used to create

Would this proposal affect the ability of California businesses to compete with other states?

YES

If yes, please explain briefly.

This proposal would increase the density of residents in urban areas where converted buildings were located, increasing California businesses' ability to compete with other states. Due to convenience, speed, and proximity, local California retail/sales businesses near residents would compete more successfully with online and other remote service businesses. Businesses such as restaurants, lounges, and local entertainment would directly benefit from the increased number of nearby customers.
Increased local jobs and services will decrease commuting costs and pollution since residents can live near office jobs. Owners of nearby commercial buildings such as

Will this proposal have an impact on individuals?

NO

If yes, please indicate initial and annual ongoing costs to individuals below.

Economic Benefit of Suggested Amendments

Describe the benefits of the suggested amendments to building standards, including but not limited to, the health and welfare of California residents and the environment, the total annual statewide benefit in dollars, and any expansion of businesses.

The costs associated with implementing a workable and responsive state level code appeals and interpretation mechanism could range from minor rearrangement of existing responsibility and resources to a major implementation requiring new staffing. This requested change does not anticipate significant expense; and also envisions that costs would be 'self funded' by those using the process.

The benefits would accrue to the entire state due to the published results. Having a searchable directory of code interpretations at the state level would reduce uncertainty in the critical early stages when project feasibility is being determined. It would also reduce the burden on