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SB 684 - New Streamlined Approval Process for Residential Projects on Small Urban Lots

SB 684 requires a local agency to ministerially approve, without discretionary review or a hearing, a parcel map or a tentative and final map for a housing development project that consists of 10 or fewer single-family residential units, meets certain minimum parcel size and density requirements, is located on a lot zoned for multifamily or single-family residential development that is no larger than five acres and is substantially surrounded by qualified urban uses, and meets other qualifying criteria. Housing development projects on qualifying sites are not required to comply with minimum requirements on the size, width, depth, or dimensions of an individual parcel created by the development beyond a 600-foot minimum parcel size and are exempt from the requirement to form a homeowners' association, except as required by the Davis-Stirling Common Interest Development Act.

Under SB 684, a local government must also approve, on a ministerial basis, an application for a housing development project on a lot subdivided by this law and issue a building permit on a ministerial basis, unless the project would have an adverse impact on health and safety.

This bill is intended to make it faster and easier to build homes on smaller lots so they are naturally lower cost under a CEQA-exempt approval process. Local agencies may adopt an ordinance to implement the provisions of SB 684 and that action will also not be considered a project under CEQA. While the operative provisions of the law do not take effect until July 2024, local agencies should be prepared to determine whether a potential site qualifies to make use of the statute's ministerial approval process.