

HOUSING, CITIES & POLICY

EXCERPTS FROM INTERVIEW WITH
SEAN BURTON, CEO, CITYVIEW
BY **RICHARD GREEN** OF
USC LUSK CENTER FOR REAL ESTATE – JAN 13, 2026

WHO IS SEAN BURTON?



CEO & Co-Founder,
CityView



Former White
House staffer



NYU Law School
graduate



Former Warner
Bros. corporate
strategy executive



20+ years in urban
housing
development

CITYVIEW OVERVIEW



Founded in
2003



Focus: Urban
infill housing



20,000+ homes
delivered



Over \$6 billion
invested

ORIGINAL INVESTMENT THESIS

Cities would re-emerge as desirable places to live

Demand driven by jobs, culture, transit, lifestyle

Chronic undersupply of urban housing

Infill housing as long-term opportunity

CITIES BEFORE & AFTER COVID

1

COVID significantly disrupted urban cores

2

Population losses in NYC, SF, LA, Chicago

3

Recovery underway where:

- Offices reopened
- Public safety improved
- Economic activity returned

4

Cities remain resilient long-term

WHY AI MATTERS TO CALIFORNIA

AI-related capital expenditures in the U.S. for 2025 exceeded **\$405 billion**, significantly above earlier estimates of about **\$250 billion**

Over 75% of venture capital investments in the country are for projects based in California

IS AI A BUBBLE?



AI INVESTMENT
INCLUDES HYPE AND
RISK



STRUCTURAL
TECHNOLOGICAL SHIFT
IS REAL



SIMILAR TO LATE 1990S
TECH CYCLE



LONG-TERM INVESTORS
FOCUS ON
FUNDAMENTALS, NOT
TIMING

PREFERRED MARKETS



San Diego – tech,
biotech, defense
growth



Orange County –
stable, constrained
supply



**Select LA County
cities** – Gardena,
Culver City, Pasadena



Cautious on LA City
due to policy risk

LA'S HOUSING CRISIS

Required:
~57,000
units/year

Actual permits
dramatically
lower

Rents rising due
to lack of supply

Housing costs
driving
residents &
employers away

MEASURE ULA (MANSION TAX)



~8% value hit to projects



LA's RHNA Target:

~ 57,000 units/year **to stay** at equilibrium (not to improve)

Housing Permits issued in LA

- Post-ULA (2024)
~7,700 units
- First 9 months of 2025
~3,000 units



Effectively shuts down new housing development



Capital fleeing LA City

INVESTOR REACTION

Global capital has many alternatives

Investors seek predictability

Housing supply further constrained

LA seen as high political risk

RENT CAPS & POLITICAL RISK



ADDITIONAL RENT CONTROL
MEASURES COMPOUND RISK



PERCEPTION OF UNSTABLE
POLICY ENVIRONMENT IS
REINFORCED



INVESTORS NOT
COMPENSATED FOR
REGULATORY UNCERTAINTY

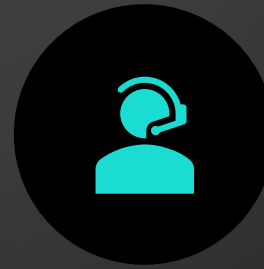
PERMITTING CHALLENGES IN LA



LONG, UNPREDICTABLE
APPROVAL TIMELINES



UNDERSTAFFED
DEPARTMENTS

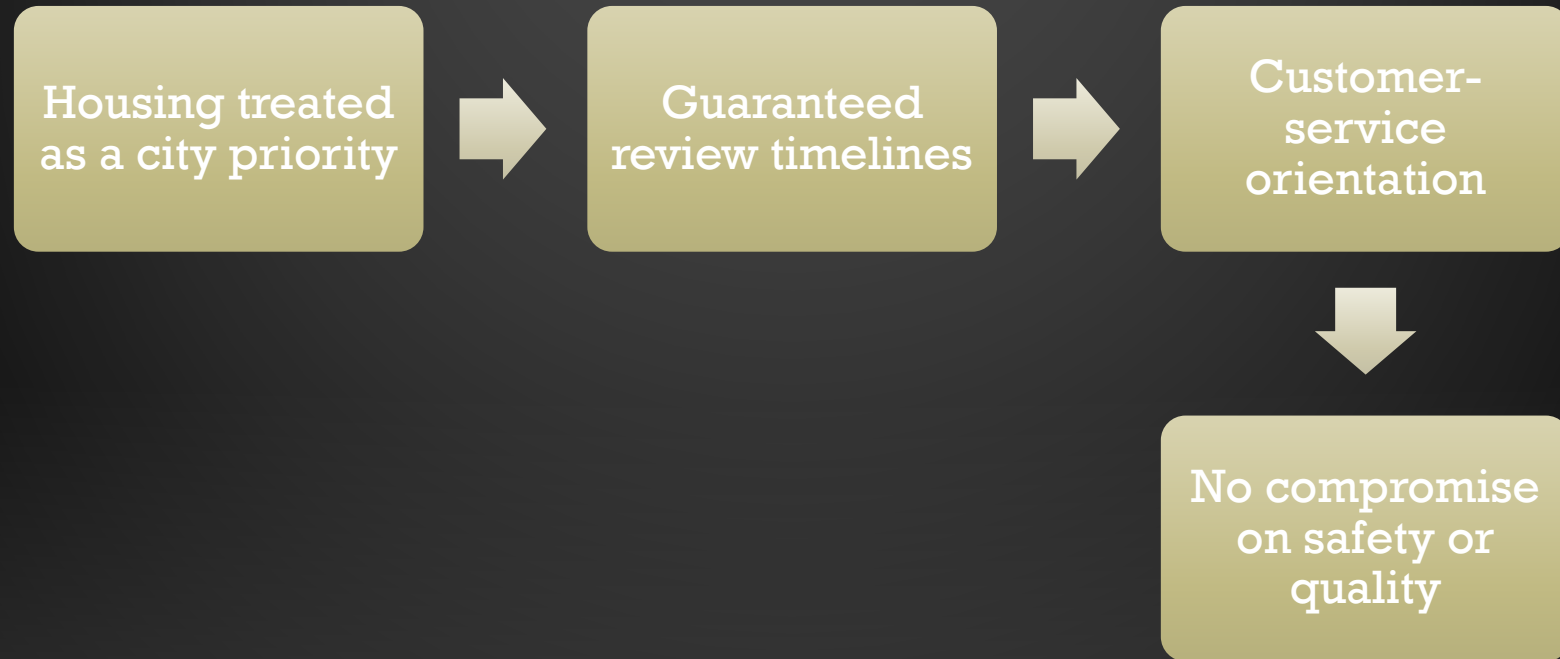


REMOTE WORK SLOWS
COORDINATION



CONTRAST: SAN
DIEGO'S "COMPLETE
COMMUNITIES" MODEL

BEST PRACTICES: SAN DIEGO MODEL



WHY THIS MATTERS

- Housing supply underpins economic growth
- Policy reform can unlock development
- Cities thrive when people can afford to live near jobs
- **Key Takeaway: Major Developers view long-term housing supply, predictable policy, and smart urban development as essential elements for the future of California's cities.**