

AB 893 Synopsis and Proposed Options

AB 893 Synopsis – Updated Plain English with Your Vision

Purpose:

- AB 893 is designed to make it easier and faster to build housing near colleges and universities in California.
- It creates “Campus Development Zones” (CDZs) — areas near colleges where housing projects get streamlined approval if they meet certain objective standards (like height, density, and design).
- The focus is off-campus housing, including affordable units for students and potentially faculty or staff. It is not limited to dorms.

Key Features

1. Streamlined Approval

- Developers or schools who follow the objective rules can’t be blocked or delayed by local governments.
- Cities must act quickly (60 days for smaller projects, 90 days for larger ones), or the project is automatically approved.

2. Housing Types

- Apartments, condos, townhomes, or mixed-use buildings.
- Focused on individual units, not shared kitchens (except possibly as part of Culinary Arts programs).
- Units can be for students, faculty, or staff.

3. Affordability Requirements

- Certain units must be set aside for low-income or very low-income students, faculty, or staff, ensuring the housing benefits those who need it most.

4. Campus Development Zones (CDZs)

- CDZs are designated areas near colleges/universities where housing projects have priority under the law.
- Other projects can still be built in the zone, but housing gets special, streamlined treatment.
- Height, density, and objective design rules apply.

Creative & Practical Possibilities

1. Student and Faculty Housing Communities

- Apartments or townhomes with individual living units (not shared kitchens).
- Could include private study spaces, patios, or balconies to enhance independent living.

2. Living Labs / Edible Gardens / Research Spaces

- Land could be used for hands-on learning (permaculture, sustainability, research projects).
- Students could live nearby and directly engage in these labs.
- Open space or preserved land can coexist with housing.

3. Integration With Support Programs

- Pair with College-Focused Rapid Rehousing to prioritize students experiencing homelessness.
- Adult students could have a McKinney-Vento liaison, helping them connect to:
 - Housing resources
 - Shelter programs
 - Rental assistance or subsidies
 - Wraparound support services (case management, tutoring, counseling)

4. Protections & Advocacy

- Local and state policies could ensure shelters or housing partners cannot discriminate against adult students or block them from accessing these resources.
- Could advocate for state law changes requiring shelters and housing providers to accommodate college students experiencing homelessness, if implemented statewide.

5. Mixed-Use Development Opportunities

- Housing + living labs + faculty units + open space can exist in the same CDZ.
- Other campus-supportive uses (like community gardens, outdoor classrooms, or research centers) could be integrated without impacting housing approval.

Bottom Line

- AB 893 gives colleges, developers, and local governments a legal pathway to expand housing quickly and efficiently.
- It allows for innovative, mixed-use communities, not just dorms:
 - Independent student apartments
 - Faculty or staff housing
 - Living labs and research spaces
 - Integration with programs supporting homeless and housing-insecure students
- Your vision could leverage AB 893 while extending McKinney-Vento protections for adult students, ensuring safe access to housing and resources with proper advocacy and liaison support.