

Housing Corridor Overlay Frequently Asked Questions:

Who came up with this idea?

The Housing Corridor Overlay owes its origin to the research and Community input that occurred with the City's 2021 Strategic Plan Update. The update process began in 2018 with data gathered from statistically valid phone surveys of the residential and business communities; a professionally prepared Community Profile; and Community focus groups with a range of interest groups.

The Strategic Plan Committee reviewed all the input and data and was responsible for updating strategic priorities and goals and sub-goals to reflect the data and community input. The Committee decided that housing was such an important issue for Torrance that they created a new Strategic Priority with associated goals and subgoals to address housing. The updated Strategic Plan was accepted by the City Council in May of 2021.

The Housing Corridor Overlay was developed in conjunction with the City's 6th Cycle Housing Element Update which was adopted by the City Council in June of 2022. The Overlay was identified as one of the tasks that the City is required to complete by October 2024 in order to remain in Compliance with the State of California Department of Housing and Community Development.

Is Development Proposed at this time?

No, the Housing Corridor Overlay is an additional layer above existing Zoning which allows property owners of industrial and commercial property the ability to develop residential uses. This implements a Program identified in the recent 6th Cycle Housing Element Update and will help the City to address the Housing Crisis in California. Existing Zoning remains in place and existing uses can continue to operate. If an owner chooses to move forward with residential or mixed-use development, then development may occur on some of the parcels within the Overlay.

Will this allow emergency housing shelters in the corridor areas?

No, Emergency Housing Shelters are not the focus of the Housing Corridor Overlay. They are not listed as an allowable use in the Overlay. There is already a Code Section dealing with Emergency Housing in the City's Municipal Code.

Are you changing the Zoning of my home?

No, the Zoning on R1 properties will not change and no overlay is proposed on property Zoned R1. The underlying commercial and industrial Zoning of the properties in the Overlay will remain and properties may be developed or used in accordance with the underlying Zoning or (optional) HCO.

How were the Overlay Areas selected?

The Overlay Areas were recommended through a review of prior approved planning documents such as the 2009 General Plan and the 5th Cycle Housing Element. Several of the areas have been under study for many years. Other areas were chosen based on input from the public and property owners. Staff also proposed areas that have been vacant or under-utilized for many years. Staff included sites that were distributed throughout the City. These sites as well as alternates were reviewed by the Planning Commission in July 2021.

Is the City Purchasing Land/Using Eminent Domain to Purchase property and develop housing? Is the City evicting tenants or businesses from properties?

No, the Housing Corridor Overlay provides the property owner of certain commercial or industrially zoned property with another option for the development of their property. The City is not purchasing properties or asking existing tenants to leave.

I was not aware of this, how have you notified the public?

The Public Engagement for these efforts included providing notice in a number of ways. The City published display ads in the Daily Breeze newspaper and on Social Media, Citi Cable, the City's Digital Signs, and on COVID-19 Today. Notices were posted on the City's Housing Element and Corridor Study Websites, and the City Council announced the upcoming workshops/meetings at City Council meetings during orals. The City also distributed workshop flyers using mailing lists of interested residents, stakeholders, developers, community groups, faith-based organizations, housing groups and sponsors, HOA's, social service agencies, and others, including those who specifically requested to be notified of housing-related meetings. Outreach also included mailed notices to owners of properties within the study area and property owners within 500 feet of the study area. Email addresses were also collected from interested participants so that emailed notices could be shared.

Why is the City implementing this?

The City has prepared the Housing Corridor Overlay for several reasons. The State of California is in a housing crisis. As such there are many laws coming from the State Legislature which promote housing construction but also limit local control of development decisions. Updating the Zoning in this manner, the City retains greater control of how development occurs in the future.

What are the benefits of this approach?

The Housing Corridor Overlay allows the City to retain as much local control of development decisions as possible. It gives property owners another option for the use of their property. It can streamline housing production to help alleviate the state housing crisis. It also encourages growth in areas that are in transition and support the revitalization of downtown. It can also help provide a range of housing types and affordability levels and place housing near places of employment which can help reduce vehicle trips.