



NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP)

To: California State Clearinghouse
Office of Planning and Research
1400 10th Street #12
Sacramento, CA. 95814

From: City of Torrance
3031 Torrance Boulevard
Torrance, CA. 90503
310-618-5990

The City of Torrance will be the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will prepare an Initial Study (IS) and anticipates preparing a Negative Declaration (ND) / Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the project identified below.

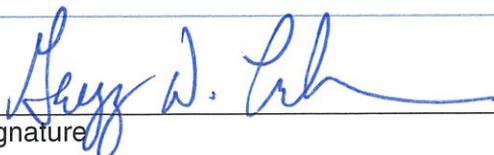
We need to know the views of your agency / organization as to the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The project description and related figures are attached. Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Mr. Gregg Lodan, City of Torrance Planning Manager at the address shown above. Please also include a name, address, email address and phone number for a contact person in your agency or organization.

Project Title:	City of Torrance General Plan Housing Element Update (6 th Cycle Update)
Project Applicant:	City of Torrance

April 29, 2021
Date



Signature

Planning Manager

Title

1-310-618-5990

Telephone

Draft CEQA Project Description

City of Torrance 6th Cycle Housing Element

The City of Torrance is currently updating its 6th Cycle Housing Element of the General Plan, which will cover the eight-year planning period from October 2021 – October 2029. Local governments across California are required by State Housing Element law to adequately plan to meet their share of the State's overall housing need. The Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) is the State department that is responsible for administering Housing Element Law and for identifying the State's overall housing need. To adequately plan for their share of the State's housing need, local governments adopt Housing Elements as part of their General Plans. Housing Elements provide goals, policies, and programs to create opportunities for housing development. The community is invited and encouraged to participate in the planning process.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Compliance

CEQA contains a Statutory Exemption associated with the Regional Housing Needs Allowance (RHNA):

CEQA Guidelines §15283: Housing Needs Allocation. CEQA does not apply to regional housing needs determinations made by the Department of Housing and Community Development, a council of governments, or a city or county pursuant to Section 65584 of the Government Code.

The City will prepare an Initial Study (IS) and anticipates the preparation of a Negative Declaration (ND) or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) to support CEQA compliance for the Proposed Project (i.e., adoption of an updated General Plan Housing Element).

The Project to be evaluated in the Initial Study includes the following components: 1) Adoption of the 6th Cycle 2021-2029 General Plan Housing Element; and 2) Adoption of revisions to the General Plan (GP) Land Use Element text and General Plan Land Use Map.

The Project Description for CEQA compliance purposes focuses on the adoption of the Housing Element Update, and related long-range housing policies and identification of programmatic implementation actions, and is not intended to provide construction-level CEQA compliance for any future subsequent related implementation actions or zoning changes by the City or others.

What is a Housing Element?

Since 1969, California has required that all local governments adequately plan to meet the housing needs of everyone in the community. The Housing Element is a State-mandated policy document within the General Plan that guides the implementation of various programs to meet future housing needs for residents of all income levels. The housing needs are determined through the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA). The Housing Element of the General Plan identifies available land that is suitable for potential future housing development, as well goals, policies, and programs to accommodate the City's housing need, provide opportunities for new housing, and preserve the existing housing stock.

Additional Information

For more information about the CEQA process and/or the Housing Element Update please contact Gregg Lodan, Planning Manager at CDDinfo@TorranceCA.gov or by phone at 1.310.618-5990.

Why update the Housing Element?

California Housing Element law requires that local jurisdictions update the Housing Element every eight years. These frequent updates are required because housing is critical to ensure economic prosperity and quality of life throughout the State. The update also helps to ensure that jurisdictions are responding to their residents' changing needs. The revised Housing Element must be adopted by the Torrance City Council and submitted to HCD by October 15, 2021, although there is a 120-day grace period. Housing Elements must be certified (approved) by HCD as complying with State law. Jurisdictions that are not in compliance with Housing Element law could lose eligibility for significant sources of funding currently provided by the State and the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Noncomplying jurisdictions also run the risk of being sued by the State Attorney General.

What is included in a Housing Element?

Key components of the Housing Element include:

- A demographic profile and analysis of population growth and trends in the community;
- Identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs for all economic segments of the community;
- Identification of adequate sites that are zoned and available within the 8-year housing cycle to meet the city's fair share of regional housing needs at all income levels, as prescribed by the RHNA;
- An evaluation of local constraints or barriers to housing development as well as opportunities to develop housing; and
- Housing goals, policies, quantified objectives and scheduled programs to preserve, improve and develop housing within the City.

Because the Housing Element is updated every eight years, the current 5th Cycle (2013–2021) Housing Element provides a foundation for this update.

What is the RHNA?

RHNA stands for Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Every eight years, "housing need"—both the total number of units and the distribution of those units by affordability levels—is determined by the State of California Housing and Community Development (HCD) for the entire State. HCD then distributes this housing needs assessment to each regional planning body in California; this housing needs assessment is the amount of housing that must be planned for by each region. Torrance is located in the six-county¹ region administered by SCAG, which is the regional planning body for our area. SCAG takes the number of housing units it receives from the State housing needs assessment and allocates it to all jurisdictions in its planning area, including Torrance. This allocation is the RHNA. To comply with State law, each jurisdiction's Housing Element must be updated to ensure its policies and programs can accommodate its share of the number of housing units identified by the State. For the 6th Cycle Housing Element update, the City's share of the RHNA is 4,939 units, divided among a range of income or affordability levels (based on Area Median Income, or AMI), as shown in Table 1 below.

¹ Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, Ventura, and Imperial

Table 1: RHNA for Torrance 6th Cycle

Income Category/Affordability Level*	Number of Units	Percent of Total Units
Very Low Income (0-50% of AMI)	1,621	33%
Low Income (50-80% of AMI)	846	17%
Moderate Income (80-120% of AMI)	853	17%
Above Moderate Income (More than 120% of AMI)	1,619	33%
TOTAL UNITS	4,939	100%

**Income/affordability categories are grouped into the four categories shown in the table above; average median income (AMI) is the average household income for each Metropolitan Statistical Area. The AMI for Los Angeles County is currently \$77,300.*

Does the RHNA require jurisdictions to build housing?

Through the Housing Element update process, the City must show that it has the regulatory and land use policies to accommodate its assigned RHNA. Local governments are not required to build the housing—the actual development of housing is typically done by for-profit and non-profit developers. However, the Housing Element is required to demonstrate potential sites where housing can be accommodated to meet all the income levels of a jurisdiction's RHNA. Identification of a site's capacity does not guarantee that construction will occur on that site. If there are insufficient sites and capacity to meet the RHNA allocation, the Housing Element is required to identify a rezoning program to accommodate the required capacity. If the City does not identify capacity for its RHNA allocation, the City could be deemed out of compliance and risk losing important sources of funding currently provided by the State as well as facing legal challenges.

How is the Housing Element implemented?

The Housing Element sets goals, objectives, policies, and programs that are implemented after the plan is adopted by the City. When a new housing program, project, or idea is considered, the Housing Element provides guidance for decision-makers to evaluate the proposal.

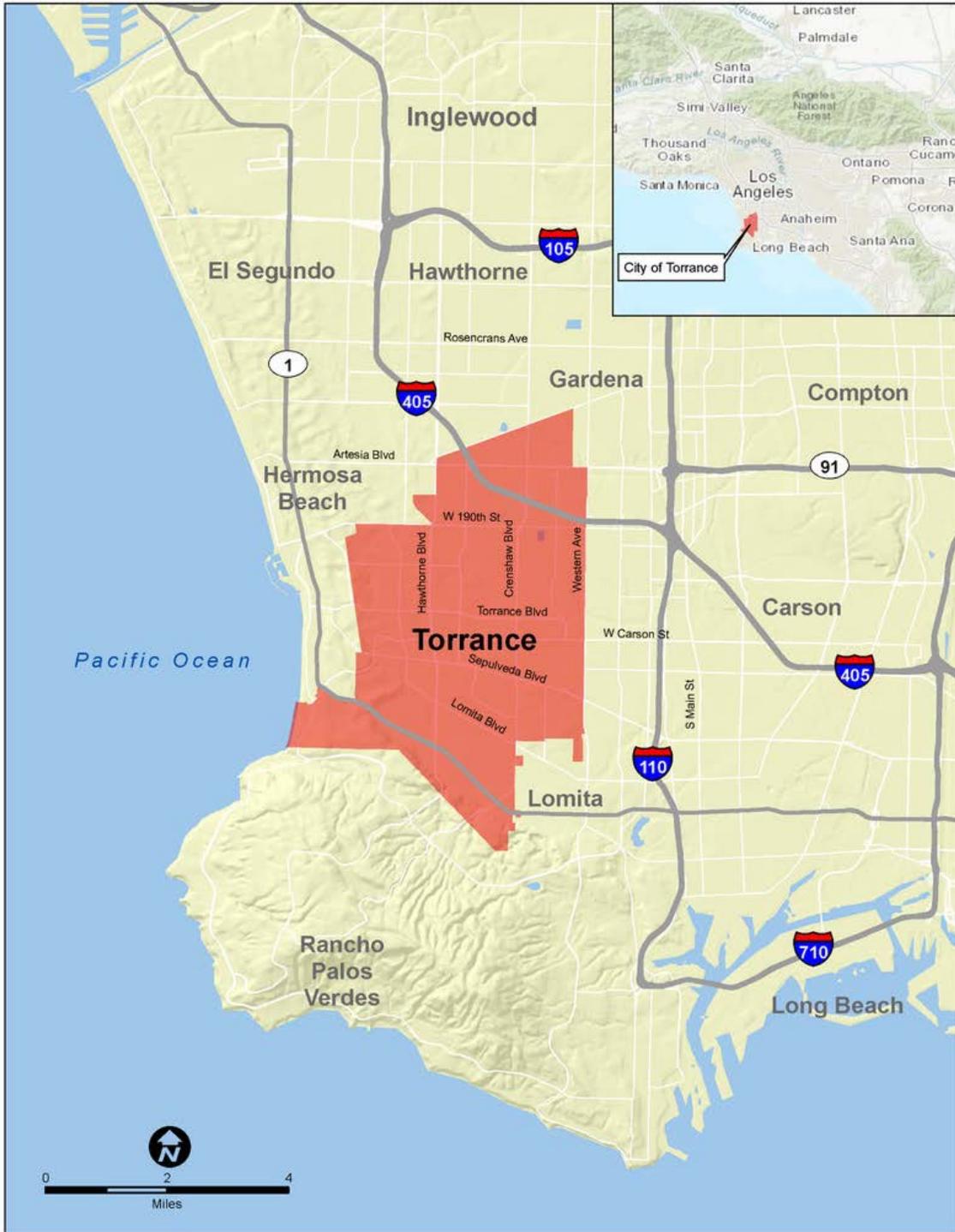
What is the relationship to other Elements of the General Plan?

The Housing Element must remain consistent with the other elements of the General Plan. This may require amendments to certain elements, most often the Land Use Element of the City's General Plan.

Public Review and Comment

Public outreach for the CEQA document (beyond the required CEQA public notices) will be integrated with public outreach efforts on the Housing Element Update. The City plans to hold multiple public workshops to provide information on the Housing Element Update and receive public comments. As of the date of this NOP, the public workshops are anticipated to be held virtually. The public meeting dates have not been determined yet, so please check the City website (link below) for the dates and for links to join the meetings virtually www.TorranceCA.Gov/HousingElementUpdate

Figure 1 – Project Vicinity Map



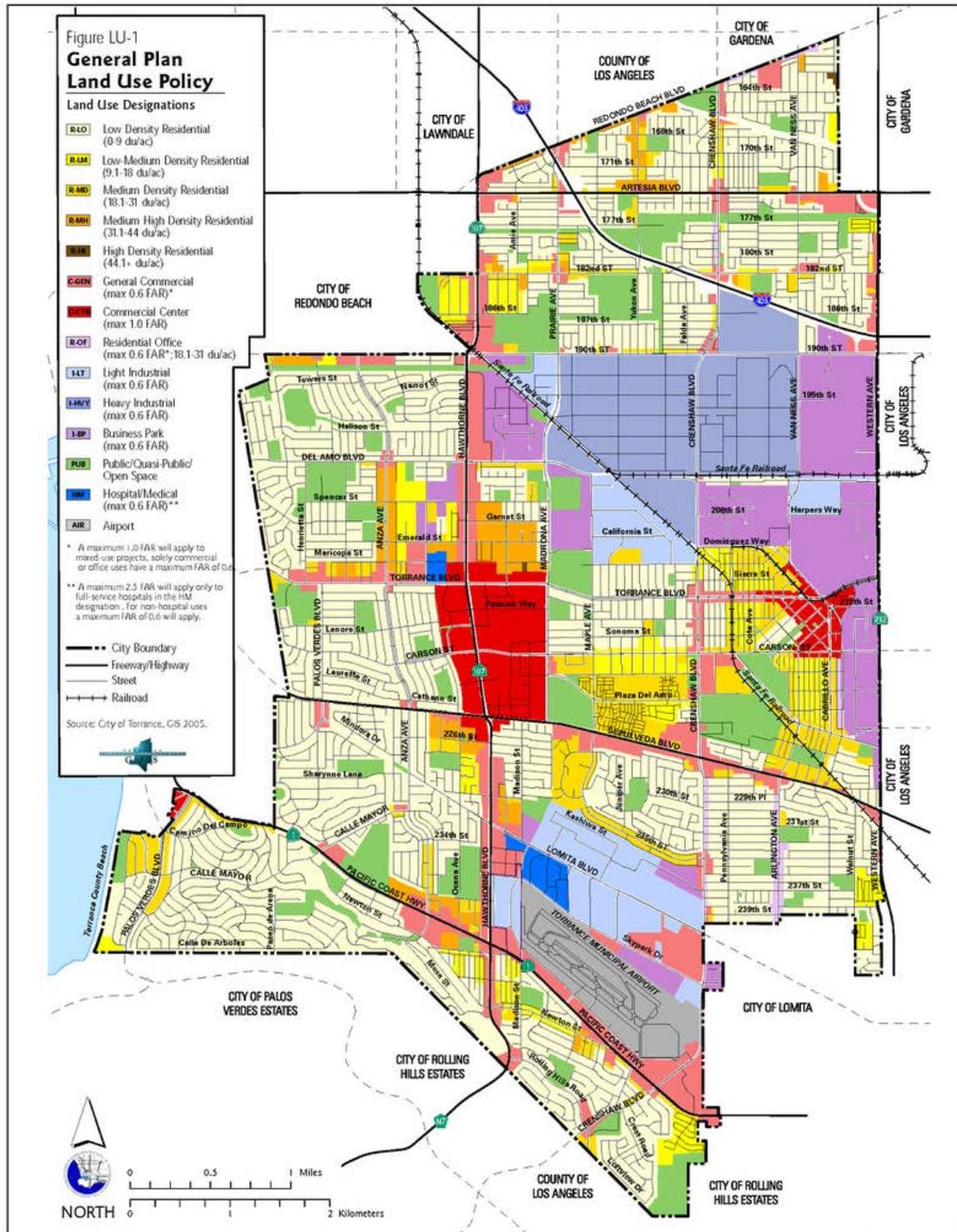
City of Torrance Housing Element



Figure 1
Project Vicinity

Source: ESRI Data, 2020

Figure 2 – Existing General Plan Land Use Map



City of Torrance Housing Element

Figure 2
Existing General Plan Land Use Map



Source: Torrance General Plan