

Ballot Initiative Summary for the Beautiful Laguna Overlay Zoning District

Overview: This ballot initiative uses provisions in the California state zoning laws to establish an overlay zoning district in Laguna's most visible and most used areas of our city. This new zone would consist of the areas within 750 ft. of State Route 133 (Laguna Canyon) or State Route 1 (Coast Highway). The zoning described below will be established by a direct vote of the residents, and thus could only be amended by a direct vote of the residents. Ballot Initiatives, such as this, are enabled by the California State constitution. It allows residents to reserve for their review any aspect of local legislative decisions, including establishing a limited zoning district. Voters in several other Southern California cities have already established similar provisions.

Purpose: This ballot initiative is being circulated by Laguna Residents First (LRF), a grassroots political action committee promoting policies and programs that protect the unique value of Laguna Beach. LRF is for preserving the local environment here including the heritage and charm of Laguna. LRF believes that as the city evolves and changes with the times, that major development projects should:

- Be unique, not part of large, monolithic developments.
- Be responsible, so that each project mitigates the impact it has on its neighbors, Laguna residents, and visitors. This includes areas such as traffic, parking, safety, scale, public safety, and aesthetic impacts.
- Be innovative in finding ways to honor the celebrated value of Laguna's look and feel.

Exemptions: First, it is important to understand the exemptions. **Any project** that meets **any of the criteria** below is **completely exempt** from **any provision** of the initiative.

(1) Single-family residential projects are exempt.

(2) Residential projects of nine or fewer units are exempt.

(3) Projects consisting exclusively of residential units affordable to Low Income, Very Low Income, or Extremely Low-Income households are exempt.

(4) Projects consisting solely of the development of a public or private K-12 school, hospital, museum, or house of worship are exempt.

(5) The repair or replacement of an existing building that has been damaged by fire, flood, wind, earthquake, or other disasters, up to the original size, placement, and density is exempt.

(6) Minor modifications to existing building are exempt.

Priority: Next, it is important to understand that the criteria specified below **do not take the place of, or loosen any of the current zoning regulations in place in Laguna**. All of that remains as it is today and can still be changed from time to time by City Council.

The overlay zone only adds a layer of protection against truly large-scale development in the most visible and congested sections of town that would require voter approval for those impactful projects. It follows that

involving voters in a meaningful way in large-scale development projects improves the quality of project proposals.

As importantly, it is designed to give developers a clear picture of the development opportunities here and take a more holistic approach to development proposals that will account for the unique setting that characterizes Laguna Beach.

Triggers Requiring Public Vote:

Large Scale Development that needs to be brought to the voters of Laguna Beach to be approved would be ***triggered by any of the following conditions:***

- Worsens traffic by causing 200 or more daily trips.
- On-site parking that essentially does not meet the on-site parking requirements that have been in place for the last decade, allowing for all existing grandfathered spaces and other existing exemptions. The initiative also specifically enables the incidental use of a small area of any commercial retail space to serve food and beverage as part of their customer service. (Addressing parking can be an expensive, but necessary part of mitigating the impact of redevelopment projects. Who else is going to do it?) .
- A project that is over 22,000 sq. ft. of floor space.
- Combines two or more lots to exceed 7,500 sq. ft. of lot area (6000 sq. ft. in downtown where lots are smaller). Combining a lot smaller than 1,200 is exempted. (Many lots in downtown Laguna are around 2,000 to 2,500 sq. ft. This is designed to allow many combinations of two to three average-size lots, but not entire-block lot combinations.)
- Increasing height over what is permitted today, including the overall height limit in Laguna Beach of 36’.
- Creates a cumulative effect if, within the past eight years and within a half-mile radius, there are already several other new, large redevelopment projects. (This is the “Enough is Enough” provision that restricts several large-scale commercial developments in close proximity and in the same timeframe.)

Full terms, definitions, criteria, and exemptions are explained definitively in the actual Ballot Initiative document.

Thank you for your interest in maintaining the value of Laguna for residents and visitors alike. This is a unique town in a unique location. As Laguna evolves we all need to ensure that it will do so in a way that preserves its unique distinction and value for residents, merchants, and visitors alike.

Who would want to live, work, or visit a new, slick, tall, overdeveloped gridlock? We all love Laguna Beach, so let’s get this done for the long term benefit of our town.