

Repurpose Riverside Outreach Summary

As part of the Re-Purpose Riverside project, the project team prepared and implemented an outreach plan, including a series of engagement activities with community members and key stakeholders. The objectives of this outreach were to gather input from stakeholders and subject matter experts to inform the adaptive reuse ordinance, and to provide education to the broader community about what adaptive reuse is and how it will be implemented in Riverside.

This document summarizes the outreach conducted for Re-Purpose Riverside and the feedback received at each phase of the process.

Meetings and Events

The following events and meetings were conducted as a part of the outreach plan.

- **Roundtable Meeting 1:** Hosted Virtually, September 9, 2025
- **Roundtable Meeting 2:** 3666 University Avenue, Riverside, December 10, 2025
- **Roundtable Meeting 3:** 3850 Vine Street, Riverside, March 25, 2026
- **Expert Interviews (4):** Hosted Virtually, October 2025
- **Working Sessions with Building and Fire:** March 2026
- **Community Open House:** Bourns Family Youth Center, April 22, 2026

Roundtable Meetings

The roundtable was created to engage local stakeholders in the development of the City's adaptive re-use ordinance. Roundtable members included local stakeholders with direct knowledge of development and community needs in Riverside. Roundtable members represented a range of perspectives, including property owners, developers, non-profit organizations, City staff, and others with relevant local expertise.

Through a series of three meetings, roundtable members were invited to provide feedback on draft materials, share expertise, and help inform the ordinance based on experience and community context. Members were encouraged to attend all three meetings but were not required. Key details and topics covered at each meeting are outlined below.

Roundtable Meeting 1

Hosted Virtually, via Zoom on September 9, 2025

The first roundtable introduced the project and process to the members, as well as reviewed the importance of adaptive reuse for changing communities. The first meeting included the following:

- Introduced the Re-Purpose Riverside project, the purpose of creating an Adaptive Re-use Ordinance, and how it can support infill housing, preservation, sustainability, and economic revitalization.
- Provided an overview of adaptive re-use concepts, including definitions, benefits, and examples from Riverside and other cities to illustrate different residential and mixed-use housing outcomes.
- Reviewed case studies of successful adaptive re-use projects in other jurisdictions, highlighting how commercial and office buildings have been converted to housing and mixed-use, often under other cities' adaptive re-use ordinances.
- Presented an initial framework for identifying adaptive re-use opportunities in Riverside, including site analysis guidelines, filtering criteria (zoning, historic areas, building height/era, transit proximity, livable corridors), and potential focus areas and candidate sites.
- Engaged roundtable members in a facilitated discussion to identify local sites and neighborhoods for further study, surface potential concerns (such as parking, economics, and zoning), and highlight key technical challenges and Riverside-specific considerations for conversion projects.
- Outlined next steps, including site inventory and feasibility analysis, developer interviews and regional best practices review, and topics to be addressed at Roundtable Meeting 2.

Roundtable Meeting 2

Hosted in-person at the Historic Walling Building (3666 University Ave, Riverside), on December 10, 2025

At the second roundtable meeting the project team covered the following topics:

- Reviewed preliminary findings from Roundtable 1, confirming continued demand for office space, concern about project costs, and interest in applying adaptive re-use in suburban and retail settings.
- Presented the citywide screening process for suitable adaptive re-use buildings and introduced two selected case study sites (Walling Building and a Bank of America building) for detailed feasibility analysis.

- Summarized regional adaptive re-use practices and insights from expert interviews, emphasizing the value of streamlined approvals, clear processes, and flexible responses to code and design challenges.
- Identified key challenges for Riverside’s ordinance, processing timelines, fees and feasibility, zoning constraints, and building/life-safety requirements, and discussed potential solutions such as by-right entitlements, reduced parking and impact requirements, and targeted incentives.
- Confirmed next steps to complete case studies, prepare a draft adaptive re-use ordinance, and reconvene at Meeting 3 to review ordinance elements and planned public outreach.
- Additionally, the project team shared the StoryMap of suitable sites based on feedback from Roundtable 1, available [here](#).

Roundtable Meeting 3

Hosted in-person at the Riverside Blue Zones Office (850 Vine Street, Riverside), on March 25, 2026

The third, and final, roundtable meeting focused on the following topics:

- Evaluated and refined the draft adaptive re-use ordinance using detailed case studies.
- Evaluated how the ordinance standards and incentives perform on both suburban and urban infill sites.
- Reviewed development assumptions for each site, including adaptive reuse and new construction area, unit counts, open space, and parking.
- Focused discussion on how the ordinance addresses height, density, floor area, setbacks, parking, and open space in real-world scenarios
- Highlighted the Technical Manual as a key tool to provide flexible, case-by-case solutions to structural, life-safety, and code-compliance issues.
- Confirmed next steps, including release of the public review draft, a community open house, and scheduled Planning Commission and City Council hearings.

Key Takeaways

The roundtable members provided at each meeting, below are the primary takeaways which helped to shape the ordinance.

- Expand the opportunities of the ordinance to include suburban areas and study a suburban site in the case studies.

- Consider the balance of parking required to needed.
- Focus on answering up front questions about process and consider committing to review and processing timelines.
- Encourage additional height and other zoning flexibility.
- The ordinance should allow mixed-use projects.
- Consider fee reductions.
- Address “unoccupied” buildings which qualify for adaptive reuse incentives.

Expert Interviews

As part of the technical research for the Riverside Adaptive Re-use Ordinance, PlaceWorks and Studio 111 met with staff from both development and architecture/design firms who had adaptive re-use experience. The interviews helped to identify major obstacles to residential adaptive re-use and to develop potential solutions and opportunities for consideration in the Riverside ordinance. Four (4) individuals were interviewed, and their experiences and recommendations are summarized below.

Interviewees

- Erin Anderson, PIM ([Palisades](#))
 - Multi-family Residential, Office, Retail and Hotel
 - 400 Oceangate, Long Beach
- Karin Liljegren, [Omgivning](#)
 - Adaptive Re-use Focus – Multi-family Residential, Commercial, Retail/Dining, Hotel, Historic Preservation
- Garret Lee, [Jameson Properties](#)
 - Multi-family Residential
 - Commercial property owner, converting currently held properties into residential.
- Howard Martin, [Howard CDM](#)
 - Multi-family Residential, Shelters, SRO/Transitional Housing, Medical Commercial, Office/Retail, Hotel

Key Takeaways

- The code/ordinance should provide relief for projects.
- “Provide all carrots no sticks philosophy in order to promote office to housing conversions.”
- Answering the unknowns and leaving little to no need for clarifications is the goal of the ordinance.

- Staff trained and informed on the ARO from each department are essential to a smooth and efficient process.
- Projects often die because of cost (not funding) – turnaround times are important,

Working Sessions with Building and Fire Departments

Hosted Virtually, via Teams, February, and March 2026

In addition to engaging local stakeholders, the project team hosted two (2) virtual working sessions with the building and fire staff. The purpose of the meetings was to educate the department staff about the adaptive reuse ordinance, the importance of adaptive reuse for riverside and to solicit feedback and ideas about how to implement the ordinance. As a part of these meetings the building and fire staff had the opportunity to review draft materials and provide comments and recommendations.

Community Open House

The Community Open House concluded the Repurpose Riverside outreach plan. The Open house was hosted in person on April 22, 2026, at the Bourns Family Youth Center.

The structure of the open house was organized so community members could review background information, project details, and draft materials at their leisure. A total of ten (10) community members joined to learn more about the project and to provide their ideas.

The open house included five (5) stations. Each station was staffed and provided key details about the project, community members were able to engage with project staff, ask questions and provide feedback. The open house also included a children’s station where kids could color the case studies and site plan how they would like to see adaptive reuse happen. The stations covered the following topics:

- What is Adaptive Reuse?
- Project Background
- Case Studies
- Draft Ordinance and Adaptive Reuse Guide

Repurpose Riverside - Adaptive Reuse Ordinance
Outreach Summary Report



Images from the open house are shown below.

