

8.4 Charter Oak

A. INTRODUCTION

Charter Oak is an approximately 1-square-mile unincorporated community located in the northern portion of the Planning Area. It has a population of 10,078, or approximately 9,888 people per square mile. The community shares boundaries with Covina to the west and south, the San Dimas to the east and south, and Glendora to the north.

Modern development of the area began in the late 19th century when Charter Oak was mostly settled by citrus farmers. After World War II, a housing boom influenced the community buildout that exists today.

B. COMMUNITY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The following presents a summary of challenges and opportunities learned from community feedback and an analysis of existing conditions in the community (see **Table CO-1, Charter Oak Challenges and Opportunities**). These challenges and opportunities serve to inform the preparation of community-specific land use, zoning, policies, and programs for Charter Oak.

TABLE CO-1 Charter Oak Challenges and Opportunities

1. Residential Areas

Access. Residential areas of the community have limited access to the primary commercial corridor along Arrow Highway. Where feasible, additional access pathways should be considered with new development to improve the permeability of residential areas and allow easier access to amenities along Arrow Highway.

Multifamily Housing. Multifamily housing is more prevalent in Charter Oak than in other communities in the area, but it is still limited. Multifamily housing in the community tends to be car-oriented with limited pedestrian access, and complexes are sometimes gated. There is a need for multifamily housing design that promotes multiple points of accessibility. Multifamily housing along Arrow Highway does not contain co-uses like commercial or retail.

Development Opportunities. Many areas along the Arrow Highway corridor offer sites suitable for affordable housing—one of the most difficult tasks facing the ESGV. The presence of significant transit systems also creates opportunities to introduce mixed-use and transit-oriented residential development.

TABLE CO-1 Charter Oak Challenges and Opportunities

2. Public Realm

Frontage Roads. Large frontage roads in residential areas limit greenspace and can act as barriers for bicyclists and pedestrians. These roads run parallel to arterial streets and connect to neighborhood streets. Frontage roads and the parallel arterials create large swathes of paved streets with little to no vegetation. Where feasible, these areas can be enhanced to provide additional green space and pedestrian infrastructure.

Arrow Highway Corridor. This commercial corridor is a major thoroughfare with little improvements made for pedestrian and bicyclist comforts. The City of Glendora is proposing improvements to the north side of Arrow Highway to create an urban trail. This is in line with their recently adopted specific plan for their jurisdictions along Arrow Highway. County jurisdiction includes the Arrow Highway right-of-way, and the design of the corridor should be reoriented to support the needs of pedestrian and people on bicycles.

Wayfinding. The boundaries of the community are difficult to discern, and lack of wayfinding signage makes it easy to get lost in the community.

Amenities. The community lacks trees, shade, or plantings along sidewalks and walking paths. Sidewalks are generally built to the minimum width.

Safety. Public spaces, including parks, have low perceived safety.

Park Needs. Based on the Countywide Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment (PNA), 52% of the study area that includes Charter Oak has a high park need, 46% has a moderate park need, and 2% has a low park need. Within the same study area, only 16% of the population lives within a half mile of a park, which is lower than the countywide average (49%).

Open Space Opportunities. Charter Oak has limited space for traditional park development. In lieu of traditional park space, the community could benefit from parklets along frontage streets, urban trails, pocket parks, and outdoor programs (CicLAVia-type programs). New development should co-locate open space/landscaping requirements to maximize public benefit.

Charter Oak Park. This park is oriented to Covina Boulevard, which serves as its primary entrance. Other neighborhood entrances may be located on both sides of the park on E. Tudor Street cul-de-sacs.

Northern bordering parcels are owned by the Charter Oak Unified School District and Charter Oak Day School. Because these uses are government owned, perhaps there is potential in providing pedestrian pathways through these parcels to better connect Covina Boulevard to Cienega Avenue.

Charter Oak High School. The school is located directly south of Charter Oak Park. Though it is located just outside of the community's jurisdiction, its location warrants attention on the school's connectivity to the surrounding neighborhood. This further justifies creating a linear pedestrian pathway connecting the high school to the south with Cienega Avenue and Arrow Highway.

Charter Oak Library. The library is located in an existing strip mall along Arrow Highway. Library space is small and may be insufficient for the community.

TABLE CO-1 Charter Oak Challenges and Opportunities

Transit Connections. Residents have expressed interest in expanding transit access in the community to reach local destinations. These local destinations are often centralized, walkable areas with opportunities for leisure and shopping. These amenities are lacking in Charter Oak, forcing residents to seek them elsewhere.

Car-Oriented Design. The community's design incentivizes car ownership and usage. The car-oriented design also limits needed greenspace needed to counteract the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions and provide an inviting environment. As a result, residents in the area overwhelmingly choose to drive than any other travel option.

Congestion. Transportation congestion for cars is perceived as high in the community. This is likely due to the abundance of vehicles with one occupant, and a lack of diversity in mobility infrastructure to support alternative modes of travel.

Condition of Streets. Street maintenance is perceived as lackluster in the community.

Parking. Parking in residential areas, particularly in the vicinity of commercial areas, is perceived as impacted and overcrowded. Residents have expressed a desire for regulated parking in residential areas. Shared parking regulations, paid parking, and increasing access via other modes, can mitigate this. This may also be an indication of overcrowding due to a lack of housing supply, with the existing units home to more people than designed.

- **Dual-Use Facilities for Flood Control and Open Space.** Parks and open spaces provide valuable opportunities for community members to exercise, recreate, and recharge. Nearby storm drain channels and flood control basins, where feasible, can be improved to create a system of open spaces and trails that provides off-road pedestrian and bicycle access to local destinations, including schools, parks, and transit.
- There are many small parcels between storm drain channels and roadways that may have too little value for commercial development. These small spaces could be used to create pocket parks to beautify the corridor and provide gateways to the surrounding jurisdictions.

3. Commercial Areas

Industrial and Auto-Related Uses. Major corridors in Charter Oak contain industrial and auto-related uses. These types of uses are not as conducive to creating and maintaining walkable spaces as other types of commercial uses and can create land use conflicts.

Industrial and auto uses are not compatible with making the Arrow Highway Corridor and other Charter Oak corridors attractive and vibrant gathering spaces. Where feasible, establish incentives to encourage locating community-serving uses along the corridor and decrease the density of auto-related uses.

Truck Traffic. Arrow Highway serves as an alternative corridor for commuters and trucks looking to avoid traffic congestion on the I-10 and I-210 freeways. Designated truck routes should be emphasized with improved signage to discourage trucks from using local streets.

TABLE CO-1 Charter Oak Challenges and Opportunities

Existing Commercial Stock. Some commercial properties along Arrow Highway are run down and need enhancement. Commercial properties often consist of commercial structures pushed to the back of the lot with parking in the front. This creates access barriers for pedestrians and bicyclists. Development standards could help locate structures along Arrow Highway closer to the street.

Charter Oak has few small markets and stores that serve healthy food within walking distance of residents. Retail in the community is minimal and decentralized, with little orientation toward a singular walkable environment for pedestrians.

Third Places. There are few “third” places—spaces other than the workplace and the home where people congregate—within the community. Charter Oak Park is one primary third place in the community, but these spaces are otherwise lacking along Arrow Highway, which is intended to be a vibrant commercial corridor. Outside of Arrow Highway, there are few places within the community that are shared and support gathering and socialization.

Façades. The façades of the commercial properties in the community are worn and in some cases in need of enhancement. Upkeep of façades in the community is not incentivized.

Land Use

The **Charter Oak Land Use Map**, found in Appendix E, *Land Use Maps*, presents land use designations and establishes the general location and diversity of each land use in Charter Oak.

C. COMMUNITY-SPECIFIC POLICIES

The following provides the policies for Charter Oak, organized to implement each of the six elements of the Area Plan and address the community-specific issues and opportunities presented above. Each policy is linked to a relevant vision statement (referenced as “VS”), as presented in Chapter 1, *Introduction*, of this Area Plan.

VS 2 – Diverse, Walkable Communities

COMMERCIAL CENTERS AND CORRIDORS

Policy CO-1: Existing Commercial. Revitalize existing commercial uses located along primary corridors near major transit, prioritizing Arrow Highway to the north and Grand Avenue to the west of the community.

Policy CO-2: Commercial Corridor Improvements. Enhance major corridors as pedestrian-oriented commercial corridors, along Arrow Highway, Grand Avenue, and Valley Center Avenue. Utilize native, drought-tolerant, and climate-appropriate landscaping and landscaped medians to enhance streetscapes.

Policy CO-3: Healthy Food. Explore opportunities to add small markets, grocery stores, and a farmer’s market along the primary corridors, Grand Avenue and Arrow Highway, which are accessible by greenways and active transportation and help to meet consumer demands.



MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT AND VILLAGE CENTERS

Policy CO-4: Village Centers. Create village centers at key nodes, close to major transit and commercial centers connected by urban pathways. Prioritize intersections at Arrow Highway and Grand Avenue to the northwest and east of the major transit, at Grand Avenue and Cienega Avenue to the northwest and south of the major transit, at Grand Avenue and Cypress Street to the southwest, at Arrow Highway and Sunflower Avenue to the northeast, and within a centralized location near Mangrove Avenue between Cienega Avenue and Covina Boulevard. Village centers should be accessible by greenways along major corridors to improve pedestrian and bicyclist pathways to these community gathering spaces.

Policy CO-5: Social Gathering Area. Create additional social gathering areas near existing schools through enhanced public park and open space amenities. Use urban pathways to connect the social gathering areas to commercial and village centers in Charter Oak.

See Land Use Policy LU-3.15.

Policy CO-4

INDUSTRIAL AND EMPLOYMENT USES

Policy CO-6: Truck Traffic. Work with local and regional agencies to ensure designated truck routes are emphasized through improved signage, to discourage trucks from using local streets.

PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND TRAILS

Policy CO-7: New Parks. Explore opportunities to add new parks in the western and eastern areas of the community where parks currently do not exist and where access to Charter Oak Park is low. Create greenways connecting residential neighborhoods and village centers to new parks.

Policy CO-8: Open Space Lots. Utilize small parcels between storm drain channels and roadways along Arrow Highway to create small parks or open spaces that beautify the corridor.

Policy CO-9: Multi-Use Paths. Create urban pathways along Glendora Avenue and Covina Boulevard to the west to connect Charter Oak neighborhoods to the proposed park and open space amenity. Collaborate with the Los Angeles Flood Control District and jurisdictions along Arrow Highway to create a system of open spaces and trails that provide off-road pedestrian and bicycle access using the existing storm drain channels and flood control basins that crisscross Arrow Highway.

See Chapter 7, Mobility Element, for related policies.

VS 3 Policies

VS 3 – Connected and Active Communities

Policy CO-10: Complete Streets. Create complete streets from neighborhoods leading to primary corridors (Arrow Highway, Cienega Avenue, Grand Avenue), major transit areas, and commercial centers.

Policy CO-11: Pedestrian Passageways through Cul-de-Sacs. Identify opportunities to provide pedestrian and bicycle passageways through the ends of neighborhood cul-de-sacs along Cienega Avenue, east of Glendora Avenue, to provide residents greater access to services and amenities within walking distance.

Policy CO-12: First Last Mile. Enhance access between the major transit stop on Arrow Highway and Grand Avenue and residential neighborhoods, community amenities, and services in Charter Oak. Plan and implement infrastructure improvements that promote pedestrian “first last mile” access, including bicycle infrastructure, bike and scooter services, greenways, shading and lighting, and other improvements that enhance access along first last mile pathways.

VS 4 – Shared Community Identity and Character

Policy CO-13: Corridor Revitalization and Beautification.

Beautify and reinforce Charter Oak’s identity and character through revitalization of major corridors that provide community access. Incorporate added street trees, lighting, community signage, bike lanes, public art, and other strategies. Prioritize beautification of the major corridors that enhance the environment and experience for users, and attract more patrons to the village centers at the following locations:

- Arrow Highway Corridor
- Valley Center Avenue between Arrow Highway and E. Cienega Avenue
- Covina Boulevard on the north side, east of Sunflower Avenue, which contains deep lots of the size needed for significant redevelopment
- Cypress Street on the south side across from Glen Oak Elementary, east of Sunflower; and east of N. Grand Avenue
- Lyman Avenue on the east side, north of E. Badillo Street
- E. Renshaw Street on the south of Scarborough Lane

Policy CO-14: Improve Frontage Roads. Enhance identified frontage roads to provide additional green space and pedestrian infrastructure, where feasible.

Policy CO-15: Community Gateways. Mark prominent community entrance points with special design and architectural enhancements. Prioritize key entrances to the northwest at Arrow Highway and Grand Avenue, to the west at Grand Avenue and Covina Boulevard, and to the east at Cienega Boulevard and Valley Center Avenue.

See Community Character and Design Policy CC-1.8.

Policy CO-15

VS 5 – Thriving Economy and Workforce

Policy CO-16: Business Attraction. Actively market to top industries that match resident skillsets and provide synergies with health care, educational services, and retail trade, the top employment industries for residents of Charter Oak.

Policy CO-17: Retail Industry. Promote new retail businesses within commercial centers and at vacant and underutilized sites to add to the community’s diversity and bring more shops along Arrow Highway.

Policy CO-18: Coworking Spaces. Encourage and promote collaborative coworking spaces at public centers, coffee shops, and village centers that accommodate telework, remote work, and mobile work for community members.

VS 6 – Sustainable Built and Natural Environment

Policy CO-19: Waterways. Maintain, protect, restore, and enhance stormwater channels along Arrow Highway and San Dimas Wash to the north of the community, which provides a unique environmental feature in Charter Oak.