

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

South Coast District Office
301 E Ocean Blvd., Suite 300
Long Beach, CA 90802-4302
(562) 590-5071



W18c

LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (DSP UPDATE)
DECEMBER 15, 2021

CORRESPONDENCE

Fw: DSP Comments from public

Alvarado, Marlene@Coastal <Marlene.Alvarado@coastal.ca.gov>

Mon 12/13/2021 2:25 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

From: Wiener, Marc CD

Sent: Thursday, December 9, 2021 3:02 PM

To: Alvarado, Marlene@Coastal <Marlene.Alvarado@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Dupuis, Shohreh CM <sdupuis@lagunabeachcity.net>; Jung, Wendy CD <wjung@lagunabeachcity.net>; Caron, Martina CD <mcaron@lagunabeachcity.net>

Subject: RE: DSP Comments from public

Hello Marlene,

The following is a response to the comments made by the public.

The Historic Preservation Ordinance, which is pending certification, contains new policies and regulations pertaining to historic preservation. It is not the role of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) to regulate historic preservation throughout the City. The DSP was updated to omit references to the Historic Inventory, consistent with the recently adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance. This change does not modify the historic status of any property, therefore no additional CEQA review is required. The properties previously listed in the DTP that have been removed from the list were on the Historic Resources Inventory prepared in 1981. Pursuant to State Law, that Inventory does not meet the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 5024(g) and it does not and cannot create a presumption that the identified properties are a historic resource. Under the revised DSP, the City will continue to review projects pursuant to CEQA, which includes performing an historic assessment when warranted and evaluating modifications to existing historic resources. If a property has already been determined to be a historic resource in a manner consistent with California law, it will continue to be protected. Additionally, pursuant to State CEQA Guideline Section 15064.5(a), this would generally include any situation where the City Council finds, based upon substantial evidence, that the property meets the criteria for the State Register. For example, the City has identified numerous properties that are potentially eligible for the National Register, and those will require a historic assessment before they can be modified. (See Updated Historic Preservation Element, which includes several properties within the DSP area.) These are properties that are not on the City's Register, but the City nonetheless recognizes the need to preserve them.

Comments that the updated DSP would allow for replacement of nonconforming historic buildings up to the nonconforming height, or that it promotes second story additions to historic buildings, are factually inaccurate. The updated DSP does not include any new standards or provisions that would allow nonconforming structures to be replaced or reconstructed up to the original height, nor does it specifically allow or promote second-story additions to historic buildings. During the multi-year update process, which included several public hearings with the Planning Commission and City Council, there were considerations to modify the building height standards in the DSP area. The City

Council ultimate decided not to approve any height increases or allowances to rebuild non-conforming buildings in-kind.

Let me know if you have any additional questions.

Marc Wiener, AICP
Community Development Director
City of Laguna Beach
Phone: (949) 497-0361
Email: mwiener@lagunabeachcity.net



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December 10, 2021

Honorable Chair Padilla
California Coastal Commission
455 Market Street,
Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

RE: December 15 2021 Agenda Item 18C, City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-005202 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Dear Chair Padilla,

I am writing on behalf of the City of Laguna Beach to urge your approval of Item 18C (**LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-005202**) with Commission staff recommended modifications.

On July 21, 2020, the Laguna Beach City Council approved the Local Coastal Program amendment 19-4482 updating the City's Downtown Specific Plan (DSP), specifically the Business Permitting and Parking Standards. Coastal Commission staff worked collaboratively with City staff on the review of this LCP amendment and is recommending approval with modifications that we fully support.

The approval of this LCP amendment is crucial to reducing regulatory barriers so the City can attract higher quality retailers with fresh and innovative businesses, fill its empty and run-down storefronts and give a boost to its long-time retailers who have weathered the pandemic. The proposed DSP update will enhance the Downtown and ensure that it has a vibrant and successful future.

The DSP serves to guide the growth, design, and development standards in Downtown Laguna Beach, with the primary objective to preserve and enhance the unique character of the Downtown. The City started the update in 2012, and after 8 years of community meetings, including 20 Planning Commission meetings, we are pleased with the final document that has been submitted for your consideration. We truly believe that the LCP amendment will enhance the experience of our residents and the millions of visitors who access the coast in Laguna Beach each year.

The existing permitting and parking regulations in the DSP have become overly restrictive, which has resulted in a lack of high-quality businesses and property investment. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements that will allow for greater flexibility in change of use and promote new and interesting business types. Parking for various independent uses is "shared" throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking, and as a result the overall demand generated by Downtown patrons is less than the sum

of the City's parking requirements. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City's parking demand data.

I understand that some recent concerns have been raised to you by members of the public about the impact that the updated DSP will have on historic preservation. Please note that this LCP amendment has no bearing on the City's historic preservation policies. The DSP was updated to omit references to the Historic Inventory, consistent with the City's recently adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance which will be reviewed by the Commission in 2022. This DSP change does not modify the historic status of any property, therefore no additional CEQA review is required. The properties previously listed in the DSP that have been removed from the list were on the Historic Resources Inventory prepared in 1981. Pursuant to State Law, that Inventory does not meet the requirements of Public Resources Code Section 5024(g) and it does not and cannot create a presumption that the identified properties are a historic resource. Under the revised DSP, the City will continue to review projects pursuant to CEQA, which includes performing an historic assessment when warranted and evaluating modifications to existing historic resources. If a property has already been determined to be a historic resource in a manner consistent with California law, it will continue to be protected. Additionally, pursuant to State CEQA Guideline Section 15064.5(a), this would generally include any situation where the City Council finds, based upon substantial evidence, that the property meets the criteria for the State Register.

Please also note that this LCP amendment does not include any new standards or provisions that would allow nonconforming structures to be replaced or reconstructed up to the original height, nor does it specifically allow or promote second-story additions to historic buildings. During the multi-year DSP update process these items were considered, however, the City Council ultimately decided not to include any height increases or allowances to rebuild non-conforming buildings in-kind in this LCP amendment.

We truly appreciate that your staff worked collaboratively with City staff on this LCP amendment and is recommending approval with some minor modifications.

Thank you for considering our request on this matter.

Sincerely,



Bob Whalen
Mayor, City of Laguna Beach

C: Laguna Beach City Council
Mr. Jack Ainsworth, CCC Executive Director

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Bruce Marshall <bmarshall@fewel-associates.com>

Tue 12/7/2021 7:25 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am writing this email to express my concerns about changes to the Laguna Beach DSP. My understanding is that the following changes are considered:

- reduce the number of identified historic resources in the downtown area from 65 to 27;
- remove all references to the Historic Resources Inventory to avoid having to consider historic resource impacts under CEQA to properties listed on it;
- eliminate Heritage Committee review of projects involving properties listed on the Inventory within the DSP;
- allow nonconforming buildings to be replaced by new construction up to the original height, which creates an *incentive* to demolish historic buildings;
- allow and encourage second story additions to historic resources.

Laguna Beach is one of the few towns in Southern California that has a plethora of historical buildings, giving it lots of charm and character. I would ask that historic preservation be a priority in any changes to the DSP. I support redevelopment of properties to improve the local economy, while providing incentives to developers to preserve historical buildings to the extent practical.

Also, as an avid cyclist, I would love to see a bike lane along PCH through Laguna Beach!

Thanks,
Bruce

Bruce Marshall, CCIM



Associate Appraiser
129 W. Wilson Street, Suite 201
Costa Mesa, CA 92627
(949) 764-2650 x107
(949) 570-9619 Direct
bmarshall@fewel-associates.com

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Alison King <aking@csusm.edu>

Wed 12/8/2021 8:44 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please vote against item 18c, Laguna Beach's updated Downtown Specific Plan. The "update" would eliminate a huge number of historic buildings from the register, thus allowing developers to demolish them and build new structures. Laguna Beach's character depends on the historic nature of its downtown.

Thank you.

AlisonKing

21621 ocean vista drive, Laguna Beach

Laguna beach resident for 20 years

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

M Thom <mthom16mo@gmail.com>

Wed 12/8/2021 6:58 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission,

Please reject the proposed changes to Laguna Beach's Downtown Specific Plan. I live in West Covina and have been to Laguna many times, most recently in September with family visiting from Oman. Laguna is the kind of place you want to share with visitors, and it's not just because of the ocean. Laguna's downtown buildings are so special. I don't understand why the city is endangering its unique character. We need your help to keep Laguna from looking like everywhere else.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Mark Thomas

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

MARGARET BROWN <margaretbee@cox.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 8:26 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please review the proposal carefully. We now have City management and a City Council majority that is pro-development and not responsive to residents' wishes. This is a disastrous first step to destroying the character of our City.

Laguna's existing Downtown Specific Plan celebrates the historic fabric of downtown as part of its fundamental "village" and community character and codifies protections for it. The proposed revisions:

- arbitrarily reduce the number of identified historic resources in the downtown from 65 to 27;
- remove all references to the Historic Resources Inventory, even though Inventory properties are historic resources and are vital to the character of downtown;
- allows replacement of nonconforming older buildings up to the nonconforming height, which creates an incentive for demolition;
- allows and promotes second story additions to historic buildings;
- reduces parking requirements for many businesses, which eliminates an incentive for property owners to preserve their buildings and place them on the Historic Register;
- eliminates Heritage Committee review for projects involving properties that are listed on the Inventory.

Historic properties in Laguna Beach

Jahn Levitt <jahnml@yahoo.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 9:18 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

I am a resident of Laguna Beach.

Please do not approve the revision to the Downtown Specific Plan. We want our vintage buildings to remain as they are. To vote for a change would help destroy the village we love, and would spoil the character and charm and quirkiness of our town.

Change merely for change to our town is frivolous.

Thank you,
Jahn and Hal Levitt
Residents

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Kris Evans <mdegen3@cox.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 9:25 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

I am writing to urge you to reject the city of Laguna Beach's changes to our Downtown Specific Plan (DSP), changes that will drastically reduce protections to our identified historic resources; encourage demolition of some of our most beautiful buildings; promote second story additions, thus destroying the village character of our largely one story town; reduce parking requirements despite the fact that parking is already a nightmare; and eliminate Heritage Committee review for historically important properties. Laguna Beach is under constant assault by developers, and pro-development members sit on our city council. The Coastal Commission is our last, best hope. I am so very grateful to you for your work, and thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,
Kris Evans-Degen
28810 Top of the World Drive
Laguna Beach, CA. 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Roger Taft <rogertaft@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 10:20 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Sirs,

As a long-time Laguna Beach resident I request that the proposed changes to the Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan be rejected. These changes will destroy the character, aesthetics, and history of the town. These environmental qualities are protected under the California Environmental quality Act.

Thank you for you attention,
Roger C. Taft

524 Center Street
Laguna Beach CA 92651
949-494-4388

Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan

betsyjenkins@cox.net <betsyjenkins@cox.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 11:16 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commissioners,

Laguna Beach is a very special place, founded over 100 years ago and still very historic and picturesque. But there are serious pressures on it to now change, develop, and dismantle the very scenic quality that makes it so special for visitors from all over America and the world.

Your consideration of the new Downtown Specific Plan is at the heart of this problem, and your actions could help to save the Laguna we all know and love. If the proposal goes forward as planned, many of our most historic and picturesque structures would be torn down and rebuilt much taller and more modern. Please place limits on the plan and do not allow development to destroy such a special treasure.

Thank you so much,

Betsy Jenkins, 41 year resident of Laguna Beach.

Downtown plan

Anne <annep@cox.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 11:49 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

We do NOT support the changes to the downtown plan. Please respect our history.

Thank you.

Don and Anne Polkingharn

371 Locust

Laguna. Beach

Sent from my iPhone

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Diana Nolan <jdnolan@cox.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 11:57 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commission,

The historical buildings of downtown Laguna Beach must be preserved. These historical buildings serve our community and visitors well. Visitors come from all parts of the world and marvel at the charm and feeling of preservation our downtown presents. Locals and visitors enjoy strolling the streets of downtown Laguna Beach.

Please know BUILDING BIGGER IS NOT BETTER, especially in downtown Laguna Beach. If these historical buildings are taken away we can never, ever get them back.

Respectfully, Diana J Nolan

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Joemy Wilson <joemywilson@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 12:00 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To the Coastal Commission:

As a Southern California resident and frequent visitor to your beautiful city, I am writing to object strongly to the proposed revisions to Laguna Beach's existing Downtown Specific Plan. These changes would damage and alter forever the community character and historic fabric that everyone who has ever visited remembers with great pleasure. The revisions encourage demolition of these irreplaceable treasures. Surely the impact on tourism alone would be sufficient to reject these changes. I respectfully urge you to do so.

Sincerely,

Joemy Wilson

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Ginger Osborne <gtosborne@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 12:09 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners:

Please deny the approval of the Laguna Beach City Downtown Specific Plan. Adoption of this plan would severely threaten the village character of Laguna Beach by reducing or eliminating protections of historic resources, for example by reducing such resources from 65 to 17. These historic buildings are the critical elements of the charm and distinctiveness of Laguna Beach. Thank you, Commissioners, for being protectors of our natural and historic resources along the California coast.

Sincerely,
Ginger Osborne
31651 Santa Rosa Dr.
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) for Laguna Beach

rollie <sirrollie@aol.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 12:09 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please DO NOT allow this to destroy our town! The only ones who want this have profit in their minds...relators and developers.....not the people who live here and love it like it is! Just look at the fiasco around the Laguna Hotel.....corruption at its worst. Please do the right thing for the people of Laguna Beach!

Thank you

Rollie Bennett....1299 Hillcrest Dr, Laguna Beach, CA 92651....resident for 20 years

Fwd: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Joan McFarland <joanmcfarland@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 12:46 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Joan McFarland <joanmcfarland@gmail.com>

Date: December 9, 2021 at 10:58:36 AM PST

To: SouthCoast@ca.gov

Subject: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

As a 35 year resident and property owner in Laguna Beach I urge you to REJECT THE PROPOSED REVISIONS to our Downtown Specific Plan.

We value our historic village character and environmental qualities that make Laguna Beach so special. These proposed revisions would be detrimental in maintaining that unique character and environmental balance. In addition they would exacerbate a parking problem by reducing those requirements for many businesses.

Please reject these proposed revisions that I believe are promoted by pro-development sources that do not have Laguna's best interests in mind.

Thank you.

Joan McFarland

Laguna Beach, CA

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Bonnie Robinson <bonanddon4@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 1:20 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I request that the Coastal Commission reject Laguna's proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). The changes promise to destroy its unique community character by explicitly encouraging redevelopment of older, historic buildings. I live in Orange, California and make at least monthly trips to downtown Laguna, my favorite place to visit, due to its charm, village atmosphere, uniqueness and historic nature, along with some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Growing up in Los Angeles County, my parents regularly brought my family to downtown Laguna to enjoy its atmosphere. Now, my children, granddaughter and friends treasure downtown Laguna for the same reasons.

I have introduced friends and out of town family members to many of the beautiful buildings that would be directly impacted by Laguna's proposed changes, such as the 1927 Water District Building at 306 Third Street, the Live Wire Cleaners at 439 Forest Avenue and Carmelita's at 217 Broadway, in addition to many others.

Laguna's existing Downtown Specific Plan celebrates the historic fabric of downtown as part of its fundamental "village" and community character and codifies protections for it. I value Laguna's visual character, aesthetics, and historic resources, and that these changes will certainly harm them. These are **protected environmental qualities** under the California Environmental Quality Act, and **the Commission Staff Report does not even mention them.**

The Coastal Commission has yet to approve the changes to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, so consideration of the proposed revisions to the DSP is premature and will result in a contradictory Local Coastal Program and General Plan.

Please reject Laguna's changes to its Downtown Specific Plan. It is important to retain its significant historic unique community character for its value, enjoyment, as well as economic benefit of residents and visitors alike.

Thank you.

Bonnie Robinson
5907 E Valley Forge Dr
Orange, CA 92869

December 9, 2021

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c – City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Commissioners,

This item needs to be continued. It is predicated on the enactment of the Historic Preservation Ordinance not yet approved by the Coastal Commission.

The Downtown Specific Plan celebrates the historic fabric of the downtown and the community character that makes Laguna such a special place. The proposed changes put our historic buildings which are vital to the character of our downtown at risk.

I have lived in Laguna Beach for over 50 years and have watched our community come together and work to preserve and enhance the special qualities of Laguna. Six million visitors come to Laguna every year to experience and enjoy the character and spirit of Laguna. This amendment is a threat to residents and visitors alike.

Please continue this amendment at least until the Historic Preservation Ordinance has been approved by the Commission.

Thank you for your consideration.

Verna Rollinger
825 Park Avenue
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

merrill anderson <merrill1137@yahoo.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 1:58 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners:

We residents here in Laguna Beach need your help.

Big developers have lined up \$1B to totally remake Laguna Beach -- bigger, taller commercial developments. They have invested over \$250,000 in City elections and these investments are bearing fruit. To wit:

The proposed revisions to historic preservation the City would like to adopt that would:

- Arbitrarily reduce the number of identified historic resources in the downtown from 65 to 27;
- Remove all references to the Historic Resources Inventory, even though Inventory properties are historic resources and are vital to the character of downtown;
- Allow replacement of nonconforming older buildings up to the nonconforming height, which creates an incentive for demolition;
- Allow and promote second story additions to historic buildings;
- Reduce parking requirements for many businesses, which eliminates an incentive for property owners to preserve their buildings and place them on the Historic Register; and
- Eliminate Heritage Committee review for projects involving properties that are listed on the Inventory.

These revisions would kick the door open for developers to destroy historic buildings and intensify usage resulting in more traffic and environmental stress. Stopping these potential actions are part of your charter. Please do so.

Best regards,
Merrill Anderson
611 High Drive
Laguna Beach, CA. 92651

merrill1137@yahoo.com
+1.515.480.6538 mobile

Fwd: Public Comment on December 15, 2021 Agenda item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No LCP-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Paln Update)

meg monahan <monahan.shops@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 3:59 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **meg monahan** <monahan.shops@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, Dec 9, 2021 at 3:55 PM

Subject: Public Comment on December 15, 2021 Agenda item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No LCP-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Paln Update)

To: <Southcoast@coastal.ca.go>

Honorable Commissioners:

I have serious concerns with the proposed Laguna Beach LCP Downtown Specific Plan Amendment and urge you to require revisions before this is approved.

Laguna Beach is among a handful of coastal California cities that boasts a true and authentic downtown -- that is what makes Laguna so special and, along with our beaches, it is what attracts visitors to our coastal town.

- The proposed changes to our current LCP greatly reduces the number of historic resources by more than 60% and removes references to our Historic Resources Inventory. It also eliminates our Heritage Committee review of projects involving these properties -- this committee was established to provide a process whereby the community can participate in review and discussions of proposed changes to historic structures. It makes no sense to eliminate the public from these reviews. The proposed reduction of historic buildings includes one of our community's gems -- the historic water district building -- WHY?
- The plan reduces incentives for property owners to maintain their authentic structures by allowing new structures to be built to the original nonconforming height. This will potentially will destroy the character of the downtown.
- The proposal also reduces parking requirements for certain businesses. Many of these businesses received parking incentives to preserve their historic buildings. That incentive will disappear.
- The plan also removes requirements and references to our Landscape and Scenic Highway General Plan Element that has been so important to maintaining the character of our community's landscape. This reference needs to be maintained as the character of our authentic downtown depends on it.

Please do not approve these revisions until these concerns are addressed. We want Laguna Beach to remain authentic and an attraction for coastal visitors for years to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Meg Monahan
345 Flora Street
Laguna Beach, CA

12/9/21, 10:59 PM

Mail - Alvarado, Marlene@Coastal - Outlook

MA -- Public Policy & Administration; BS -- Landscape Architecture; 36 year resident; former city employee; past Design Review Board Member

Public Comment Item 18c

temp7472@aol.com <temp7472@aol.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 4:04 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item 18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Please reject the proposed changes to the downtown specific plan (DSP)
as they will degrade our community character.

Thank you,
Neil & Virginia Fitzpatrick
temp7472@aol.com

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Mark May <mdmay@stanfordalumni.org>

Thu 12/9/2021 4:08 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I understand that the Coastal Commission will decide on Wednesday whether to allow Laguna Beach to relax protections for historic resources in its downtown and encourage redevelopment of older "nonconforming" buildings in general. What a mistake. I cannot for the life of me understand the rationale for this proposal. I am sure you are aware of the unique character of Laguna Beach that derives from those historic buildings and their appeal to visitors like myself. I have driven to Laguna several times in the last few years to enjoy walking through the city and have discovered gems each time like the Aldeita Court (what a treasure!), the Hotel Laguna and the Laguna Beach Lumber Company, 384 Forest. Often I had to avert my eyes from a rectangular, boring multi-use development nearby.

Please don't allow the character and soul of the community (recognized around the world as an arts community) to be damaged by proposals such as this one. You have a responsibility as stewards of the coast to protect the character of this marvelous beach town.

I ask that my comments be entered into the administrative record.

Mark May
Culver City, CA

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Ryen Caenn <rcaenn@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 4:31 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

The City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update) is seriously flawed.

Our City Council must revise the DSP and to correct the many errors and inconsistencies.

Do not approve this LCP.

Thank you.

Ryen Caenn
rcaenn@gmail.com
949-510-4106



To preserve and enhance the unique village character of Laguna Beach

California Coastal Commission
Long Beach, CA

December 8, 2021

Re: Public Comment on December 15, 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Commissioners:

Village Laguna welcomes the staff's restoration of the coastal bluffs map and the original specifications for the pedestrian easement to the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). We also appreciate the addition of a requirement that "adaptive reuse" of parking spaces (replacing parking spaces with outdoor restaurants) in the downtown be limited and temporary. And, if we understand the text correctly, we are pleased to see that CUPs can be reviewed and approved annually to provide some flexibility in the City's monitoring of the downtown's mix of uses.

However, we are concerned by the removal of all mention of the Landscape and Scenic Highways Resource Document, which spells out the policies of the corresponding General Plan element and includes detailed plans for the downtown. The fact that it isn't part of the LCP doesn't seem to explain why it should be removed from consideration. Our "urban forest" is essential to the ambiance of the downtown, and maintaining community character is an important Coastal consideration. Restoring reference to the Landscape and Scenic Highways documents is particularly important because the City Council is contemplating the wholesale removal and replacement of mature trees in the downtown, whereas the Landscape and Scenic Highways documents call for their preservation and replacement (if necessary) in kind.

The Coastal Act specifies that new development should "protect special communities . . . that, because of their unique characteristics, are popular visitor destination points for recreational uses," Section 30251 says "New development in highly scenic areas such as those designated in the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan prepared by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by local government shall be subordinate to the character of its setting." That 1971 California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan mentions Laguna Beach as one of the "few picturesque communities that recognize the long-range benefits of protecting their natural environment." It highlights four major objectives of coastal planning:

- Environmental Protection
- Preserving Natural Features
- Providing Recreation Opportunities
- Preserving History

The objective of "Preserving History" is watered down in the City's DSP and is neglected in the Coastal staff report. While the certified DSP listed 65 historic structures in the downtown, the amended version shows only 27. (See page 52 of the City's submittal.) Obliterating the evidence of the history of our downtown by encouraging removals and remodeling as this update does is a step in the wrong direction. The original list should be restored (see attached) and supplemented—even this list does not include all

of the historic resources. Other policies that discourage historic preservation should be remedied. These remedies include restoring references to the Historic Inventory, discouraging second-story additions to historic buildings, providing meaningful parking incentives for historic properties, and restoring Heritage Committee review.

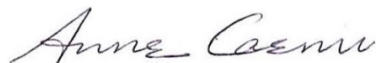
We oppose the reduction of parking requirements for new businesses. Existing businesses would not benefit from it. The reduction would allow the customers of intensified uses to compete for the limited number of spaces that exist now without the new businesses having to provide parking spaces to compensate for their impact. It would provide an incentive for property owners to replace existing low-intensity uses (a retail store, for example) with high-intensity uses (a bar or restaurant). At the same time, a retail survey recently performed for the City found that the only businesses in the downtown that were not underperforming by industry standards were the restaurants and bars. Tipping the scales in the direction of restaurants and bars might well be the end of our precariously balanced mix of businesses. The reduction of requirements is likely to lead to parking deficits and pressure to construct a parking structure in the downtown basin. Such a parking structure was resoundingly rejected by the community in 2013 because of its cost and impact on community character, and it is inconsistent with the Land Use Element's Policy 8.6, "Promote parking peripheral to the downtown." The proposed structure noted by CCC staff has not been publicly reviewed.

Lastly, Coastal staff has accepted the City's determination that the amendment is exempt from review under CEQA. However, the Commission is not to approve a proposed document "if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment." The law requires consideration of "reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment" and not just direct or specific impacts. The potential negative impacts to historic resources, aesthetics, traffic and parking, and visual character mentioned in the document should be addressed with an environmental study complying with CEQA.

We agree with the staff recommendation that the Commission should reject the City's Downtown Specific Plan submittal, but the suggested modifications are insufficient for producing an acceptable document.

Please direct staff to incorporate responses that address the concerns we have outlined in a new set of suggested modifications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Caenn".

Anne Caenn
President

Encl. Historic Inventory of Structures in the Downtown from Existing Downtown Specific Plan

EXHIBIT C

HISTORIC INVENTORY OF STRUCTURES IN THE DOWNTOWN

Address	Rating*	Type of Structure
217 Broadway	K	Commercial
298 Broadway	K	Church
496 Broadway	C	Mixed Residential/Commercial
307 Cliff Drive	E**	Laguna Art Museum
361 Cliff Drive	E**	Commercial
241 Lower Cliff Drive	C	Residential
226 Forest	K	Commercial
230 Forest	E +	Commercial
234 Forest	E +	Commercial
241 Forest	K	Commercial
245 & 255 Forest	K	Commercial
269 Forest	C	Commercial
280 & 282 Forest	K	Commercial
292 & 294 Forest	K	Commercial
302 Forest	K	Commercial
305 Forest	E**	Commercial
326 Forest	K +	Commercial
384 Forest	E**	Commercial
439 Forest	K	Commercial
477 & 491 Forest	C	Commercial
501 Forest	E +	Fire Department
505 Forest	E +	City Hall
521 & 527 Forest	K +	Sewage Treatment Plant
326 & 328 Glenneyre	K +	Commercial
412 Glenneyre	E**	Residential
422 Glenneyre	E +	Residential
347 Mermaid	C	Mixed Residential/Commercial
357 Mermaid	K	Residential
393 Mermaid	K	Residential
407 Mermaid	C	Residential
162 North Coast Highway	E	Commercial
212 North Coast Highway	E**	Mixed Residential/Commercial
278 Ocean	C	Residential
312 Ocean	C	Commercial
398 Ocean	K +	Residential
404 Ocean	K	Residential
418 Ocean	K	Residential
419 Ocean	C	Residential
432 Ocean	C	Residential
202 Park	K	Commercial
564 Ramona	C	Residential

Address	Rating*	Type of Structure
580 Ramona	K	Residential
594 Ramona	K	Residential
415 Second	E	Church
335 South Coast Highway	E**+	Commercial
300, 320 & 340 South Coast Highway	E	Commercial
373 South Coast Highway	K	Commercial
400 South Coast Highway (and 229 Laguna Avenue)	E +	Commercial
424 South Coast Highway	C	Commercial
425 South Coast Highway	E**	Commercial
448 South Coast Highway	K +	Commercial
470 & 472 South Coast Highway	K	Commercial
535 South Coast Highway	C	Mixed Residential/Commercial
629 South Coast Highway	E	Residential
349 Third	C	Residential
359 Third	K	Residential
368 Third	K	Residential
374 Third	C	Residential
386 Third	C	Residential
390 Third	C	Residential
394 Third	C	Residential
398 Third	C	Residential

Number of Structures

E Rated -- 19
K Rated -- 26
C Rated -- 20
Total 65

*Rating Key

E -- EXCELLENT
K -- KEY
C -- CONTRIBUTIVE

+ Placed on the City's Historic Register

**Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Thomas Osborne <thomasjoeosborne@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 5:43 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners:

Please do NOT approve the Laguna Beach City Downtown Specific Plan. This plan would seriously and perhaps permanently threaten the village character of Laguna Beach by reducing or eliminating protections of historic resources, for example by reducing such resources from 65 to 17. These historic buildings account for the charm and distinctiveness of Laguna Beach. Thank you, Commissioners, for being protectors of our natural and historic resources along the California coast.

Tom Osborne
31651 Santa Rosa Dr.
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Regina Hartley <rbhartley1@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 5:43 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To City Council members,

Please do NOT approve this amendment to the Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan.

Laguna Beach needs protection of it's historic buildings to maintain its true character and look.

Approval of this amendment threatens this protection by leaving the door open to developers to tear historic buildings down. Downtown Laguna Beach would become so changed and unrecognizable it would have change its name.

Very respectfully submitted,

Regina Hartley

1296 Catalina St

Laguna Beach 92651

Sent from Regina's Phone

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

armando baez <albaez@yahoo.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 6:20 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To the Coastal Commission:

I want to add my voice in asking you to help Laguna Beach preserve inclusion of the Landscape and Scenic Highways Resource Document in the amended LPC in front of you for consideration.

The objective of "Preserving History" is watered down in the City's DSP and is neglected in the Coastal staff report. While the certified DSP listed 65 historic structures in the downtown, the amended version shows only 27. (See page 52 of the City's submittal.)

Obliterating the evidence of the history of our downtown by encouraging removals and remodeling as this update does is a step in the wrong direction. The original list should be restored and supplemented—even this list does not include all the historic resources.

We ask that the Coastal Commission consider Laguna Beach's unique history and environmental setting and send this back to the city for further revisions to preserve what we have and enjoy now for future generations to come.

We cannot allow a few to ruin such a historic and beautiful city for profit. The Coastal Commission is our last line of defense. Please do not let us down!

Armando Baez
30792 Driftwood Ave
Laguna Beach, Ca 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

leroyprice@cox.net <leroyprice@cox.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 7:20 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

As you are very busy, I'm making this quite short.

I've lived here in Laguna Beach for 35 years. Why? Because it has a very "comfortable" and "reasonable" atmosphere. Of course, many others like more "up-to-date" atmospheres, and that's fine. Buy why change our atmosphere to be like most others? Isn't it a plus for Southern California to have a variety of city atmospheres?

Thank you for your attention.

LeRoy Price

Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Jenna Cassidy <jennalynncassidy@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 8:45 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to you express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

The Laguna Beach Downtown is both the face of our beautiful City and the economic engine. Due to online shopping and the decline of brick-and-mortar retail, it is vital that downtowns adapt to market trends to stay competitive. Customer preference is shifting away from retail businesses and towards experiential land uses, such as food service, tasting rooms and the like. This was confirmed by the City's Retail Market Evaluation Study, which found that restaurants are significantly outperforming retail stores in the Downtown. Additionally, the vacancy rate of retail spaces in Orange County is up 15.4% over the past year.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been overly restrictive. As such, our Downtown has struggled to find high quality tenants and innovative businesses, and there has been a lack of property investment. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most properties in the Downtown were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. In many cases, the parking requirements are so high that each site would need to be developed with a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the parking, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. Because most sites do not have sufficient parking, business are not allowed to change their use (e.g., retail to restaurant), which has caused the businesses to stagnate. I fully support the updated parking requirements in the updated DSP, which will allow for greater flexibility in change of use and will promote new and interesting businesses. Parking for various independent uses is "shared" throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking, and as a result the overall demand generated by Downtown patrons is less than the sum of the City's parking requirements. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City's parking data.

Over the past several years, cities throughout the country have been contemplating how to enhance their downtowns and create a sense of place. Laguna Beach is doing the same by updating its DSP. I am thrilled with the results and optimistic about the future. The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it a great place for both residents and visitors alike.

This updated DSP is the result of City staff working with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings to reach consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements. For these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated DSP.

Thank you very much,
Jenna Cassidy

--

Jenna Cassidy

Executive Consultant & Coach

w: [OSSNOHM](#) / s: [IN](#), [FB](#), [IG](#) / p: 310.648.9635

e: jennalynncassidy@gmail.com

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

dave p <edendaleprojects@yahoo.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 9:19 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission Members,

I spend much time in Laguna and am very concerned that weakening the protections for historic resources could transform this charming downtown into just another sterile drive-through beach city.

Please protect all historic resources and reject any changes that would make it easy for developers to remodel or replace them. Laguna is too unique to be subject to this fate.

The human scale of the historic architecture is what gives the downtown its quaint feel and brings tourists who support its businesses—tourists like me. Please have the wisdom to leave it intact.

Respectfully,
David Ptach

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

David Raber <david@raber.us>

Thu 12/9/2021 10:00 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach. The proposed changes to the DSP are too much, and arbitrary. The list of downtown historic properties is just a list of which properties the developers want to redelop. The list has no correlation to historical value, or value of the existing structure to the environmental considerations of historicity.

David Raber
949.300.7424

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Jerome Pudwill <j.pudwill@cox.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 10:16 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

I've been following the proposed changes of Laguna's Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Action Plan for the past two years and have been appalled by the abject disregard the gungo-ho developer-backed City Council and City Staff have had for residents and the town's historic village charm.

Laguna is unique - with a dazzling coast, an artistic heritage, and a smalltown village charm. This proposed Specific Plan would utterly gut all that in favor of turning Laguna into another stucco box, Huntington Beach tourist amusement park, with no absolutely no regard for the town's 23,000 residents - most of whom moved here for the town's tranquility and singular historic beauty.

The changes this plan would make would be nothing less than the destruction of this charming community by deep-pocket, quick-buck, profiteering developers.

Please say no to this plan and help save Laguna.

Yours truly,

Jerome Pudwill - 37-Year Resident

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Karen Dennis <karendennis@me.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 10:30 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am strongly [against this proposed agenda item](#). Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to retain its unique character.

Residents have chosen to live in a small community, and we appreciate and value the historical structures in Laguna Beach that have formed our past.

Let's not sell out for a flash of green (development money)— where uncontrolled development destroys a city's essential character.

Long time resident:

Karen Dennis

430 Blumont Street

Laguna Beach, CA 92651

karendennis@mac.com

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Lynn Hustwick <l.hustwick@icloud.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 10:56 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

All these buildings are serving their purposes. They are structurally sound and beautiful esthetics are the majority of the charm. Instead of tearing down all is needed is light facelifts and the city of Laguna to entertain the idea of welcoming in a better variety of businesses that are useful to our township... why must we leave town for a decent sandwich, a good butcher market a good permanent location for a farmers market with locally grown fruits and verges open 7 days a week. The solution is not tearing down, charging more rent and obliterating all the charm and history and artistry of Laguna Beach. If you want cement and high rises MOVE TO Miami!!! Biggest difference is obvious...new \$ vs old \$ and all that comes with it.

Sad days ahead for our once sleepy little seaside village.

Best,

LHustwick

Sent from my iPhone

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. L

mary ellen <maryellen@usa.net>

Thu 12/9/2021 11:00 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Subject: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission:

I am not one to write letters of this nature. However, when I learned of the proposed changes to the way Laguna handles development in the downtown, I knew I had to voice my concerns and objections.

With its varied architecture, historic and cultural character, Laguna Beach is a rare aesthetic treasure. I have enjoyed many visits there from Los Angeles, and I have particularly enjoyed historic walks to enjoy the exact, irreplaceable structures threatened by this proposal. I love the County Water District Building and the many modest bungalows that still line the small downtown. Losing structures such as these, which give Laguna Beach its unique beauty and charm, would be an absolute tragedy. Please understand that the qualities that draw visitors to Laguna are precisely those threatened by this reckless proposal!

Please vote no on the proposed changes to the Downtown Specific Plan. It took hard work and real foresight to preserve Laguna thus far. Don't let the city throw it away.

Sincerely,
Mary Ellen Gorski

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Kevin Chalk <chalkster30@hotmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 11:29 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commission Members,

I am opposed to the proposed changes to Laguna's Downtown Specific Plan. I believe that having historical treasures in our community is an honor and a privilege (and an asset, really). My friends and I go on architecture tours in cities and towns all over the southland just to admire their buildings from the past and listen to their fascinating stories. It says something great about a city that appreciates these stories and implements rigorous policies to ensure the history sticks around. So I ask and I beg that you please reconsider and reject Laguna's proposal to change development policies in the downtown area. Removing protections for historical structures in Laguna Beach will be devastating to the enriched, charming environment I hold so dear, and will pave the way for a cold, soulless city out of touch with its past.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kevin Chalk

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Nancy Bushnell <nrbilaguna@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 11:37 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Nancy R. Bushnell <nrbilaguna@gmail.com>

I have lived in Laguna Beach for the past 40 years and have appreciated all the generations that have built and made sure that there was a special quality to this town. I have volunteered in many of our art organizations, and have personally cleaned our beaches of trash tossed out by our many visitors, helped all the residents that banded together to make Laguna Beach a Marine Protected Reserve and have supported the businesses and restaurants in town. I love our village feel and the history it has carefully, thoughtfully, and intentionally preserved for all of us to enjoy. And that is exactly why Laguna attracts over 5 million visitors a year and why so many people want to live here!

I don't want Laguna to lose this specialness and its ties to Southern California history. It is one of the very few places in Orange County that has a historical base. If that is forgotten, Laguna becomes like all the less grounded areas that have become far more commercial and quite frankly become predictable and boring. Those who want to make drastic changes must be motivated for their personal short term and short sighted goal of making a quick profit and not for the good of the local residents who have chosen this Laguna Beach to be the center of their lives.

I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Sincerely,
Nancy Bushnell

December 9, 2021

Dear Coastal Commission Members,

Laguna Beach has always fiercely protected her coast, trees, historic resources, and celebrated memories. She has forever been a poster child for preservation, an influential, shining example to other cities. But there is a dismantling occurring in the city of Laguna Beach today. It is a developer friendly erosion to an icon of distinction that has been a source of inspiration to poets, artists, and authors, yet is now facing less protection to valuable historic assets than ever before.

Laguna Beach is my hometown. It is where my memories reside; where I went to grammar, junior high and high school and where I now spend favorite afternoons. It is like nowhere else in the world with a distinct authenticity, picturesque coves, wonderful topography, graceful eucalyptus that infuse the air with fragrance, and an abundance of architecturally significant, beautiful historic structures that were frequented by, and witness to, some of the most talented, illustrious people in the entire world. Even a tiny cottage I used to pass on my way to school was where John Steinbeck wrote, "Tortilla Flats". Laguna has always been a mecca where exceptional people gathered. Other cities shrink with envy, knowing their past can little compete with the likes of Laguna Beach. She has an amazing story to tell, but it is now at serious risk.

You have only to look at surrounding communities who have allowed developer interests to promote construction of enormous, multi-storied buildings spanning blocks, to see that overnight these cities take on a generic hue. The purposeful weakening of historic preservation elements inevitably paves the way for destruction of historic resources and frees up the land.

"Historic preservation offers dividends that benefit the entire community. It is a green endeavor that reduces landfill debris and captures embodied energy. It enables heritage tourism where visitors stay longer and spend more than in non-historic destinations. Buildings in or near historic districts hold value better and longer. In short, it is a driver of economic success." (Donovan Rypkema: The Economics of Historic Preservation.) Environmental and sustainability considerations along with the

protections of CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) have never been more vitally important and necessary than today.

As you ponder whether to lend your vote to the weakening of the Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) to enable changes that will cause the loss of many historic structures and erase priceless resources and memories, please consider what this will mean to those who have been blessed to call Laguna Beach home, or the many in the United States and around the world who have spent treasured vacations in this one of a kind coastal enclave held so close to the heart. Stripping Laguna of its Heritage Review of historic properties listed on the Inventory within the DSP; allowing the replacement of non-conforming buildings by new construction of the same height creating incentive for the demolition of historic structures; allowing and encouraging second story additions that will diminish architectural historical integrity and significance, will exact a terrible toll. If Laguna's distinguishing provenance is lost, it will break the heart of every person who has ever been awed by her profound charm, exceptional beauty, uniqueness, cultural significance, and impressive history. Generations will weep.

Appreciatively,

Georgette Korsen

**Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna
Bech LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)**

Sheri Matigian <smatigian@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 5:37 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please reject Laguna's proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). Some of the most unique, beautiful places in this world are cities that have never allowed the original character of its city to be demolished. This is a unique city and without its historic buildings, this city would be just like any other beach community, which is what we do not want. We want a village environment -- not mass and blah buildings here.

--

Sheri Matigian

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Sheri Matigian <smatigian@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 5:38 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Lee

Sent from my iPhone

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)(oppose changes)

Susan Skinner <susanskinner949@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 6:12 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission:

I am writing to oppose the proposed changes to Laguna's Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). These changes will fundamentally alter the character of the downtown area by allowing demolition of existing historical buildings and actually encouraging redevelopment.

In every other city I am aware of, destruction of a non conforming building eliminates the privilege of having non conforming standards such as height and parking, but this change does not do that. This effectively incentivizes developers to raze and rebuild instead of protect and restore.

This could well have the effect of reducing the public parking available if the newly rebuilt buildings have a higher intensity of use, requiring more parking for their tenants. If the parking standards for the historic building are allowed to remain, a new building won't be required to create new parking stalls above what was previously required, thus utilizing the existing parking resources. These resources are heavily used by people using the beach and bluff parks for enjoyment and will make it harder to find parking in Laguna.

Please reject this plan.

Thank you,

Susan Skinner
31561 Table Rock Dr., #419
Laguna Beach

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Lorna Cohen <lornacohen@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 6:31 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Sincerely,
Lorna Cohen

Sent from my iPad

Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2

Joseph Ballesteros <jj@ballesterosgroup.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 6:51 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

This email is to express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

The Laguna Beach Downtown is both the heart and soul of our beautiful City. Laguna must stay competitive with our downtown as it tries to meet the challenges of online shopping. The City's Retail Market Evaluation illustrated that customer preference is shifting away from retail businesses and towards experiential land uses, such as food service, tasting rooms. Additionally, the vacancy rate of retail spaces in Orange County is up 15.4% over the past year.

The permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been very strict. This has caused an inability to recruit or attract the type of businesses we feel town needs. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

It will provide new energy for existing businesses owners and help attract new ones.

I ask that you certify the updated DSP.

Sincerely,

J.J. Ballesteros

Laguna Resident

Chairman of the Board of Directors

Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce

J.J. Ballesteros | CalDRE# 01493760

Ballesteros Real Estate Group | Coldwell Banker

M 949-690-3240 **E** jj@ballesterosgroup.com

W www.BallesterosGroup.com

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Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

highspeed8@aol.com <highspeed8@aol.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 7:18 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

As a long time resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Our historic downtown is one of the major reasons I chose to live in Laguna Beach.

It is vital to keep our unique charm and feel of our town and to allow these changes would seriously affect community character for residents and visitors alike. Without these charming, historic and interesting buildings Laguna Beach is just another redeveloped vanilla town that have unfortunately replaced a small town feeling in other towns.

Reading the staff report, I was struck by the omission of the recognition of how these changes will affect the general environmental qualities and the visitor/resident experience of a small town feel. I am very disturbed that this report is pro-developer and not taking resident's living experience into consideration. Residents are fighting this march to changing the look and feel of Laguna with a Ballot Initiative to allow residents a say in how our town looks. We are not against development but against becoming any other town on the coast at the expense of our history.

Please help us to be the unique, interesting and quirky town that residents love and tourists want to visit. These proposed changes will take all that away.

Thank you for your time.

Michèle Monda
Laguna Beach

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Jennifer Finamore <finamoremf@att.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 7:25 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission,

I am looking forward to visiting my sister in Laguna Beach over the holidays. She has told me the disturbing news that Laguna has proposed to change its Downtown Specific Plan, so as to allow redevelopment of older and historic buildings. I strongly object to these changes.

Laguna's picturesque and vibrant downtown is a major reason I enjoy coming to visit. Have you noticed that Laguna has visitors year-round? It's not because they are swimming in the ocean in December! It's because this town has a charming character and beautiful, irreplaceable historic buildings, especially along Coast Highway and Forest and Ocean. They house wonderful restaurants and shops. I have no idea why the city would want to throw all this away, but I'm grateful there is a break on their plans. Please protect the historic downtown and make sure its small-scale, historic character is preserved.

Thank you.

Jennifer Finamore

Jennifer Finamore LMFT
3172 Walford Avenue. Suite 1
Eureka, CA 95503-4898
(707) 442-0172

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Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Diane Mello <dianelmello@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 7:32 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents. Please do not let this plan go through—I like the charm of Laguna Beach—the reason why I live here and NOT in Newport Beach is because it is quaint and cozy and NOT cookie Cutter like Newport Beach and Irvine.

Diane and Kevin Mello
2506 ALTAMAR DR
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

949-280-7610

**Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).**

Julie Laughton <Julie@julielaughton.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 7:41 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Re :

Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to you express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

The Laguna Beach Downtown is both the face of our beautiful City and the economic engine. Due to online shopping and the decline of brick-and-mortar retail, it is vital that downtowns adapt to market trends to stay competitive. Customer preference is shifting away from retail businesses and towards experiential land uses, such as food service, tasting rooms and the like. This was confirmed by the City's Retail Market Evaluation Study, which found that restaurants are significantly outperforming retail stores in the Downtown. Additionally, the vacancy rate of retail spaces in Orange County is up 15.4% over the past year.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been overly restrictive. As such, our Downtown has struggled to find high quality tenants and innovative businesses, and there has been a lack of property investment. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most properties in the Downtown were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. In many cases, the parking requirements are so high that each site would need to be developed with a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the parking, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. Because most sites do not have sufficient parking, business are not allowed to change their use (e.g., retail to restaurant), which has caused the businesses to stagnate. I fully support the updated parking requirements in the updated DSP, which will allow for greater

flexibility in change of use and will promote new and interesting businesses. Parking for various independent uses is “shared” throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking, and as a result the overall demand generated by Downtown patrons is less than the sum of the City’s parking requirements. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City’s parking data.

Over the past several years, cities throughout the country have been contemplating how to enhance their downtowns and create a sense of place. Laguna Beach is doing the same by updating its DSP. I am thrilled with the results and optimistic about the future. The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it a great place for both residents and visitors alike.

This updated DSP is the result of City staff working with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings to reach consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements. For these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated DSP.

THANK YOU

JL

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Diana Tomei <dianatomei@me.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 8:02 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Diana Tomei

Diana@dianatomeidesign.com

Sent from my iPhone

Laguna's Downtown Specific Plan

Terry Meurer <dancaskev@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 8:10 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commissioners--

As a 30 year resident of Laguna Beach, I am writing to you with the hope that you will reject the proposed Downtown Specific Town which would forever change the character of our town. This would negatively affect so many aspects of our community--architecture, parking, and above all, history.

Please do not approve this plan!

Best,

Terry Meurer

1361 Gaviota Drive

Laguna Beach

Public Comment on December2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c- City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No.LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2(Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Vicki Crowe <vicki.mc@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 8:19 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To the Coastal Coastal Commission,

I strongly oppose the Laguna's proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan. The new plan would ruin our unique village character. I value the aesthetics and history of my town. Making these changes would deteriorate the overall environmental qualities of Laguna. Please reject this current proposal.

Vicki Crowe

999 Skyline Dr

Laguna Beach

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Gene Felder <gene@felders.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 8:53 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Johanna Felder <johanna@felders.net>

CaliforniaThe

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Gene Felder <gene@felders.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 9:01 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Johanna Felder <johanna@felders.net>

California Coastal Commissioners,

Please vote against this ill-conceived amendment.

The Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan has protected important treasured historic resources as is required by CEQA. The City Council has even now ignored the Historic Resource Inventory.

The historic resources should be noted and preserved as possible.

Eugene H. Felder Jr.

Former President Laguna Beach Historical Society

2680 Park Avenue

Laguna Beach CA 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Gabrielle Mandola <solarovenchef@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 9:02 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in strong opposition to the changes Laguna Beach proposes to implement for downtown development. These would have a detrimental impact on the character of this community, which still manages to feel like a 1920s beach town, even in the 21st century.

Since it is your mission to protect coastal resources and promote public access to them, I ask you to vote against the changes that would damage the visual character of this wonderful place and lead to the demolition of older, historic structures. I don't live here, but I like to visit, and these changes would make it much less appealing.

Thank you.

Gabrielle Mandola Thomas

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Stan Sholik <ssholik@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 9:26 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach and have lived here for 36 years. My wife and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach is a precious resource for us, our children and grandchildren. We need these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents. We strongly oppose those in our community who are attempting to destroy the charm and history of Laguna Beach.

Stan and Linda Sholik

--

Stan Sholik
1449 Bluebird Canyon Drive
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Re: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Johanna Felder <johanna@felders.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 9:32 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

California Coastal Commissioners,

Please vote against this ill-conceived amendment To the Laguna Beach downtown specific plan

The Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan has has protected and celebrated the historic fabric of the downtown as part of its fundamental village and community character. It is what brings tourist tourist village and why many of us move to Laguna. The changes proposed are at the request of those who want to re-develop Laguna and change it forever.

Johanna Felder

2680 Park Avenue
Laguna Beach CA 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

C. Deborah Laughton <cdlaughton@linkline.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 9:50 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

December 10, 2021

Dear California Coastal Commission,

Without public review by the residents, except by a convenience sample of members of the Chamber of Commerce and local developers and their affiliates, the City of Laguna, led by the past and current City Managers, have pushed through a Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). This DSP will remove a majority of the restraints on redevelopment of the downtown, including removing old growth shade trees and reducing the number of identified historic buildings downtown from 65 to 27. These changes in our DSP will permanently alter the community character of downtown Laguna Beach---a downtown that is renowned for its charming, diverse buildings and quirky character that work together to please the eye.

A few years ago, a well-known urban planner, Andrés Duany, described Laguna's downtown as follows, "This is a place of extraordinary character and a very delicate and fragile character... built over time by very unusual people. This kind of place is very fragile and very, very subject to destruction by the 20th and 21st century. The role here might be one to understand what can go wrong with a place like this and sort of vaccinate it---you know, to prevent actually losing it."

Please reject Laguna Beach's proposed new Downtown Specific Plan. Charm and aesthetics are worth keeping for California's residents and visitors.

Thank you, C. Deborah

C. Deborah Laughton
Publisher, Methodology and Statistics
Senior Editor, Developmental Psychology and Geography
Guilford Publications, Inc.
693 Bluebird Canyon Dr., Laguna Beach, CA 92651
(949) 494-9799 (o)
cdlaughton@linkline.com

NY Office: 370 Seventh Ave., Suite 1200, NY, NY 10001 1-800-365-7006

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

John <john.martelli@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 9:55 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a 20 year resident of Laguna Beach who frequents our downtown district. I am against this proposed agenda item.

Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic buildings to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

The visual character, aesthetics and history of Laguna Beach are all important touchstones in the 21st century.

Please vote NO on the proposed item.

Thank you,
John Martelli
697 Catalina
Laguna Beach

Sent from my iPhone

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Adrian Rowley <adrianrowley@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 9:57 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

I love the historical charm of Laguna Beach! It's the main reason my family and I bought a home here! Our home was built in 1924. We definitely do not want that beautiful history torn down!

Adrian Rowley

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Gary McCarter <gary.mccarter@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:07 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against the proposed agenda item, 18c to change the Downtown Specific Plan. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

We moved to Laguna Beach 35 years ago because of it's unique village character, aesthetics, and historic resources. The changing of a few recent city council members implemented by developer money is set to change the city's building and development rules to seek their own agenda, and not the interests of the residents.

Sincerely,

Gary S. McCarter

**Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).**

Rebecca Visconti <rebeccavisconti1@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:10 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am in complete agreement with City Manager Shohreh Dupuis' well articulated comments (below) and fully support our City moving forward with the DSP.

Thank you for considering my comments in support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

[It is important that we move forward considering new business needs with respect to our town's architectural heritage]. The Laguna Beach Downtown is both the face of our beautiful City and the economic engine. Due to online shopping and the decline of brick-and-mortar retail, it is vital that downtowns adapt to market trends to stay competitive. Customer preference is shifting away from retail businesses and towards experiential land uses, such as food service, tasting rooms and the like. This was confirmed by the City's Retail Market Evaluation Study, which found that restaurants are significantly outperforming retail stores in the Downtown. Additionally, the vacancy rate of retail spaces in Orange County is up 15.4% over the past year.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been overly restrictive. As such, our Downtown has struggled to find high quality tenants and innovative businesses, and there has been a lack of property investment. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most properties in the Downtown were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. In many cases, the parking requirements are so high that each site would need to be developed with a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the parking, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. Because most sites do not have sufficient parking, businesses are not allowed to change their use (e.g., retail to restaurant), which has caused the businesses to stagnate. I fully support the updated parking requirements in the updated DSP, which will allow for greater flexibility in change of use and will promote new and interesting businesses. Parking for various independent uses is “shared” throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking, and as a result the overall demand generated by Downtown patrons is less than the sum of the City’s parking requirements. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City’s parking data.

Over the past several years, cities throughout the country have been contemplating how to enhance their downtowns and create a sense of place. Laguna Beach is doing the same by updating its DSP. The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it a great place for both residents and visitors alike.

This updated DSP is the result of City staff working with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings to reach consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements. For these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated DSP.

Warm Regards,

Rebecca Visconti

341 Diamond street

Laguna Beach 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Louise Thornton <lbthornton46@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:12 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item.

Laguna Beach's Village is unique. There are very few places left in Southern California where you can find a charming, visitor friendly, and walkable downtown—all shaded by mature trees. Each building is a piece and part of our history which—as we have for over 100 years—we should continue to celebrate and preserve. The loss of these one of a kind historic resources would destroy the very fabric our community.

Laguna is protected by the mountains and the sea. We take advantage of our one of a kind spot on the coast by artistically renewing and refurbishing rather than tearing down. Please do open the doors to those who wish to turn Laguna into another Dana Point, Corona Del Mar or Newport Beach.

Please do not allow the Laguna Beach City to once again ignore the environmental impact that overbuilding and reduced parking will bring to our central Village.

Just as we view our Marine Reserve as part of who we are, so, too, is our Village. Laguna Beach residents live here because of our unique character and we cherish it. Help us protect it.

Thank you.

Louise Thornton
Laguna Beach, California

"Bring light, not heat."
Gwen Ifill (1955-2016)

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Kathy Tanaka <blissdesigns@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:18 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

We are a family that lives in Laguna Beach, and we are against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents. People come to Laguna due to its special quaintness. Please do not take Laguna's history away and give it to the developers.

Sincerely,

The Tanaka Family

Sent from my iPhone

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Roger Owens <rowens35@yahoo.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:29 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please reject Laguna Beach's proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan. As a homeowner in Laguna Beach since 1979, I moved my family to Laguna because of its small-town character, its visual and aesthetic appeal, and its unique history. The proposed changes to the Downtown Specific Plan will destroy our unique village character and allow historic buildings to be altered or demolished.

Laguna Beach is a very special place. Tourists from all over the world come to Laguna to experience its unique character. Long-time residents and homeowners stay in Laguna precisely because of its special historic character and feel. The proposed changes to the Downtown Specific Plan will allow the destruction of the very elements that make Laguna so special a place to visit and to live.

Please reject the proposed changes, as they do not reflect the views of the vast majority of Laguna Beach residents and homeowners.

Thank you,
Roger Owens
Laguna Beach
(949) 497-5503

**Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).**

Kavita Reddy <ms.kavita.reddy@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:32 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

[Dear Commissioners,](#)

I am writing to you to express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2),.

The Downtown Specific Plan was originally written and updated in the 1980's which is pre-Internet. Think about how much our lives have changed since then! The DSP needs to be amended to catch up and modernize for the needs of today's residents and visitors.

Laguna Beach's downtown was created as a walkable community as evidenced by the lack of parking attached to each building. Visitors come for this reason - to spend the day walking - going to the beach, shopping and dining. Locals enjoy walking around their town as well. Though it was not designed with parking, the parking requirements that went into effect in the 1950's are the same as other cities like Irvine which have a lot of space and a lot of parking lots. As a resident of Laguna Beach, I do not want to see parking created for each building in the downtown. It would ruin the essence of the town.

Pick up any newspaper in the last 7 years and you will see article after article about how today's consumers (visitors and residents) want experiences and not retail. Experiences include dining and mixed use spaces. This is evidenced further by the record number of retail store closures throughout the country. Laguna Beach's parking requirements render it impossible to provide the types of experiences that visitors and residents want because these uses require more parking than we have. We address parking by having the year round trolley and many parking lots throughout the city.

The updated Downtown Specific Plan addresses provides a path to address the desires of visitors and residents. Please vote for this plan because the status quo means the modern day needs of visitors and residents can't be met.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Kavita Reddy

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Jennifer Johns <jjen58@att.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:40 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Members of the Coastal Commission,

I have been alerted to a proposal from the city to change the policies for Laguna's downtown, which would encourage the redevelopment of its vintage historic buildings. This is a terrible of the community, which brings people from all over to visit (including me, although I only have to travel from Los Angeles).

Please don't support this. I don't particularly like hanging out on the beach, but I love wandering through Laguna's historic neighborhoods, including Forest and Ocean downtown. I ask you to keep it and beautiful.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Johns

**Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).**

Cary Redfearn <cary@lblumberyard.occoxmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 10:48 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to you express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

The Laguna Beach Downtown is both the face of our beautiful City and the economic engine. Due to online shopping and the decline of brick-and-mortar retail, it is vital that downtowns adapt to market trends to stay competitive. Customer preference is shifting away from retail businesses and towards experiential land uses, such as food service, tasting rooms and the like. This was confirmed by the City's Retail Market Evaluation Study, which found that restaurants are significantly outperforming retail stores in the Downtown. Additionally, the vacancy rate of retail spaces in Orange County is up 15.4% over the past year.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been overly restrictive. As such, our Downtown has struggled to find high quality tenants and innovative businesses, and there has been a lack of property investment. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most properties in the Downtown were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. In many cases, the parking requirements are so high that each site would need to be developed with a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the parking, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. Because most sites do not have sufficient parking, business are not allowed to change their use (e.g., retail to restaurant), which has caused the businesses to stagnate. I fully support the updated parking requirements in the updated DSP, which will allow for greater flexibility in change of use and will promote new and interesting businesses. Parking for various independent uses is "shared" throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking, and as a result the overall demand generated by Downtown patrons is less than the sum of the City's parking requirements. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City's parking data.

Over the past several years, cities throughout the country have been contemplating how to enhance their downtowns and create a sense of place. Laguna Beach is doing the same by updating its DSP. I am thrilled with the results and optimistic about the future. The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it a great place for both residents and visitors alike. I am the owner of two restaurants in downtown Laguna Beach and have gone through the onerous process of getting a CUP – an updated DSP will help make it easier for both the business and City to provide ongoing improved locations that benefit locals and visitors alike.

This updated DSP is the result of City staff working with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings to reach consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements. For these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated DSP.

Thank you,

Cary Redfearn, Owner

Lumberyard Restaurant & Slice Pizza

Laguna Beach Historic Preservation Coalition

31423 Coast Highway #28
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
(949) 424-5228 lagunabeachhpc@gmail.com

December 9, 2021

California Coastal Commission
via email

Re: City of Laguna Beach LCP Major Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission:

The organizations that co-sign this letter thank you for the opportunity to register our objections to the proposed amendments to Laguna Beach's Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). The proposed amendments would lead not only to significant erosion of Laguna Beach's community character, which attracts visitors to our coastal community from across the region, state, and nation, but also to the demolition and substantial alteration of historic resources that are essential to preserving that character.

Staff have taken care to recommend modifications to the proposed DSP that better maintain public access to many coastal resources and protect views. But the Staff Report's silence on the subject of historic resources and community character is troubling and surprising: troubling, because of the obvious environmental impacts under CEQA if the proposed revisions to the DSP are allowed to go into effect; and surprising, given that we alerted staff to these problems in our letter of September 16, 2021, in light of proposed and related changes to Laguna Beach's Historic Preservation Ordinance, Design Guidelines, and Land Use Element. These documents are also part of Laguna's Local Coastal Program, and proposed revisions to them are expected to come before the Commission within a few months.

We believe that the proposed revisions to Laguna's DSP, *even as modified by staff*, do not comply with the California Environmental Quality Act or the Coastal Act. The revisions would lead to substantial adverse impacts to historic resources and aesthetics and to impacts that are cumulatively considerable, and these impacts have not been acknowledged let alone mitigated or avoided. Moreover, the Commission should not consider changes to the DSP separately from related proposed changes to other documents in the LCP. The DSP revisions are inconsistent with the current Historic Preservation Ordinance, Design Guidelines, and Land Use Element of the LCP. Apart from the pressing problem of an inconsistent LCP, reviewing these documents separately makes it impossible for the Commission or the public to understand potential impacts of the amended DSP. We therefore urge you to reject the proposed changes.

The DSP Amendments and CEQA Compliance

When a local government prepares and adopts a local coastal program pursuant to the Coastal Act, under Title 14 § 15265(c) of the Cal. Code of Regulations the burden of CEQA compliance "shifts" "from the local agency...to the California Coastal Commission." CEQA explicitly considers historic resources, aesthetics, and visual character to be part of the environment. The revised DSP makes several changes that would affect all three by:

- arbitrarily reducing the number of identified historic resources in the DSP area from 65 to 27;
- removing all references to the Historic Resources Inventory, even though the properties listed on it are considered historic resources under CEQA, and they are treated as historic resources throughout Laguna's LCP;
- allowing all nonconforming buildings to be replaced by new construction up to the original height, which creates an *explicit incentive* for the demolition of older and historic buildings;
- changing parking requirements that disincentivize preservation of historic buildings;
- allowing height increases and the addition of second stories to historic resources;
- removing a requirement that proposed alterations to historic resources on the Inventory be reviewed by the Heritage Committee.

The Staff Report errs in finding the proposed DSP amendments consistent with CEQA. It appears to borrow the logic of the City's flawed (and superfluous) Negative Declaration. In finding that the revisions "could not have a significant effect on the environment," the Neg Dec states, multiple times, that "The proposed project does not include new development; however, the DSP allows for greater flexibility in development standards such as increased building height. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State, and City regulations, discretionary review and *must be consistent with the policies of the DSP*" (Oct. 21, 2019, p. 5, 6, emphasis added).

The "policies of the DSP" are precisely what are in question. If those policies change, the City's—and the Coastal Commission's—obligations under CEQA would change too, for example, if these new policies no longer protect some three dozen properties listed on the Historic Resources Inventory. Changes such as this must be reviewed for CEQA compliance, in addition to any review of new development projects down the line. Staff propose for the Commission to skirt this obligation by claiming that "Throughout the coastal zone, specific impacts to coastal resources resulting from individual development projects are assessed through the coastal development review process; thus, any individual project will be required to undergo environmental review under CEQA" (Staff Report, November 21, 2021, p. 24).

If staff's analysis were correct, and CEQA review only concerned "specific impacts" from "individual development projects," then policy documents would be exempt from CEQA review. They are not. CEQA requires consideration not only of direct physical impacts but also of "reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment," which is why revisions to a Local Coastal Program qualify as a "project" under CEQA (CEQA Guidelines § 15064 (2) (d)). In *Lighthouse Field Beach Rescue v. City of Santa Cruz* (2005) 131 Cal.4th 1170, the court overturned a negative declaration for a proposed amendment of a beach master plan that failed to evaluate possible adverse impacts to the environment by a foreseeable increase in unleashed dogs. Similarly in Laguna's case, proposed changes to Laguna's DSP would all too likely increase demolitions and substantial alteration of historic buildings for new construction. The City and the Coastal Commission would be creating new policies and processes for reviewing historic properties that weaken oversight of them (such as elimination of Heritage Committee review).

In dramatically reducing the number of buildings considered to be historic in the downtown, Laguna aims to preempt further CEQA review for cultural resource impacts to buildings that are currently considered historic resources, but no longer would be if the amendments are adopted. Indeed, the goal of the City's efforts to create a "voluntary" historic preservation program, which include revisions to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the Design Guidelines, and the Land Use Element, in addition to the proposed changes to the DSP, is to avoid having to consider hundreds of properties in Laguna, including dozens within the DSP area, as historic resources under CEQA.

The Coastal Commission's functional equivalent of the EIR process must disclose these impacts and comply with CEQA's substantive mandate "that each public agency shall mitigate or avoid the

significant effects on the environment of projects that it carries out or approves whenever it is feasible to do so" (Pub. Res. Code 21002.1(b)). It has not done so in this case. The Staff Report makes no mention of potential historic resource impacts, even though, under the mandates of CEQA, the Commission's purview reaches beyond community character to the protection of Laguna's historic resources.

Laguna's Changes to the DSP Are Contrary to Protecting Community Character

The character of Laguna Beach, and its value for both residents and visitors, is inextricably tied to its historic resources, especially in the downtown area. Laguna recognizes this. As stated in the Historic Resources Element of the General Plan (1983; revised 2006):

A defining feature of Laguna Beach is its variety and number of older homes and buildings. If the positive image of Laguna Beach as a pedestrian community with a unique village atmosphere and significant aesthetic amenities can be maintained, the City will continue to enjoy prosperity and increased property values.

The loss of numerous older buildings due to the escalating coastal real estate market and changes in the housing sizes and styles was the catalyst for the original Historic Resources Element adopted by the City in 1983. The City Council recognized the importance of enacting measures to protect its numerous historic buildings.

Through the Historic Resources Element and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City incorporates historic preservation as a major component of its local planning process and recognizes its importance to maintaining the quality of life of its residents, as well as promoting its attraction to visitors" (p. 1, emphasis added).

The variety, quantity, and quality of Laguna's historic buildings are vital to community character. The City's historic preservation program was created to prevent the loss of character by actively discouraging the loss of historic buildings. Although the City has also proposed to amend its Historic Resources Element (which is not part of the LCP and thus not subject to Commission review), none of this language has changed, meaning that the City still purports to consider older homes and buildings "a defining feature" of Laguna.



Corner of South Coast Highway and Forest Ave., 1920s and today

Amendments to the DSP impermissibly reduce protections for historic resources. The current DSP (2008) states:

There are many buildings in the downtown area which are listed in the City's Historic Resources Inventory and which make a notable architectural contribution to the village character (II-7).

This sentence has been changed to:

There are many buildings in the downtown area which may be eligible for listing on the State and /or National Historic Register that make a notable contribution to the village character (Revised DSP, 2019, p. 32).

These sentences are not equivalent. Buildings listed in the Historic Resources Inventory are considered historic resources under CEQA. The Inventory was adopted by Council Resolution in 1982 as "the best representatives of historically significant architecture within the City of Laguna Beach" (Resolution 82.111) and thus qualifies as a "local register of historical resources" (PRC § 5020.1(k)). These historic resources are identified and specific. The City is attempting to eliminate protections for them through their changes to the DSP as well as other LCP documents. Buildings that might hypothetically be eligible for listing in the National and California Register specifically omit locally significant and eligible historic resources. Buildings on the Inventory continue to "make a notable architectural contribution" to Laguna's "village" and community character.



Forest Ave., Historic resources listed on the Inventory

The current DSP has this to say about “historic preservation” under Issue Statements and Policies, Topic 1 Village Character:

Downtown Laguna Beach was one of the first areas of the City to be extensively developed in the early 1900’s. Many of the original buildings are still in use today. The City’s Historic Resources Inventory identifies a total of 65 historically significant structures in the Downtown Specific Plan Area, including 19 buildings that have a rating of “Exceptional”... While the “Exceptional” or E-rated buildings are individually viewed as quite significant, the entire collection of historic buildings including “Key” (K) and “Contributive” (C)-rated structures make an important contribution to the character of the downtown. There are a number of older buildings in the downtown that do not appear on the Inventory but which also add to the overall character of the area. A concerted effort should be made to maintain the contribution these buildings make to downtown.

Historic preservation is an important consideration in the downtown because of its close relationship to other planning and design considerations. The historic buildings in the downtown display the City’s architectural heritage and serve as models for preserving the downtown’s character into the future...” (III-4, underline added.).

The revised DSP eliminates the underlined portion above.

Downtown Laguna Beach was one of the first areas of the City to be extensively developed in the early 1900’s. Many of the original buildings are still in use today.

Historic preservation is an important consideration in the downtown because of its close relationship to other planning and design considerations. The historic buildings in the downtown display the City’s architectural heritage and serve as models for preserving the downtown’s character into the future...” (Draft DSP, 2019, p. 43).

These changes are scarcely trivial. They seek to eliminate properties listed on the Inventory from consideration as historic resources whose preservation contributes to the character of downtown. The revised DSP does not suggest that properties on the Inventory no longer contribute to community character. Moreover, the existing DSP notes the existence of “a number of older buildings” that are not on the Inventory, which did not survey properties built after 1939, and *their* contribution to the “overall character of the area,” a contribution that should be “maintain[ed].” The revised DSP scraps this language without explanation. Particularly chilling is the provision that non-conforming buildings could be replaced and yet maintain their original height. The City is proposing to create an incentive to demolish older character buildings.

It is impossible to understand the significance of these changes without evaluating them in tandem with the other proposed changes to the City’s historic preservation program. Those changes aim to make the City’s robust historic preservation program, which has been in place for forty years, “voluntary.” After years of meetings to revise the historic preservation program in a way that would preserve protections for identified and potential historic properties, while clarifying expectations and simplifying the project review process for property owners, the City Council voted in October 2018 to switch to a “voluntary” preservation program at the behest of property owners who wanted to be able to treat their historic properties like any other property, including demolishing them. These revisions to the LCP propose to treat historic resources differently from any other aspect of the environment. Property owners do not get to decide whether their property is in an environmentally sensitive area or on a bluff top. Historic status is a matter of expert opinion not owner whim.

The LCP Would Be Inconsistent

Laguna's current LCP includes language that celebrates Laguna's architectural heritage including resources that are listed on the Inventory. For example, both Design Review Criteria LBMC 25.05.040(H) and the Land Use Element (A-8) state: "Destruction or alteration of properties with

historic significance, *as identified in the City's historic resources inventory* or historic register, should be avoided whenever possible. *Special preservation consideration should also be given to any structure over 45 years old*" (emphasis added). The proposed revisions to the DSP specifically open up property on the Inventory and older buildings—structures "over 45 years old"—to redevelopment, including demolition and the addition of a second story.

The Historic Preservation Ordinance begins with the following objective: "(A) To safeguard the heritage of the city by providing for the protection of historic resources representing significant elements of its history" (LCM 25.05.002). The revised DSP would remove local historic properties on the Inventory, violating the very first provision of the ordinance.

Laguna Beach has proposed destructive changes to the treatment of historic resources in several documents in the LCP, *but they have not yet been heard by the Coastal Commission*. They may never be adopted, and so approval of the changes to the DSP at this point is premature.

Conclusion

For the above reasons we ask that you vote against adoption and certification of the proposed amendments to the DSP. We further request that you

- insist that revisions to Laguna's DSP be considered together with the other revisions to Laguna's LCP

- insist on study of the impacts to historic resources, aesthetics, and visual character as required under CEQA

- insist on study of the impacts to community character under the Coastal Act

- refuse to remove references to the Historic Resources Inventory and the properties listed therein from any LCP documents.

In 2017 the entire city along with its greenbelt was recognized by the National Park Service as a Historic American Landscape, the only one in Orange County. Laguna's historic built environment is key to the ongoing national significance of this honored landscape, and Laguna's downtown plays a vital role. Both the current and proposed DSP describe a "downtown village area" that "remains, against almost overwhelming odds, unique." Laguna has beaten the odds, not because it was lucky, or miraculously exempt from the pressures that have destroyed the character and charm of beach communities up and down the state, but because of its long-standing commitment to preserving its historic, small-scale village character. Allowing the City to willy-nilly unravel this commitment is a gamble the community, and the millions of visitors who enjoy this magnificent town each year, can ill afford.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Catherine Jurca, President
Laguna Beach Historic Preservation Coalition

Krista Nicholds, Executive Director
Preserve Orange County

Tony Trabucco, President
Old Town Preservation Association, Orange

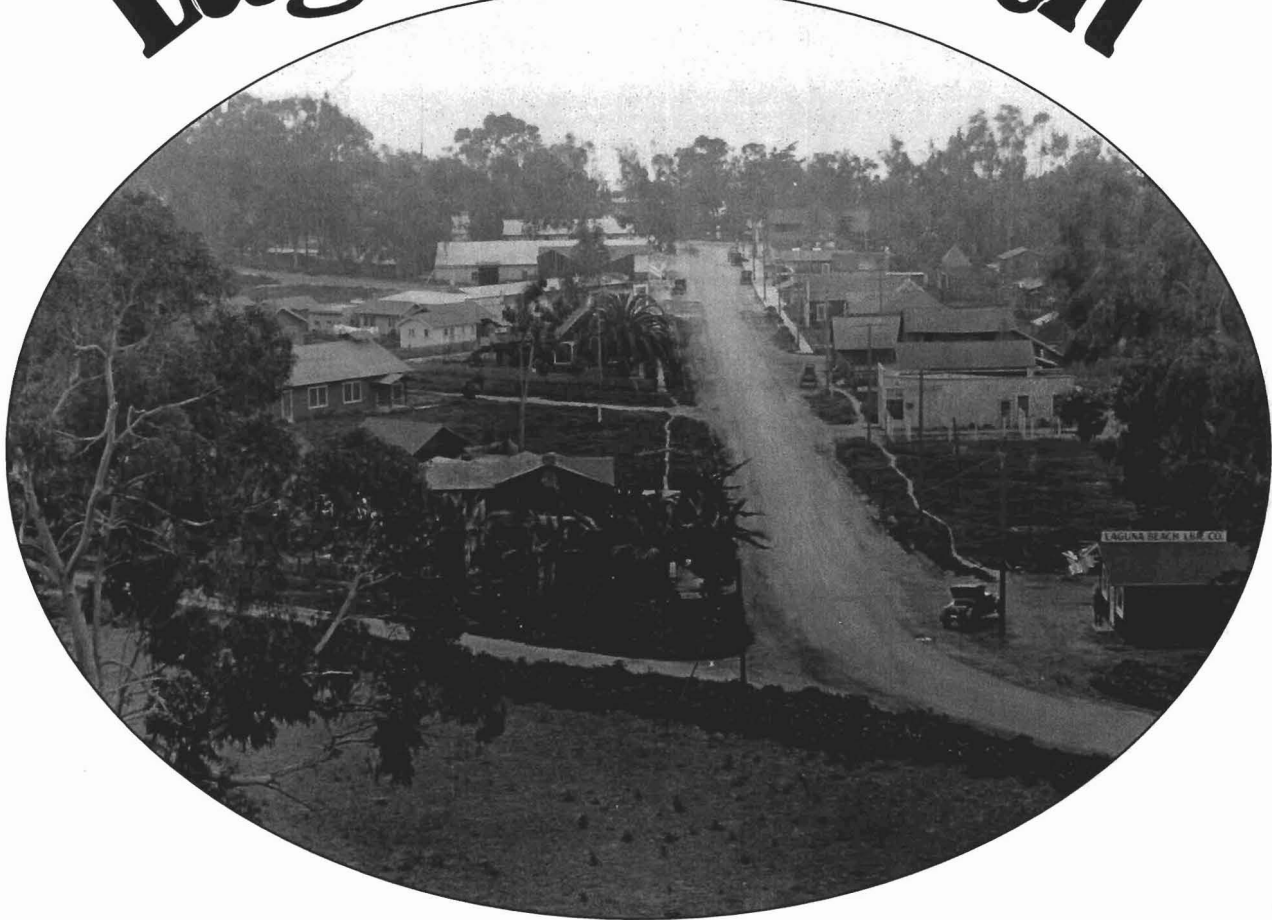
Patricia Martz
California Cultural Resources Preservation Alliance, Irvine

Peggy Palmer
The Coalition to Protect Mariner's Mile, Newport Beach

Cc: Susan Brandt-Hawley
Deborah Rosenthal
Anne Caenn, Village Laguna
Marlene Alvarado, Coastal Program Analyst
Zach Rehm, District Supervisor
Amber Dobson, District Manager

Attachments: Laguna Beach Historic Resources Element (rev. 2006)

Laguna Beach



Historic Resources Element

CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

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CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH

HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

Originally Adopted
July, 1981

Amendment Adopted by City Council January 10, 2006
Resolution No. 06.006

**CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH
HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT**

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PURPOSE OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

The Historic Resources Element provides the foundation for the protection and preservation of historic structures identified in the inventory.

A defining feature of Laguna Beach is its variety and number of older homes and buildings. If the positive and inviting image of Laguna Beach as a pedestrian community with a unique village atmosphere and significant aesthetic amenities can be retained, the City will continue to enjoy prosperity and increased property values.

The loss of numerous older buildings due to the escalating coastal real estate market and changes in the housing sizes and styles was the catalyst for the original Historic Resources Element adopted by the City in 1983. The City Council of Laguna Beach recognized the importance of enacting measures to protect its numerous historic buildings. In 1980 the City Council took a proactive approach composing a citywide inventory of structures with historic value. The Historic Resources Element provides guidelines, goals and policies that assist the City of Laguna Beach in preserving its historic and cultural resources. It establishes a broad framework for both public and private efforts and outlines an implementation program of both financial and planning incentives to promote long-term appreciation and preservation of historic resources.

Through the Historic Resources Element and the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the City incorporates historic preservations as a major component of its local planning process and recognizes its importance to maintaining the quality of life of its residents, as well as promoting its attraction to visitors.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE HISTORIC RESOURCES ELEMENT

The Historic Resources Element is not a state-mandated element of the General Plan. Even though this element is optional, it follows specified procedures developed for mandatory elements in terms of content, style and process. The Historic Resources Element is composed of three main components: 1) Introduction, 2) Issues, Goals and Policies, and 3) The Implementation Plan. The Issues, Goals and Policies section provides a description of the major issues related to preservation and protection of historic resources. Goals, which are overall statements of the community's desires, are comprised of broad statements of purpose and direction. Policies are action statements presented to address these issues. Implementation measures explain how the goals and policies will be achieved and implemented.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The State of California General Plan Guidelines discusses the need for internal consistency among elements of a general plan. The goals, policies and implementation measures are consistent with the applicable elements of the City's General Plan, specifically the Land Use and Housing Elements. Throughout the preparation of this document, consistency and coordination has been maintained, not only with the General Plan, but also with other plans, such as the Vision Laguna Strategic Plan.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Vision Laguna Strategic Plan

In the spring of 1999, the Laguna Beach City Council appointed the Laguna Beach Vision Steering Committee to oversee and manage the Vision Laguna Strategic Plan. The mission of Vision Laguna 2030 was to generate a consensus about the future direction of Laguna Beach. The Vision Laguna 2030 process required gathering a database, identifying a shared vision, developing a strategic plan, and planning for implementation. This update to the City's Historic Resources Element has incorporated pertinent historic preservation goals and projects from the Vision Laguna Strategic Plan.

Downtown Specific Plan

Downtown Laguna Beach was one of the first areas of the City to be extensively developed in the early 1900's. The downtown presence and character distinguishes the community from most of the surrounding cities. The policies established in the Downtown Specific Plan are for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing this unique character. Historic preservation is identified as an important concern in the downtown because of the close relationship to other planning and design considerations. The goals and policies of the Downtown Specific Plan are consistent with the policies of the Historic Resources Element of the City's General Plan

Historic Preservation Ordinance

The provisions of the City of Laguna Beach Historic Preservation Ordinance provide a tool for implementing the Historic Resources Element. The Ordinance promotes voluntary implementation and provides incentives for adding to and modifying historic structures while ensuring preservation of the original architectural integrity of the structure. The incentives include fee waivers, setback flexibility, parking reductions and a property tax reduction (Mills Act) for qualified historic structures.

Properties on the historic inventory are rated either "E" for Exceptional, "K" for Key or "C" for Contributive. "E" rated buildings are usually in excellent condition and unique; some are eligible for the National Register. Structures with a "K" rating are buildings which strongly maintain their original integrity and demonstrate a particular architectural style or time period. "C" rated structures contribute to the overall historic character of the neighborhood, but are not unique or distinctive; however, these properties are still important to the streetscape of Laguna

Beach. The City of Laguna Beach has a total of 745 properties listed on its Historic Inventory, with 130 “E” rated structures, 351 “K” rated structures, and 258 “C” rated structures.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the state legislature in response to a public mandate for thorough environmental analysis of any projects that have the potential to affect the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedures are described in the CEQA Statutes and the CEQA Guidelines. Implementation of CEQA ensures that during the decision-making stage of development, City officials and the general public will be able to assess the environmental impacts associated with private and public development projects to historic, archaeological and paleontological resources.

Certified Local Government

The 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 provided for the establishment of a Certified Local Government (CLG). This program allows for direct local government participation and integration in a comprehensive statewide historic preservation planning process. Certified Local Governments are eligible on a competitive basis for special matching grants from a pool of money representing at least 10 percent of California’s annual grant from the National Historic Preservation Fund. Although it is a federal program, the CLG program is administered by the Office of Historic Preservation in California. A local government that agrees to enforce state and local legislation for the designation and protection of historic properties, maintains a review board, maintains a system for the survey and inventory of historic properties and provides public participation in the local historic preservation process.

California Register of Historical Resources

The California Register of Historic Resources, enacted in 1992, is an authoritative guide to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state’s historical resources. The California Register program encourages public recognition of architectural, historic, archaeological, and cultural significance resources; identifies historical resources for state and local planning purposes; and defines threshold eligibility for state historical grant funding. Individuals or local governments may directly nominate properties to the California Register. Local public agencies may assist in the nomination of properties and may comment on nominations, which originate from private groups or individuals within their jurisdiction. Property owners must be notified and provided an opportunity to comment upon the nominations.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation’s cultural resources worthy of recognition and preservation. It is a federal program maintained by the National Park Service and administered by the Office of Historic Preservation in California. Properties qualify when they (a) are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history, (b) are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past, (c) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; represent the work of a master; possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose

components may lack individual distinction or (d) have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. Any individual or group may prepare a National Register nomination. Completed applications are submitted to the Office of Historic Preservation.

Although there are 38 properties eligible, only two properties in Laguna Beach are currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places; one is Villa Rockledge (c.1918-1921), a Spanish Mediterranean house designed by noted architect Arthur Benton, designer of the Mission Inn Hotel in Riverside, CA. Villa Rockledge is located at 2529 South Coast Highway. The other property listed on the National Register is the Cathedral Chapel of St. Francis By-the-Sea (American Catholic Church, c.1933), with eclectic architecture and built from the rubble of the Long Beach earthquake. The Cathedral Chapel of St. Francis by the Sea is located at 430 Park Avenue. Photographs of these two structures follow this section.

List of Properties Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places:

 411 Arroyo Chico	2191 Ocean Way
820 Catalina Street	2192 Ocean Way
1559 Catalina Street	162 South Coast Highway
372 Center Street	335 South Coast Highway
339 Cleo Street	425 South Coast Highway
550 & 556 Cliff Drive	901- 913 South Coast Highway
305 Forest Avenue	976 South Coast Highway
384 Forest Avenue	1009 South Coast Highway
412 Glenneyre Street	1183 South Coast Highway
1166 Glenneyre Street	1289 South Coast Highway
571 Graceland Drive	1316 South Coast Highway
310 Hawthorne Road	1450 South Coast Highway
770 Hillcrest Drive	1464 South Coast Highway
445 Linden Street	2241 South Coast Highway
390 Magnolia Drive	2475 South Coast Highway
758 Manzanita Street	155 Sunset Terrace
139 Moss Point	2683 Victoria Drive
212 North Coast Highway	290 Wave Street
308 North Coast Highway	South Laguna:
1280-1284 North Coast Highway	31172 Ceanothus Drive
1991 Ocean Way	40 North La Senda



Villa Rockledge as
viewed from above.



Villa Rockledge as viewed
from the front.



The Cathedral Chapel of St.
Francis by-the-Sea.

A Short History of Laguna Beach

by
Karen Turnbull

Reprinted from: *A Hundred Years of Yesterdays: A Centennial History of the People of Orange County and Their Communities*. Edited by Esther R. Cramer..., et al. Sponsored by the Orange County Register. Santa Ana: The Orange County Centennial, Inc., 1988.

Additional material and minor editing by Belinda Blacketer, Jane Janz, Anne Frank, Kathy Les and Norm Grossman

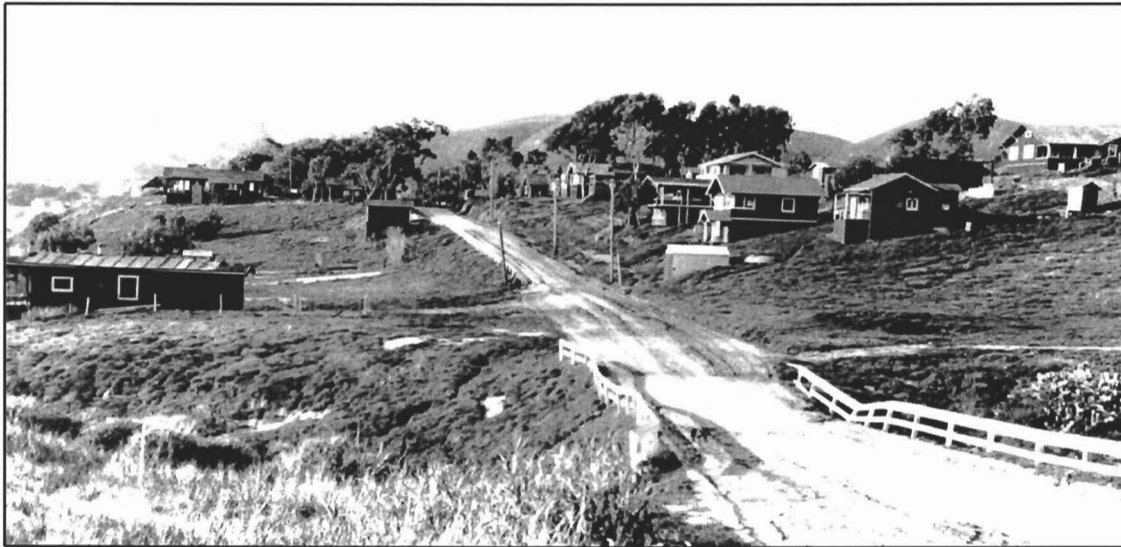
Steep cliffs, water-etched coves, rolling hills, and deep canyons surround a small, flat basin where vacationers used to come in the summer to escape the inland heat. In what is one of the most desirable and expensive communities in Orange County today, it is difficult to believe that at one time land was free to those willing to cultivate and farm it and that oceanfront lots were assessed for about \$5 apiece.

Before 1880

Although the North Laguna area was originally part of the San Joaquin Rancho, downtown Laguna and South Laguna were never part of a Spanish or Mexican land grant. This meant that these areas remained available for government sponsored homesteading. The Timber Cultures Act of 1872 was designed to encourage migration to the "Golden West" by granting 160 acres of land to anyone planting 10 acres of trees. Families began to arrive and stake out their 160-acre claims and plant the requisite trees, which in Laguna meant the Australian eucalyptus. The groves planted in the 1880's helped form the character of Laguna and added much needed shade, although as lumber they were virtually useless. The groves grew so prodigiously that in the 1910's trees had to be cut down by the dozens to carve out space for the growing community.



1920's view of Main Beach from St. Ann's Beach.



Sleepy Hollow in 1920's. Cleo Street and South Coast Highway before paving.

In 1871, Eugene Salter, the first American settler of South Laguna, claimed part of Aliso Canyon. He soon left and George and Sarah Thurston claimed his 152 acres and one-room shack. George Thurston raised vegetables and melons and sold them in Los Angeles, which required a five-day trip by wagon. Their son, Joseph Thurston, chronicled the family's life and times in *Laguna Beach of Early Days*. The family name is memorialized in Thurston Intermediate School, Thurston Street, and Sarah Thurston Park in Laguna Canyon.

The Brooks brothers, William and Nathaniel, arrived and settled in 1876. Both are referred to as the "father of Laguna" depending on the source cited. William Brooks came to Laguna from Downey on a hunting trip, following the old Indian trail through Laguna Canyon. He claimed 169 acres at Arch Beach (now the Diamond Street area) and laid out a subdivision. He was also Laguna's first stagecoach driver. Nathaniel Brooks brought water from Bluebird Canyon through a series of pipes and tunnels to Arch Beach. They temporarily sold out to another pioneer, Hubbard Goff (remembered in Goff Street and Goff's Island). In 1886, Goff opened the first hostelry in Laguna, the Arch Beach Hotel.

In 1878, John Damron homesteaded 528 acres near the mouth of Laguna Canyon, including Temple Hills and the "flats" above Arch Beach. The downtown was later purchased by George Rogers for \$1,000 and subdivided into individual lots. The Rogers home stood on the site of the present city hall. He and his daughter Elizabeth are credited with planting the prominent pepper tree that stands in front of city hall. Rogers built a one room school house adjacent to his home for his eight children and hired a teacher. Several other children attended as well, marking this as Laguna's first significant attempt at public education.

1880 – 1900

By 1888, there were about 15 permanent families living in Laguna. By then, the area had gained a reputation as a lovely seaside resort ideal for summer camping and vacationing. During the summers, rows and rows of canvas tents were pitched by seasonal vacationers.

During the Southern California real estate boom of the 1880's, Arch Beach was a separate village. It was granted a post office in 1889, two years before Laguna received one on May 15, 1891. Laguna Beach was then called "Lagona," a corruption of the Spanish word for lagoon until September 17, 1904, when the residents petitioned the government to change the name to Laguna Beach.



1910 Forest Avenue from the intersection with South Coast Highway.

The first postmasters were Oliver Brooks at Arch Beach and William Brooks in Laguna. South Laguna opened a post office in 1933 under the name "Three Arches," with Mrs. Grace Powers as postmistress. The following year residents voted for a new name. "South Laguna" won by a write-in vote.

In 1888, the Mormons who settled near the intersection of El Toro Road and Laguna Canyon Road built a school for their children. The school was used until 1892 when the land boom ended and most of the Mormons moved to El Toro, taking their houses with them. In 1893, this building was moved to the corner of Canyon Acres and Laguna Canyon Road, then to Legion and Through Streets, where it became a church and later the art studio of Joseph Kleitsch. Building materials were scarce and most buildings were recycled in the early days.

Always a tourist town, Laguna Beach opened its second hotel in 1889. It was built by Henry Goff and purchased by Joseph Yoch for \$600. Yoch also bought the defunct Arch Beach Hotel. He had it cut into three sections, moved it into town, and joined it to his hotel, creating a massive establishment of thirty bedrooms and two bathrooms. This hotel was condemned in 1928 and the present Hotel Laguna opened the following year on the same site.



1940's Hotel Laguna with neon sign on top. The sign, which was removed in the 1960's, was considered a Landmark. In the foreground, the Isch Building, a Mediterranean Revival built in 1927.

The next vacation retreat was the Brooks House, built in 1892. It was a red two-story Victorian structure located on the present site of the Isch Building, the building directly south of and adjacent to Main Beach Park. Unfortunately, the hotel burned down before the paint was completely dry.

Other early residents included Oscar Warling and Fred Trefren who operated a stage line to El Toro and Santa Ana which ran daily from 1884 to 1901. John Nicholas Isch ran the livery stable (on the site of the present Isch Building). He also ran a grocery and was one of the early postmasters. Known for his trusting ways, he never locked up when he went fishing. Customers came in, helped themselves to groceries, picked up their own mail and could pay the next time they came in. For a number of years, the only telephone in town was in the store. The phone was connected with the Irvine ranch house, and messages could be relayed from there to the outside world.

In South Laguna, the Egans, Shrewsburys, Andersons, and Goffs were homesteaders raising beans and melons. South Laguna had several close calls with commercialism. In 1889, the Santa Fe railroad purchased Goff's Island, (now the Montage Resort and Spa) and planned a depot and resort. When the tracks were laid inland instead, those plans failed. The Depression of the 1890's saved South Laguna from an urbanized future.

1900-1920

Elmer Jahraus came to Laguna from Santa Ana in 1903 to open a cigar factory and curio shop in the lower floor of the Yoch Hotel. In 1912, his son, Joe Jahraus, started a lumberyard on upper Ocean Avenue, which enabled the community to grow at unprecedented rates. Prior to the lumberyard, construction materials were hauled by mule down Laguna Canyon, or were floated in on the tide from boats - usually the schooner *Emma*.

The third school was built on Park Avenue in 1908 on the site of an old cemetery. This two-room school was still in use in 1926, when it was moved down the hill to its present location on Legion Street, where it is used as Legion Hall.



1920's looking down South Coast Highway and Ocean Avenue. Shown in the foreground are Lewis Blacketer and Doc Mallow.

North Laguna was originally called Laguna Cliffs. This area was developed by Howard Heisler, L.C. McKnight and the Thumb Brothers. In 1905 they purchased the land north of Laguna Creek to Emerald Bay from the Irvine Ranch Company. They subdivided and laid out the only streets in Laguna that ran perpendicular to one another. Water was piped in from Laguna Canyon and this was the first neighborhood offering water with every lot. Wells had been used for years and water was hauled in barrels from Laguna or Aliso Canyons to town.

Artists Discover Laguna Beach

The first important artist to arrive was Norman St. Clair, who in 1903 reached Laguna Beach by train from Los Angeles and stagecoach from El Toro. He made numerous sketches of the surf, hillsides and lagoons. His fellow plein air artists in San Francisco were so impressed with his work and his praise of the weather that they began to move to the area and a tradition was born.

As news of the picturesque village spread, the artists came in droves. They included such notable artists as Frank Cuprien, Gardner Symonds, William Wendt, William Daniell, Anna Hills, and William Alexander Griffith. Many of these artists banded together in 1913 and rented a small wooden building next to the Hotel Laguna. Under the leadership of Edgar A. Payne, the artists refurbished the building and held their first exhibition in August 1918. Three hundred people attended the first day and two thousand the first month. This showing was the beginning of the Laguna Beach Art Association and the present Laguna Beach Art Museum.



1950's 200 block of Forest Avenue looking towards the ocean.

1920-1940

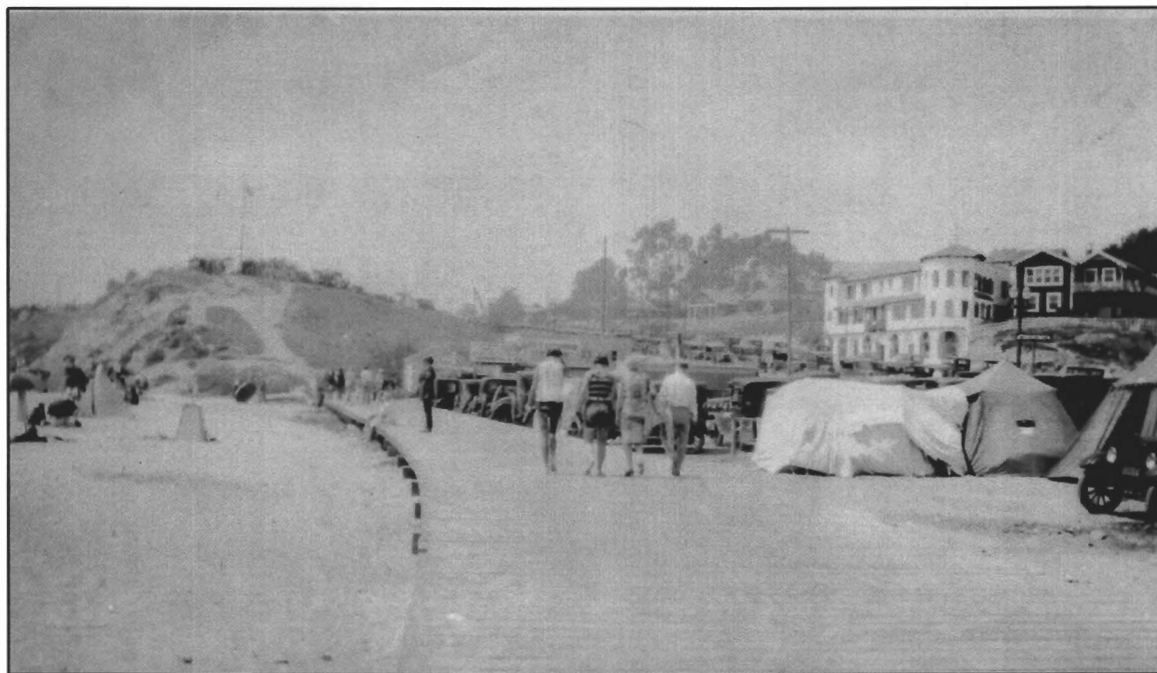
The opening of Pacific Coast Highway on October 9, 1926 was a major stimulant for growth in both Laguna Beach and South Laguna. Famous Hollywood actress, Mary Pickford, accompanied by equally famous husband Douglas Fairbanks Jr., cut the inaugural ribbon. Opening up the coast route brought in not only tourists and film celebrities, but more permanent residents. Finally, with a population of 1,900, Laguna Beach was incorporated as a city on June 29, 1927.

Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters

The first pageant ever held in Laguna was in 1923, as an Indian pageant promoted by Isaac Frazee. It was called *Kitshi Manido* and was held in the large eucalyptus grove in Sleepy Hollow (corner of Catalina and Arroyo Chico streets). The second *Kitshi* was held in 1927 in Laguna Canyon on the Boys Club property. In 1932, Roy M. Ropp conceived of the idea of a pageant and art festival. El Paseo (a little street by Hotel Laguna) was used as the site. Booths were set up and a stage was built on which people posed against painted backdrops to recreate great works of art. In 1935, Ropp took over the presentation of the “old masters,” and he designed and directed what is now the Pageant of the Masters. The citizens of Laguna Beach passed a park tax in 1940 and bought the Irvine Bowl Park to house the festivities from then on.

Today

Laguna’s “village character” remains in spite of growth and commercialism. No small part of this charm is due to the shaggy eucalyptus and one of a kind architecture. Also, the relative isolation in which Laguna exists, surrounded by mountains, ocean, and greenbelts, keep the town a little different from neighboring cities. This geography makes it unlikely that Laguna will ever be absorbed in a major urban continuum. Concerned citizens work hard to acquire land just to leave it alone. Other groups work hard to promote ordinances to keep the city's charm. The artistic spirit prevails and it seems likely that Laguna’s charm will be here for a long time to come.



1920's Main Beach boardwalk looking north.

Architectural Background

The earliest dwellings and buildings built by homesteading families like the Thurstons, Brooks, and Rogers were of a rudimentary construction and have long since disappeared. Typically they were a board and batten box plan dwelling with a gabled roof and some type of entry porch. Economy and lack of elaborate building materials meant ornamentation was kept to a minimum. Only a handful of these pre-1900 Victorian-era homes remain in Laguna. Because of their age in relationship to the rest of the City's housing stock, they take on special historic importance.

By 1910 Laguna Beach was still a rather rustic and isolated village, but still popular as a seaside resort. There was no electricity in town, cooking and lighting were still performed by kerosene, and only a few homes had hot water from the old well up the canyon.

The early beach houses of Laguna were basically a permanent replacement of the early tent shelters. They were built as country cottages for weekend retreats from the "city." Utilitarian in design, these cottages were often constructed without foundations and were usually single-wall construction. The only reason that some of these cottages still exist is that they were built entirely of redwood, a termite's nightmare. Beach cottage architecture is not unique to Laguna; the style was also prevalent in Newport Beach and other beach communities.

By 1920 Laguna Beach had gained distinction as an art colony and popular vacation spot. The building boom that took place in Southern California in the 1920s hit Laguna as well. Laguna also became a destination point for the movie industry. This created a demand for hotel lodging for film crews and actors, and some of the stars even bought homes for themselves in Laguna Beach.

With the increase in summer visitors, the demand for permanent residents to provide services for vacationers also increased. More and more beach cottages began to be built, and those who had previously been seasonal residents began to make Laguna Beach their permanent home. All manner and style of housing began to be erected in what was almost an "anything goes" atmosphere with very lax building requirements.

During this period, the Craftsman style, was very popular around the region and was utilized in all sizes of construction. The Craftsman style was a derivative of the Arts and Crafts Movement, which spread across Europe and the United States. It was a back-to-nature life-style movement resulting from a reversion from the Machine Age and the Industrial Revolution. The Craftsman style of architecture was an organic design intended to visually anchor homes to the ground and to create a design that was harmonious with the natural setting, much like a mushroom popping out of the ground. The vast majority remaining are in the mid-sized bungalow category, which are humble interpretations of the Craftsman bungalow style set forth by the architects Charles and Henry Greene of Pasadena. The Bungalow style was derived from housing constructed for British residents in India, designed to maximize comfort in a hot climate.

Almost every house built in Laguna Beach prior to 1927 had its roots in the Craftsman tradition. Greene and Greene designed large Craftsman style houses for the very wealthy, but the designs for a wide variety of smaller, more affordable craftsman homes were readily available in catalogs

throughout the country. Those, however, which were built economically and had the least resemblance to a prevailing architectural trend, were simply beach cottages. So many of these structures still exist today that they make up an architectural category in and of themselves.

Unlike most cities whose older buildings are concentrated in one area near the city center, people who came to Laguna Beach had a preference for the seclusion offered by the wide open spaces. Since the vast majority of the early homes were built strictly for summer usage, they were constructed in various scattered locations away from the mainstream of activity.

The influence of artists and movie people of the 1920s led to individualized architecture, which formed good replicas of styles popular in other continents. Thus, Laguna Beach architecture illustrates the personality that results from one-of-a-kind interpretations of styles, as well as strong European influences in the desire to emphasize the village quality. Beginning in the late 1920s and lasting through the mid-1930s, most of the homes and commercial buildings were constructed in the Period Revival styles. This architectural line of thinking sought to recreate the architecture of Europe, in particular, along the Southern California coast. Many of the stylized or whimsical homes that were built for the movie people were designed by stage or set designers. They often designed from pictures of European mansions, but with reduced scale to accommodate the smaller lots in Laguna. The result was an intimate, very low, and human scale of development that contributes to the village atmosphere.

Although people from the movie industry did influence local stylistic trends, most of the "revival" architecture became popular due to events like the Chicago World's Fair and the Pan American Exposition, the latter of which introduced Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture to Southern California. Most popular were the Spanish-Mediterranean and the Provincial Revival styles. There are examples of many other "revival" styles in Laguna, including Mission Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, Mediterranean Revival, and English Tudor Revival. The pre-1940 commercial buildings which remain in Laguna are largely those in the Period Revival styles.

Art Deco, and the spin off Streamline Moderne, were styles that became prevalent during the Depression. In contrast to revival styles, these styles were more future looking and intended to give a sense of hope during difficult times. Although both styles are considered modern styles that feature cerulean forms, Art Deco typically has a vertical emphasis and angular features, while Streamline Modern is characterized by very curvilinear, robust and horizontal features.

South Laguna is similar to Laguna Beach in that the structures were built in a variety of architectural styles during roughly the same time period (1920- 1940). The development of Tract 849 (South Laguna Village) and Three Arch Palisades (Three Arch Bay) was shepherded by Edward G. Chatham, his son, Lesley G. Chatham, and his brother-in-law, Lewis Lasley. After the opening of the Pacific Coast Highway in 1926 lots were actively promoted for sale in both South Laguna Village and Three Arch Bay. The first home in Three Arch Bay was constructed at 17 South La Senda in 1927. The Three Arch Bay Association was formed in 1936 and policies were developed to oversee the overall architectural character and to deal with governmental agencies. These policies have resulted in the small scale private community that Three Arch Bay is today.

Infill development has occurred in the post-World War II years and the majority of lower Laguna Beach below High Drive on the north and Temple Hills Drive on the south contains a mix of old and new housing. The scale and character of the housing styles and overall density of the neighborhoods follows today a precedent set by those who came to Laguna Beach in the 1920s. About 25% of the city's housing stock in lower Laguna Beach contains pre-1940 housing, which retains its original architectural integrity. These units establish the clear preference for human scale homes constructed in natural materials with a custom design; houses built in harmony with the natural bends of the terrain, and the use of yard space which is both amply and generously landscaped.

The fact that the railroad never had tracks to Laguna Beach and that, still today, only two roads lead in and out of the city, has caused Laguna to remain a somewhat isolated and self-contained village. The village quality has continued to be perpetuated particularly through the local architecture. Today Laguna Beach contains a myriad of residential and commercial building styles all with the mark of charm and individuality that has been popular in the city through the decades. Many of these one-of-a-kind houses are simply referred to as the Eclectic style. The individuality of existing (or newer) homes in Laguna resulted from the general lack of large tract development. Most houses built in Laguna, were designed and built one at a time. The result is a very diverse collection of architecture without large concentrations of one particular style found in other South Orange County Communities.

The older homes and buildings in the city form both an important part of the local history and serve as an important setting component of the quality and character of Laguna Beach. For this reason, it is important that the City of Laguna Beach implement programs which protect and prolong the life of these older buildings.

The following excerpts are from a Historic Resources Report prepared by Environmental Coalition Orange County, November 1980.

Craftsman Style **1910-1930**

The Craftsman style was the first architectural trend since the founding of the United States to have its roots in the West, rather than the East Coast. Craftsman architecture evolved out of anti-industrial movement which emphasized the importance of craftsmanship, as well as a relationship to the terrain on which the structure was sited.

Craftsman homes are informal in character, horizontal in their massing and incorporate an abundance of landscaping. The style utilizes a variety of woods, with accents provided by brick and stone. The consummate Craftsman house is the Gamble House in Pasadena, designed by the Greene brothers, the foremost pioneers of the style.

The Craftsman houses were built both at a very large scale by the rich and at a smaller bungalow scale by the middle class. The gospel of the Craftsman movement was individuality, so these houses tended to be one of a kind. More than any other style, Craftsman is difficult to generalize about the appearance and features. Usually shingles and clapboard, often in combination, are used to side the exterior of these homes. A certain complexity in appearance is derived from the presence of several gables, each embellished with decorative exposed rafters and ornamentation in the gable face. A front porch is almost always present and is framed with large picture windows further emphasizing the relationship between the interior and outdoor spaces.

The Craftsman style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Horizontal massing
- Asymmetrical with large front porch
- Usually two stories in height

Materials

- Exterior clapboard and/or shingle siding

Windows and Doors

- Windows have horizontal emphasis
- Windows in twos and threes
- Doors and windows often have stained or beveled glass

Roof

- Low pitched with gables on several levels
- Extended eaves
- Exposed rafters



Additional Features

- Gable venting
- Common use of bricks or boulders

Bungalow Style 1900-1930

By definition, a bungalow is any small cottage-like dwelling. The Bungalow started in California and spread to other parts of the country and in response to the need for inexpensive homes. The Bungalow style is based on the Craftsman tradition. Homes were one-story and usually had a large porch or veranda. A variation in the style is called the California Bungalow. This type of style features double gables and there was always a front porch. The exterior was usually sided in clapboard or shingles and the chimney was often made of stone. The highest concentrations of these Bungalows are in the Aster Street neighborhood.

The Bungalow Style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Asymmetrical with large front porch
- Horizontal massing
- One to one and a half stories
- Similar to Craftsman house, except smaller

Materials

- Exterior walls of clapboard or shingles
- Occasionally use brick, concrete, boulders, or stucco

Windows and Doors

- Windows have horizontal emphasis
- Windows grouped in threes
- Windows occasionally have stained or beveled glass
- Doors often have glass panes

Roof

- Low pitched
- Extended eaves
- Exposed rafters
- Occasionally a dormer

Additional Features

- Tapered porch columns (sometimes)
- Brackets in gable
- Porch is focal point for embellishments



Beach Cottage Style 1910-1940

Hardly part of a nationwide or even a region-wide movement, these cottages are more of a product of a local beach culture than of any larger architectural style. This style is indigenous to Laguna Beach and South Laguna. There is no national architectural style called "Beach Cottage."

The building boom of the 1920's, which hit not only Laguna Beach but all of Southern California, made many inland residents wealthy and provided them with extra money for a second home. Typically, these cottages were a family project with everybody contributing to the project in any way they could.

Construction was simple with board and batten being the most common exterior siding. These cottages usually started as a single story basic box with a slightly gabled roof, but were very often enlarged and most transitioned into a full time home.

The local beach cottages were more a derivative of the Craftsman style than anything else, and therefore, when it could be afforded, were embellished on a simple scale like the Craftsman houses. These embellishments included decorative porch treatment, exposed rafters and decorative shingles. This is the most prevalent architectural style in South Laguna.

The Beach Cottage Style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Simple box or rectangular plan
- Usually asymmetrical
- Originally one story

Materials

- Board and batten, shingled and overlap siding

Windows and Doors

- Windows regularly shaped
- Windows and doors simply framed

Roof

- Low pitched
- Extended eaves
- Sometimes exposed rafters

Additional Features

- Porch or patio
- Brackets under eaves



Period Revival Styles 1928-1940

The infiltration of the film industry into the lives of Americans in the 1920's brought with it a profound change in residential architectural styles. The glitter of Hollywood coupled with a time of renewed prosperity encouraged the feeling that life in the movies was better than life in the real world.

The style that we now term as Period Revivals were the beginning of a kind of fantasy architecture, which has come to stay in Southern California. Designers began to look beyond the native California style. Instead, residential styles were heavily influenced by architecture from other places and other times. Most popular were the Spanish Mediterranean and the Provincial Revival styles.

Mediterranean homes and commercial buildings were modeled after the architecture of Italy, Spain and North Africa along the Mediterranean Coast. Easily identifiable by their red tile roofs and white stucco walls, these buildings offered the comfort, casualness and fantasy of life along the Mediterranean. Providing a neat and tidy appearance, the Spanish Mediterranean Revival style typically includes arched windows, doors and porch openings with a Spanish quality.

The Provincial Revival style, coming from an altogether different part of the globe, became popular at the end of W.W.I. Having a definite idyllic quality, Provincial Revival homes and buildings are characterized by a steep pitched roof, reminiscent of the English and French villages.

The Mediterranean Revival style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Rectangular plan with horizontal massing
- Asymmetrical with front porch
- Arcades with arched openings
- One to two stories in height

Materials

- Exterior stucco walls
- Occasional usage of dark stained wood in porch or eaves

Windows and Doors

- Both are frequently arched
- Windows deeply recessed, giving appearance of thick walls

Roofs

- Low-pitched roof covered with tiles, or flat roof with extended parapets



Additional Features

- Arched openings
- Sometimes use of wrought iron
- Patterned tiles

The Provincial style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

Rectangular plan with vertical massing

Entry is focal point

Entry often gabled or turreted

Materials

Stucco often with half timbering

Occasionally some brick or stone

Windows and Doors

Usually prominent picture windows, often arched

Steeply pitched dormers

Door often of heavy wood with castle entry quality

Roof

Steep pitched

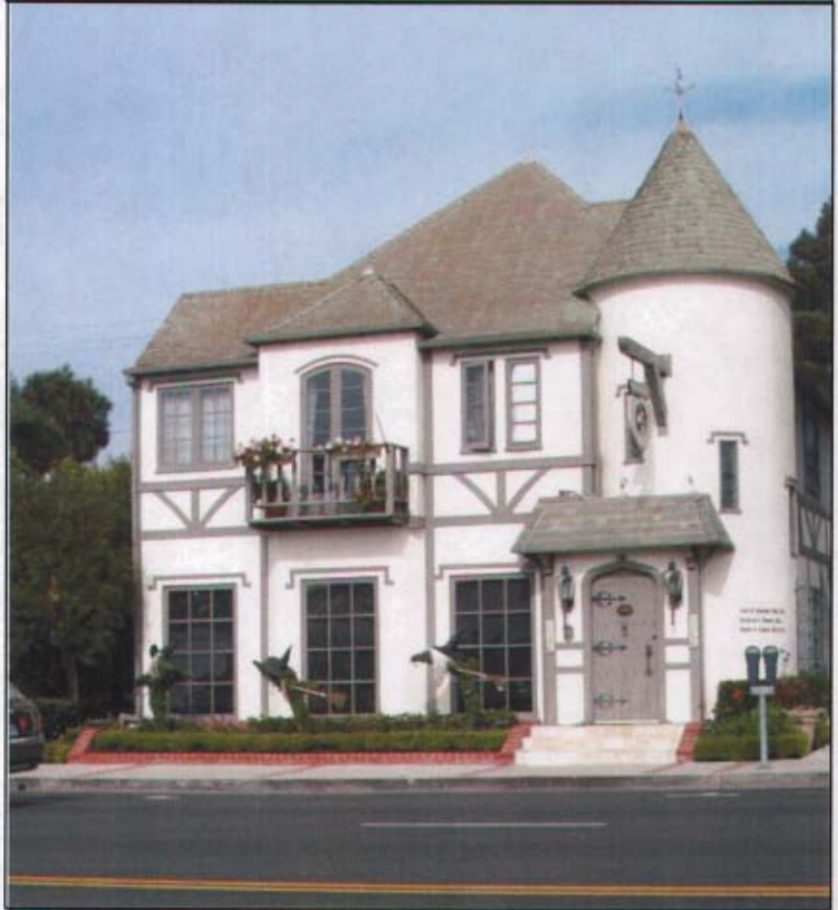
Sometimes with decorative composition shingles

Additional Features

Decorative chimney

Sometimes patterned brick highlighting door

Often small ventilation windows



Moderne Styles 1930-1940

In the 1930's there arose a fascination with technology and the industrial power of man. Unlike the similar trend toward the celebration of technical progress under the reign of Queen Victoria, the Moderne style buildings of the 1930's emphasized simplicity rather than heavy ornamentation. The style manifested itself in two very different varieties, the Art Deco Moderne and the Streamline Moderne. A major characteristic of the Art Deco style is the emphasis on verticality through the use of stepped pilasters, parapets and other decoration. Streamline Moderne buildings have sleek, rounded corners and broad, smooth planes.

The only structure in South Laguna in the Moderne style is the Halliburton house, 31172 Ceanothus, which is described as "Moderne with a brutalist influence." Here the functional and forthright use of materials is essence of design. Historical references and superfluous detailing are absent. This house built of cast-in-place concrete fits well visually into its setting on the gray concrete-like San Onofre Breccia cliffs of Aliso Canyon. The material is also an appropriate functional response to the surrounding area, which is surrounded by fire prone chaparral.

Art Deco Moderne Style is typified by the following characteristics:

Structural Form

- Square or rectangular in plan
- Vertical emphasis through the use of pilasters and massing

Materials

- Stucco or concrete

Windows and Doors

- Many regularly spaced windows
- Simple treatment often separated by pilasters

Additional Features

- Sunbursts or zigzag pattern decoration
- Prominent, accented entry



Streamline Moderne Style is typified by the following features:

Structural Form

Horizontal in massing
Broad and slick in overall treatment

Materials

Stucco or concrete

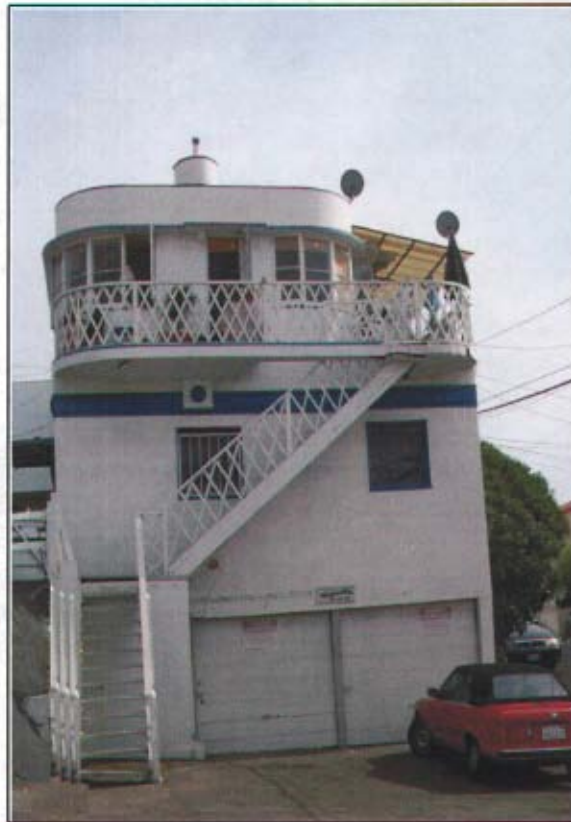
Windows and Doors

Many regularly spaced windows and often of glass brick
Common use of portholes
Windows curved with rounded corners of building

Additional Features

Horizontal banding to emphasize horizontal quality

Rounded corners



Eclectic Style 1915-1940

The eclectic style represents that category of housing in Laguna Beach for which there is no other architectural trend that fits the whimsical and imaginative ways in which some houses have been constructed. These unusual and extraordinary houses are generally ample in scale and complex in appearance. Many of them take their roots in the Mediterranean and Provincial Revival trends and others derive more specifically from the English Cotswold mold. Most combine a flair for the fanciful with one or more of these base styles.



ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The Heritage Committee is advisory only and does not possess the authority to approve or deny alterations to historic structures.

1. The streetscape of older Laguna is changing in terms of size, scale and character of housing.
 - Escalating land values discourage rehabilitation and encourage demolition of older structures.
 - Demolition of older structures, located on multiple lots, is changing the density and the character of the neighborhoods increasing the number of building sites and homes.
 - Extensive remodeling of older homes and buildings that are not listed on the Historic Register is altering the original architectural integrity and changing the character of the streetscape.
 - The streetscape of predominantly older neighborhoods is sometimes compromised by new construction of greater bulk and height than existing residences.
2. There is an insufficient awareness of the community's historic resources and the economic and cultural benefits of their preservation.
 - There is a lack of awareness and appreciation of local historic architecture.
 - There is a lack of knowledge of compatible rehabilitation techniques and approaches.
 - There is not sufficient knowledge of the benefits of placing historic structures on the Historic Register.
3. During construction, deviations to approved plans for projects involving historic structures occur without City approvals.
 - Key architectural elements are removed and replaced during construction.
 - There is no "follow-up" over-sight to Design Review Board approved modifications to historic structures.

GOALS AND POLICIES

The effectiveness of the preservation of historic resources in the City of Laguna Beach is dependent on the establishment of attainable goals and policies. Goals are direction-setting statements. Policies reflect the attainment of specific ends, conditions or steps in achieving goals. They are specific statements that guide decision-making.

Goal #1:

Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of historic significance in Laguna Beach. Assure that neighborhoods which have a preponderance of older homes and which greatly contribute to the village atmosphere be maintained as cohesive neighborhood units through consistency of size, scale and character.

Policies

- 1.1 Create a Historic Preservation Task Force to review and update the Historic Resources List (Inventory).
- 1.2 Implement an outreach program to promote the listing of historic structures on the Historic Register and improve the City's recognition program for owners of listed historic structures to acknowledge exemplary maintenance and preservation efforts.
- 1.3 Protect historic buildings through the implementation and expansion of incentive programs specifically designed to encourage rehabilitation and preservation. Incentive programs could include flexible development standards, fee waivers and property tax reductions.
- 1.4 Expand the Mill's Act Contract program to include "K" and "C" rated structures as "qualified structures."
- 1.5 Provide a process for the City to initiate rescission of registered structures that have been illegally modified so that they no longer meet the criteria for a historic resource.
- 1.6 Continue the current City policy to discourage the demolition of historic resources by providing incentives for relocation.
- 1.7 Ensure the preservation of historic homes by requiring the owners to record a document acknowledging their obligation and responsibilities.

Goal #2:

Continue and expand programs practices that encourage an appreciation of history and historic preservation in Laguna Beach.

Policies

- 2.1 Require Heritage Committee review of any application for Design Review of any structures, listed or proposed for listing, on the Historic Register.
- 2.2 Support the requirement that the Design Review Board emphasize compatibility, including historic character and context within deliberations of new or remodeled structures.
- 2.3 Provide specific guidelines for the rehabilitation of historic structures, including “how-to” and pictures or illustrations of successful projects.
- 2.4 Foster community pride through identification and aesthetic improvement of historic sites and areas, such as plaque programs and historically relevant brochures.
- 2.5 Require the City to identify and list all eligible City-owned structures on the Historic Register.
- 2.6 Prepare a manual showing techniques of preservation to help property owners understand what to expect during remodeling/restoration process and to provide information on how preservation can be accomplished within local ordinances.
- 2.7 Disseminate information on the provisions of the Historic Preservation Ordinance.
- 2.8 Promote the use of the State Historical Building Code.

Goal #3:

Promote community awareness of local history and historic architecture and enhance recognition of the City’s historic role as an important art colony and seaside resort.

Policies

- 3.1 Increase awareness and appreciation for Laguna Beach’s cultural and historic heritage through activities and events, such as designating May, as the City’s Heritage Month.
- 3.2 Appoint a City staff person to monitor remodeling activity of historic homes to ensure compliance with approvals.
- 3.3 Appoint a City staff person as a “Historic Preservation Administrator,” to act in an advisory role to the Heritage Committee and Design Review Board.

- 3.4 Identify specific City owned vacant properties where historic buildings could be relocated when threatened with demolition.
- 3.5 Encourage property owners to seek listing for appropriate properties on the National Register of Historic Places and the California State Register of Historical Resources.
- 3.6 Work with local Historic Preservation groups to develop a program that informs new buyers of historic homes of the benefits and responsibilities of owning a historic resource.

IMPLEMENTATION OF GOALS AND POLICIES

GOALS AND POLICIES	CITY	OTHER PUBLIC ENTITY	COMMUNITY GROUPS	PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL
Goal #1 Preserve and enhance buildings and structures of historic significance in Laguna Beach. Assure that neighborhoods which have a preponderance of older homes and which greatly contribute to the village atmosphere be maintained as cohesive neighborhood units through consistency of size, scale and character.				
Policies				
1.1. Create a Historic Preservation Task Force to review and update the Historic Resources List (Inventory).	●		●	
1.2. Implement an outreach program to promote the listing of historic structures on the Historic Register and improve the City's recognition program for owners of listed historic structures to acknowledge exemplary maintenance and preservation efforts.	●		●	
1.3. Protect historic buildings through the implementation and expansion of incentive programs specifically designed to encourage rehabilitation and preservation. Incentive programs could include flexible development standards, fee waivers, and property tax reductions.	●			
1.4. Expand the Mill's Act Contract program to include "K" and "C" rated structures as "qualified structures."	●			
1.5. Provide a process for the City to initiate rescission of registered structures that have been illegally modified so that they no longer meet the criteria for a historic resource.	●			
1.6. Continue the current City policy to discourage the demolition of historic resources, by providing incentives for relocation.	●			
1.7. Ensure the preservation of historic homes by requiring the owners to record a document acknowledging their obligation and responsibilities.	●			●
Goal #2 Continue and expand programs and practices that encourage an appreciation of history and historic preservation in Laguna Beach.				

GOALS AND POLICIES	CITY	OTHER PUBLIC ENTITY	COMMUNITY GROUPS	PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL
Policies				
2.1. Require Heritage Committee review of any application for Design Review	•			
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2.6. Prepare a manual showing techniques of preservation to help property owners understand what to expect during remodeling/restoration process and to provide information on how preservation can be accomplished within local ordinances.	•		•	•
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2.8. Promote the use of the State Historical Building Code.	•			
Goal #3 Promote community awareness of local history and historic architecture and enhance recognition of the City’s historic role as an important art colony and seaside resort.				
Policies				
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GOALS AND POLICIES	CITY	OTHER PUBLIC ENTITY	COMMUNITY GROUPS	PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL
3.3. Appoint a City staff person as a “Historic Preservation Administrator,” to act in an advisory role to the Heritage Committee and Design Review Board.	●			
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3.5. Encourage property owners to seek listing for appropriate properties on the National Register of Historic Places and the California State Register of Historical Resources.	●			●
3.6 Work with local Historic Preservation groups to develop a program that informs new buyers of historic homes of the benefits and responsibilities of owning a historic resource.	●		●	●

California Coastal Commission
South Coast Area Office
301 E Ocean Blvd, Suite 300
Long Beach, CA 90802-4302

Marshall Inniss
599 Oak Street
Laguna Beach, California
92651

December 10, 2021

Project: Public Comment on December 15, 2021
Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2
(Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Dear Commissioners,


The parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been overly restrictive. Our Downtown has struggled to find high quality tenants and innovative businesses, and there has been a lack of property investment. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most properties in the Downtown were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. In many cases, the parking requirements are so high that each site would need to be developed with a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the parking, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. Because most sites do not have sufficient parking, business are not allowed to change their use (e.g., retail to restaurant), which has caused the businesses to stagnate. I fully support the updated parking requirements in the updated DSP, which will allow for greater flexibility in change of use and will promote new and interesting businesses. Parking for various independent uses is "shared" throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking, and as a result the overall demand generated by Downtown patrons is less than the sum of the City's parking requirements. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City's parking data.

Over the past several years, cities throughout the country have been contemplating how to enhance their downtowns and create a sense of place. Laguna Beach is doing the same by updating its DSP. The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it a beautiful place for both residents and visitors alike.

This updated DSP is the result of City staff collaborating with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings, which I attended most of these meetings, to reach consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements. The Laguna Beach City Council then approved the revised DSP. For these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated DSP. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Marshall

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Paul Holmes <paulsurfs@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 11:58 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

As residents of Laguna Beach we are strongly opposed to changes being proposed to our city's Downtown Specific Plan.

Laguna Beach is a unique community and we believe its historic character and aesthetic needs to be preserved for future generations of locals and visitors alike.

We urge you to reject the proposed changes on our behalf.

Thank you,

Paul Holmes and Kiku Terasaki
520 Center Street
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
949-497-5332

December 15, 2021 Agenda Item 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Charlotte Masarik <charlottemasarik@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 12:20 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commissioners: The Coastal Commission has an obligation to uphold the environmental laws, and historic preservation of Laguna Beach as per THE COASTAL ACT. Pleased DO NOT UNDERMINE, REDUCE OR WEAKEN what Laguna has strived to preserve and maintain for over 50 years. Thank you for your continued support. Happy Holidays and good health to you all,
Charlotte and Alex Masarik

Charlotte Masarik
949-494-1630 Land
949-295-8040 Mobile
charlottemasarik@cox.net

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Bernard H Tranel <bhtranel@uci.edu>

Fri 12/10/2021 12:57 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please reject the changes to our Downtown Specific Plan. Their implementation would be profoundly detrimental to the charming character of our city.

Bernard Tranel

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Janet Bescoby <jbescoby@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 1:11 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please do not accept the suggested changes to the Laguna Beach downtown specific plan recommended by city staff.

These changes, if accepted , will endanger the unique character of Laguna Beach in addition to putting several historic buildings at risk for exclusion from historic register, how long with many other questionable practices.

Regards,
Janet Bescoby
Resident of Laguna Beach

Public comment on December 2021 Agenda item from Wednesday 18c-City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan)

Marion Staggs <marion.staggs@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 1:20 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To the Coastal Commission:

I ask you as a resident and homeowner of Laguna Beach for 60 years, to reject Laguna's proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan.

I do not want to see the intrinsic charm and atmosphere that I cherish here changed or destroyed.

REFRESH AND PRESERVE - NOT - RAZE AND REBUILD

Sincerely,

Marion Staggs
31618 Scenic Drive
South Laguna

Revised Downtown Specific Plan for Laguna Beach hearing on 12/15/2021

LINDA VIAN <levian@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 1:46 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To: Commissioners

From: Linda Vian, 477 Center St. Laguna Beach, CA. (since 1987)

Intermeshed with Laguna Beach's natural environmental beauty as well as its small business development,

Laguna Beach has always reminded me of living in and visiting Paris when visiting and living in Laguna Beach!

Since moving to California in 1974, I've always loved the natural environment and community character

of Laguna Beach! Laguna Beach's historic resources contribute immensely to the aesthetics, environmental and

community character.

The proposed revision to the Downtown Specific Plan would have a significant negative affect to these

"Protected Environmental Qualities" by reducing the number of historical resources; replacement of historical

nonconforming buildings with new buildings with same nonconforming height grandfathered in; reduction of

parking allotments per square footage, second story additions, elimination of Heritage Committee review

for projects. The downtown's view corridors view of the sea would be negatively hindered along with sunlight

access.

The downtown will also be negatively affected by the increasing levels of the water table and rising seas in the

near future. Management of downtown will need to consider abatement of these deleterious effects which is not

in the revised downtown specific plan.

Increasing the business density by way of the revised downtown specific plan will have negative effects to

businesses both south and north of downtown Laguna Beach—the Hip District; South and North Laguna which

is a further negative impact of the revised downtown specific plan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Linda Vian

DSP

Craig Strong <cstrong@strongrestaurantgroup.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 1:53 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to you express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

As a business owner and resident of Laguna Beach I have seen the importance of the need for this plan to take place to help businesses be more diverse and thrive in our community. I have read and heard experts in city council whom have spent quality time on developing a well designed plan that will support modern progress in Laguna Beach and benefit the city. This proposal is an important part of moving forward and allowing the community to thrive.

The parking structure that has been suggested is greatly needed and the careful fiduciary planning to not negatively impact taxpayers is brilliant and well designed by the city planners and consultants.

I hope you will certify the updated DSP.

Sincerely,
Craig Strong

Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2)

Sandy Morales <sandy@lagunabeachchamber.org>

Fri 12/10/2021 1:55 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to you express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

The Laguna Beach Downtown is both the face of our beautiful City and the economic engine. Due to online shopping and the decline of brick-and-mortar retail, it is vital that downtowns adapt to market trends to stay competitive. Customer preference is shifting away from retail businesses and towards experiential land uses, such as food service, tasting rooms and the like. This was confirmed by the City's Retail Market Evaluation Study, which found that restaurants are significantly outperforming retail stores in the Downtown.

Unfortunately, the permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been overly restrictive. As such, our Downtown has struggled to find high quality tenants and innovative businesses. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most properties in the Downtown were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. In many cases, the parking requirements are so high that each site would need to be developed with a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the parking, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. I fully support the updated parking requirements in the updated DSP, which will allow for greater flexibility in change of use and will promote new and interesting businesses. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City's parking data.

Over the past several years, cities throughout the country have been contemplating how to enhance their downtowns and create a sense of place. Laguna Beach is doing the same by updating its DSP. I am thrilled with the results and optimistic about the future. The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it a great place for both residents and visitors alike.

This updated DSP is the result of City staff working with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings to reach consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements. For these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated DSP.

Sincerely,

Sandy Morales



Sandy Morales

President/CEO, Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce

📍 949.494.1018 | 🌐 www.lagunabeachchamber.org

📧 sandy@lagunabeachchamber.org

📍 [357 Glenneyre St. Laguna Beach, CA 92651](#)



**Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach
LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).**

Jeffrey Redeker <jsredeker@yahoo.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:01 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to you express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

The proposed changes to the DSP allow us to address items of restrictions that have hindered our town with working to address our growing vacancy issues in our downtown commercial district. The city note vacancies of over 15% and this does not include the units that are "for lease by owner", which pushes this to closer to 20%.

The changes to the parking changes allows buildings that were designed and built long before the existing DSP parking requirements were put in place to be more viable options for new business and the ever changing retail and restaurant environment. This is important with the heavy competition retail faces with online competitors. In addition, this reduces expense to possible small businesses looking to Laguna's unique environment. This has been confirmed by the City of Laguna Beach's Retail Market Evaluation Study performed by an qualified independent 3rd party. The city has actively worked to create additional avenues for movement around town, such as the Laguna Local program, trolley service and remote parking location as well as all existing parking. Adding flexibility in parking and permitting makes us a more viable option.

I thank you for your consideration,

Jeffrey Redeker
949-371-7595

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Dan McInerny <danmcinerny@me.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:24 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents. Understanding that our village will require some updating and modifications going forward, it is important that find a reasonable balance that maintains the charm and character of our small town. Much like a European community or coastal Mediterranean town, it is hard to find what Laguna Beach has to offer in the United States. This is why we attract so many visitors from around the world. We love our town and our historic artist community.

Let's preserve Laguna Beach in a way that says history and tradition matters, before we lose the fabric and tradition that has made our community so special.

Thank you for your consideration.

Happy Holidays

Dan McInerny
danmcinerny@me.com
949-484-3267

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Barbara Manalis <bmanalis@icloud.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:26 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To The Members of the Coastal Commission

I am writing to urge your opposition to the City of Laguna Beach's LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB 20-0052-2 (DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE)

The changes proposed in this amendment are massive and indiscriminatory, and run contrary to everything that makes Laguna's downtown unique and special to generations of residents and vistors alike.

Please don't let this amendment destroy the decades of efforts by many to remember and preserve the history and roots of this community's buildings, while allowing for development that is compatible. This is what differentiates our downtown from other coastal communities. Once it's gone, it will never come back.

Thank you,

Barbara Manalis
31618 Jewel Avenue
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Cat Lukaszewski <clukaszewski@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:44 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission,

I write regarding the proposal to change Laguna Beach's Downtown Specific Plan to decrease protections for historic resources, which I understand is on the Commission's December 15, 2021 meeting agenda.

I have had the pleasure of visiting Laguna Beach and have enjoyed walking its historic streets. I could not help but notice several newer developments as well – eyesores that distract from and negatively impact the cozy charm that has characterized this seaside town from its inception. Clearly, much has already been lost. The proposed changes would pave the way for more destruction of the very qualities that make Laguna Beach so attractive to visitors like me. Coastal resources are more than just the ocean!

Having spent over ten years of my professional career working in historic preservation and conservation on both East and West Coasts, I was extremely disheartened to hear of the threats to these valuable sites and the overall aesthetic of downtown Laguna Beach. I have many friends, both residents and non-residents, who would be loathe to stay in – or visit – Laguna should its historic fabric be destroyed. There are too many other charming places to visit in Southern California – many of which have taken pride in working hard to preserve their older treasures.

I urge you to reject any changes that would redefine what counts as a historic resource downtown and that would incentivize the demolition of the priceless older architecture. The damage to Laguna's character, aesthetics, and historic fabric is imminent and real.

Thank you,

Catherine Lukaszewski
Los Angeles, CA
clukaszewski@gmail.com

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Rosemary Boyd <rosemaryboyd190@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:56 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please reject the changes to the Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan. My concerns parallel those indicated in the Village Laguna documents attached, which you have already received. Please review and consider these well-considered arguments before making your decision (see the following quote. You do have the jurisdiction).

However, the Commission is not to approve a proposed document "if there are feasible alternatives or feasible mitigation measures available which would substantially lessen any significant adverse impact which the activity may have on the environment." The law requires consideration of "reasonably foreseeable indirect physical changes in the environment" and not just direct or specific impacts. The potential negative impacts to historic resources, aesthetics, traffic and parking, and visual character mentioned in the document should be addressed with an environmental study complying with CEQA.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Boyd
3002 Bern Drive
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
949-494-4088

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Barry Fogel <bfogel888@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:58 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commission members:

I am a 36-year resident of Laguna Beach who was drawn to this amazing beach community for the many, beautiful aspects of this setting, not the least of which is the authentic and charming downtown village. These real and beautiful historic buildings are the very essence of our Southern California heritage, and, in my opinion must be protected and valued for the next generations to come.

Please reject the new proposed Downtown Specific Plan. This is an obvious move by developers with no other purpose but to raze the old and make money on the new. It is unconscionable, and should also be viewed within the Environmental Quality Act which was ignored in the LB Staff Report.

Thank you,
Barry Fogel
31956 10th Avenue

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

David Serrurier/Barry Fogel <dsandbf@sbcglobal.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:09 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Coastal Commission Members:

I am writing to you to ask you to reject the proposed changes to the Downtown Specific Plan for Laguna Beach.

This is an attack on our village and it's historic architectural heritage, and a thinly veiled attempt for developers to obliterate our community character in order to line their pockets. History should not be bought (or sold) so cheaply. Laguna Beach is an authentic artist's community, and this treasure must be protected.

Thanks,
David Serrurier
31958 10th Avenue

**Kent Russell
P.O. Box 913
Laguna Beach, CA 92652
949-494-0043**

TO: California Coastal Commission
SouthCoast@Coastal.CA.GOV

RE: Public Comment on December 15, 2021 Agenda Item W18c – City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission,

I SUPPORT the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2) with the proposed modifications by Coastal staff.

I have been involved with the business community in Laguna Beach for over 40 years. Consequently, I have seen a lot of things happen. Frankly, our Downtown is at a crossroads. There is nothing I can say that we do not all collectively already know or have seen in the news headlines for the last 5-10 years. Consumers shop differently; retailers cannot stay in business; people want to gather over food, not stuff; visitors want services and experiences, not things; on-line is for today, while brick-and-mortar is yesterday's news. These issues are not simply changes to the market. They are existential.

I support the LCP certification because our Downtown needs these changes to survive. We are not just losing businesses; we are losing some of them permanently. We pride ourselves as being part of town with charm and village character. Unfortunately, our businesses have not been able to adapt well enough, and the charm we cherish is running the risk of become stale. One of the saddest things I witness is watching many old businesses remain open, even though they are failing from the inside out. Property owners are conflicted. The current Downtown Specific Plan has put restrictions in place that make it very difficult to bring in new tenants, or to allow an existing business to change and

adapt to new lines of business. So many just ride it out in hopes that something may change. And business owners themselves just hobble along.

The irony is that NO ONE in the public notices. Worse, they think that everything is OK. If a business's doors are open, they must be doing well, right? Wrong. I can speak for myself in saying that many of the business I work with in Downtown Laguna, perhaps most, are not doing well.

That is why I support the LCP certification to revise the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). The revised DSP will (1) allow for more flexibility of use, and (2) modify the parking code, both of which will make it more attractive for new businesses to come to Laguna. Without these modifications, our Downtown will be stuck in 1980 with no way back to the future. The world has changed, but much of Laguna hasn't. Our goal as a town is find ways to maintain our charm, but also adapt to changes in the way people experience our Downtown so that it remains vibrant and relevant.

Laguna's Downtown is our business and community center, but interestingly, it is also our heart and soul. It always has been. People live in Laguna and visitors love to come to the Downtown for many of the same reasons. It is a shared experience. We need to make sure that the business that want to serve our town are able to do well. When someone comes to visit our town, we should want to make sure they take home good memories. Modifying the use requirements under the DSP and allowing more flexible use of parking will both work towards those goals.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kent Russell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kent" and last name "Russell" clearly distinguishable.

Kent Russell

Public Comment opposing reduction of the parking requirement regarding December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

johnthomas@cox.net <johnthomas@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:45 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Alvarado, Marlene@Coastal <Marlene.Alvarado@coastal.ca.gov>; 'A' <johnthomas@cox.net>

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

I oppose approval of the Local Coastal Plan as proposed by the City of Laguna Beach.

Specifically, I oppose the addition of a new parking requirement of three spaces for each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area for certain non-residential uses, such as office, retail, and food service in Downtown.

It is long established practice that negative impacts of development must be mitigated to a large extent by the developer.

There is no public benefit in reducing required parking in the DSP for people wanting to access the beach.

There is no public benefit in reducing required parking in the DSP for customers of existing local businesses.

There is no public benefit in reducing required parking in the DSP for employees of local businesses.

There is no public benefit in reducing required parking in the DSP for residents.

The only benefit of reducing required parking in the DSP is for the owners of commercial buildings in the DSP in that the proposed reduction facilitates an increase in land use intensity of commercial properties without requiring mitigation of negative impacts from that intensification of land use.

It is long established practice that negative impacts of development must be mitigated to a large extent by the developer.

To the extent the Coastal Commission encourages and attempts to facilitate access to California beaches for the general public, reducing required parking would only add to the demand for existing parking facilities making finding a parking space for people going to the beach, as well as for customers of existing businesses and for residents progressively more and more difficult.

I encourage the Coastal Commission to add a modification that deletes the new parking requirement of three spaces for each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area for certain non-residential uses, such as office, retail, and food service in Downtown and only consider approval of LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 if required parking for certain non-residential uses, such as office, retail, and food service in Downtown continues as reflected in the municipal code prior to the DSP's proposed reduction and required parking reverts to the current code requirements. That is, the required parking for office and retail should remain at 4/1000 and the required parking for food service (bars and restaurants) should remain at the current 10/1000.

Please consider deleting from the DSP the proposed reduction in required parking.

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

stacy collins johnson <stacycollinsjohnson@gmail.com>

Thu 12/9/2021 11:03 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

--

Stacy Collins Johnson, MA
Instructional Design
415.680.0178 c

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Marilyn Bruno <pmfritz@aol.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 6:48 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Thank You
Paul Fritz

FW: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Mon 12/13/2021 10:16 AM

To: Alvarado, Marlene@Coastal <Marlene.Alvarado@coastal.ca.gov>

-----Original Message-----

From: Marilyn Bruno <pmfritz@aol.com>

Sent: Friday, December 10, 2021 6:47 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Subject: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Thank You

Marilyn Bruno

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

JAMES LYONS <jlyons439@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 8:05 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents. Don't let local money bags change the quality of our town

Jim Lyons

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

mark.dawson@knowledgequest.com <mark.dawson@knowledgequest.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:04 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To whom it may concern:

It would be terribly unfortunate if the character of the Laguna Beach downtown area were eroded over time. The small downtown area of Laguna Beach has a unique and authentic look and feel that is the result of having key iconic buildings that represent a previous era before the profit margin expectations of owners and developers changed.

Recent events in Laguna have made it clear that we cannot always rely on our elected officials to consider what is best for the community. There's a reason locals and visitors love Laguna, and its not because the buildings in the downtown area are new, large, and fresh. We all love Laguna because its funky and eclectic, a look and feel you can't easily replicate when building new.

Thank you,

Mark Dawson
690 Vista Lane
Laguna Beach

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Ali <alihecht@yahoo.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:20 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Alison Hecht

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Pamela <portal1998@aol.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 2:57 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

We are concerned that downtown retains it's traditional atmosphere and design. Please be concerned about what Laguna has to offer, not what it can be changed to be!

Sent from my iPad

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

David Sullenger <davidsullenger@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:10 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

David and Jeanne sullenger

135 stan oaks dr

Laguna beach ca

92651

Ps ; laguna residents for 27 years

Date: December 10, 2021

To: California Coastal Commissioners

Subject: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c
City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan)

The proposed Downtown Specific Plan will have several negative impacts on the historic qualities of Laguna Beach's downtown. Mainly it would encourage developers and property owners who don't value the town's historic importance to demolish and replace with buildings that would forever alter the downtown environment based on bad information or a delusion that there is more value in rebuilding.

Due to the recent influx of development money flooding our town and the desire of outsiders to create their own contradictory vision, the time to strengthen our rules and not diminish them is now. Our regulations should be clear enough to encourage preservation while allowing new development to coexist without detriment to the historic context. The proposed plan would minimize historic relevance and put many important buildings in danger of demolition by property owners who don't understand the value to themselves and the downtown.

Like many areas of early Laguna Beach, the downtown is uniquely scaled to be subordinate to the natural beauty and surroundings while allowing newer structures to fit in and not take over. The Historic Inventory and other historic references have managed to hold things together. But with the concerted effort by some to eliminate this reference, danger awaits. There are many prime locations for new development that would not affect historic properties, and that overlay needs to remain in place or the heart of what Laguna Beach is will be lost. Our lack of districts has added challenges since the town developed over miles of coastline and many have fought the notion of districts or overlays for years.

Specifically the Inventory has been under attack because some very vocal pro-development groups, individuals and their lawyers believe it gets in their way. Instead it should be seen as a great framework and source of information to allow sensible, compatible improvements that honor our past while making good use of properties for our current and future needs. As a resident and design professional working in this town, it has been most useful, informational and a major record of our past.

The group of very outspoken pro-development types have been entirely disrespectful to the pro-preservationists who they see as obstructive to some grand vision. The beauty of this town is in the natural setting, the trees and the ocean, and the unique architectural styles of our early structures in a harmonious setting. Whenever appropriate preserving them should be a priority. Instead, too much money and grandiose ideas are pressuring a new way to view this town. Never has our historic environment been more threatened at a time when preservation should be valued more than ever.

I and others believe there is a way to allow upper level additions on historic properties (set back on the site) particular since additional housing is a priority. The parking incentive for historic buildings should remain since it has served as a perfect path forward to favor historic fabric over new development. And the Heritage Committee has been an important check point in this town to focus specifically on preservation as a priority since the forces against preservation have been great lately.

As a member of the Heritage Committee for many years, I've been able to see the opportunities that exist for historic preservation including the financial benefits. I've also seen examples of those who choose to believe what a realtor or others tell them (that there is more money to be made by demolishing historic structures). Having worked on several, the benefits are all there ... financial, ease of process particularly lately, and the rewards that come with being part of the history and the soul of our town.

Respectfully,

Linda Morgenlander Architect
Laguna Beach Heritage Committee Member
Former Design Review Board Member
lindamorgenlander@yahoo.com

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

katew.clark@verizon.net <katew.clark@verizon.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:33 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To Whom It May Concern:

I mean that greeting seriously: I am hoping you all can be persuaded to raise your concerns along with those of the citizens of Laguna Beach. This downtown specific plan does not reflect the completeness, the thoroughness or the expertise that we expect of those who have created this document. I served for two years on a citizen's committee (comprised of ordinary residents, business people, and commercial interests), who considered this important segment of our General Plan prior to the creation of this team. We looked seriously at its current function, identifying areas to be retained and those to be modified as we sought to update it. What is presented here to you is so unlike what citizens want and called for during our deliberations. Quickly, I'd point to these three items:

- This document has disregarded the community character, the unique features of downtown Laguna Beach that bring so many tourists to our town to walk the streets, study the buildings, and patronize our merchants.
- This document excludes some of our most significant, historic buildings, refusing to exempt them from being condemned and paved over, or worse, yielding to something larger and more gaudy. The Historical Society house, Hobie's, and the 1925 building where The Wire cleaner now resides are all sanctioned in this plan as possible sites for new development, regardless of their contribution to the community's rich history. They have suddenly dropped scores of buildings from the historical category==not because they are "too new," or "changed beyond their original form," but just because.
- The document pays scant attention to the demands of CEQA. At a time in which climate change shapes much of our public policy and planning, to ignore it so callously is an affront to global concerns, to our local concerns, and certainly to the statutes you are pledged to uphold.

We as residents of Laguna Beach have reason to fear what the developers who pushed this version will next seek to do. We are moving this very week toward large signs atop a hotel building, no doubt soon to be in competition with other smaller buildings who also clamor for attention and visual space in the sky. We did not move here to Laguna Beach to have it turned into a Cancun. We appreciated its placid and peaceful nature—even when it was filled with day-trippers, tourists enjoying what we had. This Specific Plan ensures that this will no longer be the case, for us or for them.

Please reject this proposed plan and ask them

- to justify why so many historic buildings have been cut from the list
- to demonstrate how this plan addresses the demands of CEQA.

Thank you for your consideration of our requests.

Kate Clark
Professor of English, Emerita
(949) 376-9882

kclark1@alumni.uci.edu

Public Comment on 12/15/21 Agenda Item W18c-City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Susan Whitin <whitin@whitingirouxworks.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:39 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commissioners:

As a 40 year resident of Laguna, I support the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment LCP-5-LGB-20--0052-2 updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with modifications proposed by your Coastal Commission staff.

As you know, Laguna Beach has a history of active public involvement in the planning process. The update of the DSP has been underway for the last 8 years. In order to reach consensus on the DSP update, there have been numerous public and 20 Planning Commission meetings. Proposed changes include updated parking standards based on parking demand studies prepared by a city parking consultant and streamlining the permit process for certain land uses based on recommendations in the City's Retail Market Evaluation Study. Both parking and permitting updates reflect current practices in other cities similar to Laguna Beach. Changes to allow increased building height and in kind replacement of non-confirming buildings were studied by staff, reviewed in public meetings and ultimately not supported by the City Council.

The DSP also includes guidelines for historic assessment of projects as needed as well as guidelines regarding alterations to existing historic buildings. A senior member of city staff trained in historic assessment reviews all proposed projects using CEQA and State of California historic criteria.

Additionally, the City Council appointed Heritage Committee provides a thorough review of each proposal before it is forwarded to the Planning Commission public meetings. Other specific Historic Preservation guidelines are not a part of the DSP and are addressed in the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

On all of these issues there was give and take in public meetings in addition to meetings of the public with city staff. Over 8 years, the public process resulted in numerous revisions to this DSP, enhancing and protecting the fabric of our walkable downtown.

Susan Whitin

SUSAN McL. WHITIN
www.whitingirouxworks.com

Public Comment: Dec. 2021 Agenda Item. Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Marcia Hanford <marcia.hanford@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:41 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Honorable Coastal Commissioners:

As a resident of a landlocked city, visits to coastal areas are very special. My travel friends and I have learned that the city of Laguna Beach has taken measures to remove historic protections from a large portion of the village.

Development is a part of the life cycle of any city, and it needs to be thoughtfully and legally planned and executed. As an out-of-area lay person, I am trying to stay on top of what might alter the community character of my favorite destination.

Approval of the Historic Preservation Ordinance by the Coastal Commission requires thoughtful analysis. Laguna Beach's staff reports are not mentioning historic resources, the city's character, or overall aesthetics. This is unacceptable and should be remedied. After a HPO has been modified to include the historic resources, and is properly adopted, a Downtown Specific Plan would then progress through appropriate channels. These are separate and sequential, not simultaneous.

Laguna Beach is unique, and I am concerned about its future. The proposed changes and how they are being brought forward are blatant attempts to erase most, if not all, of the thoughtful historic designations that have kept Laguna Beach unique and not emulating what other communities have done to modernize.

Please do not allow any changes, large or small, to proceed without the Coastal Commission's involvement in requiring proper documents. Generations in the future will look back with horror on these attempts to erase and replace. They will study this time period while enjoying the charm that will remain because of your due diligence.

Many thanks for your deep dive into this important matter.

Marcia Hanford
Glendale CA

Public Comment 12'15/2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Steve Goldman <steveg415@ymail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:51 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Lesli Henderson <lesstev@ymail.com>

California Coastal Commission,

My wife Lesli Henderson and I are residents of Laguna Beach and I am writing to express our strong support of the certification of the City's Downtown Specific Plan that will be heard by you on 12/15/2021.

US (and global) spending patterns have changed dramatically over the past 10 years, particularly since Covid. Consumers now understand the ability to work away from the office (their home, relative's and friend's homes, hotels, etc.) and efficiently buy all their commodity items on line. Air travel is significantly more prevalent to a broader demographic. Ride sharing apps and smaller electric vehicles were in their infancy 10 years ago. This increased work, spend and transportation mobility has generated greater desire to spend more time and money away from home and on less commoditized goods, services and experiences that cannot be easily acquired online. It has also changed the way we allocate and configure space for parking. Many cities in California and throughout the US are looking for ways to keep their cities and local economies viable amidst this change.

The current permitting and parking regulations in Laguna Beach are out of date. Onerous business approval processes and highly restrictive parking requirements discourage new and innovative businesses from taking the time and spending the money to invest in Laguna Beach. As a result, the town is significantly less vibrant and interesting than it was 10 years ago, and we are not maximizing the fiscal impacts associated with new business growth. Worse, there are many empty storefronts that cannot find new tenants to invest in downtown Laguna Beach and many other buildings are shabby and in need of the capital spending associated with new businesses coming to town.

Our City Staff, Planning Commission and City Council have all been working on the DSP for years, taking public input to ensure Laguna Beach does not lose its village character. The back and forth and compromise accommodating all different factions of City residents has resulted in a DSP that makes it easier to invest in Laguna Beach without changing its eclectic charm. Laguna Beach City Staff, Planning Commission and City Council have done a good job of not letting either extreme (those who support growth through increased verticality and those who support no growth whatsoever) and this DSP accommodates the large majority of the city's population that does not want to see the City either die or become over built.

Please certify the Laguna Beach updated DSP. Not certifying the plan will continue the decline of business here which in turn erodes the fiscal impacts necessary to maintain the necessary services to accommodate the City's six million annual visitors. Not certifying the DSP has negative repercussions to every Laguna Beach resident and visitor from California, the rest of the US and around the world.

Thank you.

Steven Goldman
Lesli Henderson
31943 South Coast Highway

Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

caren liuzzi <carenmary@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:58 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners,

My Name is Caren Liuzzi. I live in Laguna Beach and served on Lagunas Design and Review Board from 2004-2019. I am asking for you to continue this item as the Coastal Commission has yet to approve the changes to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, so consideration of the proposed revisions to the DSP is premature and will result in a contradictory Local Coastal Program and General Plan.

Laguna's existing Downtown Specific Plan celebrates the historic fabric of downtown as part of its fundamental "village" and community character and codifies protections for it. The proposed revisions:

- arbitrarily reduce the number of identified historic resources in the downtown from 65 to 27;
- remove all references to the Historic Resources Inventory, even though properties identified as historic in the Inventory are historic resources under CEQA and are vital to the character of downtown;
- allows replacement of nonconforming older buildings up to the nonconforming height, which creates an incentive for demolition;
- allows and promotes second story additions to historic buildings;
- reduces parking requirements for many businesses, which eliminates an important incentive for property owners to preserve their buildings and place them on the Historic Register;
- eliminates Heritage Committee review for projects involving properties that are listed on the Inventory.

To allow business to expand and grant exemptions from parking will severely restrict the public's access to the beach.

The City of Laguna Beach has taken advantage of the Covid Pandemic by pushing through many changes to policies and procedures including changes to the General Plan without the benefit of the checks and balances and public input which has made Laguna the unique coastal city it is famous for. I ask you to help Laguna Beach embrace new development by adopting their proposed changes to the LCP and General Plan prior to considering a proposal such as this that will forever change Lagunas welcoming eclectic character and charm. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask .

Sincerely,

Caren Liuzzi
949-233-6011

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

John Morcos <j_morcos_2000@yahoo.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 3:59 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am strongly **against** this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to keep its value to both visitors and residents.

In addition, we desperately need the existing parking spaces. Saying that we MIGHT build a new parking structure is not a current reality.

Besides, we are restricted in our walking – it does not do us any good to say we have parking a mile away from downtown or the beach.

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

ME Morris <m_e_morris@hotmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:07 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commissioners:

I am writing to request that you reject the City of Laguna Beach's proposed revisions to its DSP, primarily because of the un-analyzed and likely detrimental environmental effects that the changes would visit upon the residents and visitors to the City and its neighboring ocean habitats. The City of Laguna Beach has, due to tenacious pressure applied by the Chamber of Commerce and deep-pocketed commercial developers, put forward revisions to the DSP which would result in wholesale intensification of use without proper mitigation steps. The revisions would also accelerate the loss of our City's unique charm and quirky character; to be replaced by higher-density uses that will diminish the quiet and family-friendly atmosphere that generations of Southern Californians have come to appreciate.

Since 2018, developer founded and funded PACs have poured over a quarter million dollars into our local elections (this, for a city with only 23,000 residents). They have succeeded in obtaining a pro-development majority on the City council which has, in turn, appointed pro-development majorities to City Committees/Commissions/Boards. If the CC approves the proposed intensification-enabling measures contained in the proposed DSP update, the results will be swift and catastrophic to those who hold Laguna's charm dear. As a simple example: the revised DSP's recommendation for a "blended" parking requirement at 3-per-1000sq ft (regardless of use) will exacerbate an already impossible lack of parking in the downtown area (current standards require 1 parking space/250 sq ft of retail, and 1 parking space/100 sq ft of restaurant/saloon). This change is an enormous financial gift to downtown property owners at the cost of residents and visitors alike. This change alone will accelerate Laguna's downtown transformation into a sea of monotonous, loud and family-hostile restaurant/bars because these types of establishments are the only businesses which will be able to afford the heightened rental expectations of downtown landlords. Laguna, with already the highest per capita number of alcohol/liquor licenses in the State of California will continue to see increased mayhem on the roads and disruption in the downtown and downtown-adjacent neighborhoods due to DUIs and alcohol related violence.

Please do not approve the City's developer-promoted revisions to the Downtown Specific Plan. You would be doing Laguna Beach residents as well as visitors who love Laguna Beach a great disservice by allowing these changes to be enacted.

Regards,
Michael Morris
1136 Skyline Dr
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
m:(562)412-2684

Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Barbara McMurray <mcmurray@me.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:10 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to express my support of the certification of Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed by your staff.

Downtown Laguna Beach is a place many thousands of people visit and enjoy, and is also our economic center. We recognize that we must adapt to market trends to stay alive. Online shopping and decline of traditional retail have changed everything.

Visitors and residents alike look for more experiential land uses, such as tasting rooms and creative food courts. The City's Retail Market Evaluation Study found that restaurants are significantly outperforming retail stores in the Downtown. Retail vacancy rates in Orange County are up 15.4% in the past year.

Overly restrictive permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown makes it difficult to find and retain high-quality tenants and innovative businesses. The updated DSP provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most Downtown properties were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. Parking requirements are so high that each site would need a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the requirements, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. Because most sites do not have sufficient parking, business are not allowed to change their use (e.g., retail to restaurant), which has caused the businesses to wither.

The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City's parking data. I fully support these updated parking requirements in the updated DSP, which will allow for greater flexibility in change of use and will promote new and interesting businesses. Parking for various independent uses is shared throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking.

The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it an attractive place for both residents and visitors.

This updated DSP is the result of City staff working with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings to reach consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements.

For all of these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated DSP.

Sincerely,

Barbara McMurray
McMurray Marketing Communications
PR • writing • marketing • grant writing
949-233-9548 mobile

www.mcmurraymarketing.com

600 Diamond Street
Laguna Beach, California 92651

stay healthy • be kind

FW: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

liza@stewartslandscaping.com <liza@stewartslandscaping.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:18 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commission,

I want to start off by thanking you for being the stewards of our Coast and Beaches.

I am writing you today to ask you to **reject** the Downtown Specific Plan that the City of Laguna Beach is trying to push through. It promises to destroy the unique village character of Laguna Beach by explicitly encouraging redevelopment of older, historic buildings and would reduce parking requirements for many businesses. If this plan allows developers to add second stories to the downtown buildings most of these historical buildings will have to be demolished and therefore Laguna Beach will lose her character. If the downtown buildings were allowed to add second stories for apartments and/or more shopping areas it could result in less parking for the beach goers, due to issue parking permits for renters and it will eliminate an important incentive for property owners to preserve their buildings and place them on the Historic Register. This would also make it almost impossible for families outside of Laguna Beach to come here and find parking to enjoy the Beach, the very thing you are the stewards of. Adding second stories to these small cute village type buildings would require special construction for the handicapped and would mean most of the old historic buildings would have to be demolished to accommodate for the handicapped and will required parking for the handicapped there would be less parking for those who don't have disabilities. Anything this current City Council is trying to push through will be for big developers, their history of keeping items from the citizens to vote on has proven they can not be trusted to be the stewards of Laguna Beach. After you, The Coastal Commission, had put a stop work order for The Laguna Beach Hotel the current Mayor, Bob Whalen, the current city manager, Shohreh Dupuis, and The City Attorney called a Closed Session to resubmit a different permit for them to continue work there. The Hotel Laguna is now open and has never submitted a Conditional Use Permit or any plans for the work to be done at this site, this has never been allowed in The City of Laguna Beach! This was a violation of The Brown Act and everyone got their hands slapped and The Laguna Beach Hotel only had to pay a \$100.00 fine for never getting any permits. How could this happen? Why did the city attorney and the city manager call for a closed session? Why didn't they let the citizens of Laguna Beach get a chance to express their opinions in an open City Council Meeting? I'll tell you why, three of the City Council Members are financed by big developers and do not have the citizens, visitors, shoppers, or the Beach goers best interests in mind, they care only for the developers and how much bigger buildings will bring in tax dollars. Those three Council Members are Bob Whalen, Peter Blake, and Sue Kempf and they do not have Laguna Beach's best interest in mind, in fact they wanted to put in more parking meters to charge more for the beach goers to get more money and thankfully you, The Coastal Commission, would not allow them to do this reminding them the Beaches are for everyone. They recently stopped allowing the Citizens of Laguna Beach, that pay for yearly parking stickers, to park for free on Laguna Canyon Road with their stickers or the new Parking Lot that our tax dollars were used to purchase the property, pave it, put parking stripes in, and landscaped it. This is a direct insult to the citizens that pay for a parking stickers and that support the artists at the Festival or Arts, The Art of Fair, and The Sawdust festival. Recently the Council stopped public transportation to all the neighborhoods, that's right, no buses go into our neighborhoods for those who can't drive to get downtown to shop or go to the beach, they started an Uber type program where you have to get the app and text for a driver to meet you at

the bus stop in your area and be dropped off at other bus stop. Most of our elderly residents don't know how to load an app onto their phones and have always counted on a bus with a bus schedule to get downtown or the beach.

I have a long history in Laguna Beach and value Laguna's visual character, aesthetics, and historic resources, and that these changes will certainly destroy the village atmosphere that my ancestors and the rest of us have tried so hard to keep for visitors and new residents to enjoy as much as I did growing up in such a magical place. My mother was born here, I was born here and my Grandparents lived here and open a printing shop on Forest Avenue in the 1920s. The building that my Grandparents had their printing shop is in the Downtown area, this building is historic just for the reason of having a printing shop in the 1920's that had a working block printer and was consider a factory operation because of the machines used during those times.

Laguna Beach is famous for it's history and I'm proud that my grandparents, mother, and father were a big part of our history. My parents met at the original Playhouse on Forest and Ocean Avenue, a building that was demolished for a parking lot. Both of my parents were very involved with Laguna and keeping it a charming village with lots of history. My mother was the Art Director for the Pageant of the Masters for 1958-1959 and painted the numbers on the wooden seats that were used in those days with Bette Davis, all of the seats are metal now and spray painted with stencils to put the numbers on them now, an art history that has been lost. My father was the Famous Phil Interlandi and would write cartoons for the local paper capturing the village atmosphere and the locals of Laguna Beach another lost art. We are losing our history piece by piece, little by little so please reject The Item 18c-City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update) at the Wednesday.

Thank you for taking your valuable time to read my concerns.

Happy Holidays,
Liza Interlandi Stewart
(949) 274-0443 Cell
(949) 715-3641 Home

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Judy Teverbaugh <jtlb@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:33 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Commission Members:

Please reject the recent proposed changes to the Downtown Specific Plan of Laguna Beach! These changes run counter to the protections put in place over 50 years ago, and they would exacerbate our serious parking problems while violating the precedents and ordinances in place to preserve the historic, small-scale buildings that both residents and visitors value. There is a group of moneyed developers that have seriously threatened the fairness of our City Council elections in order to seat their chosen pro-development candidates on our City Council. Some of their proposed developments are truly abominations that run counter to the character of Laguna Beach.

Please help us to preserve the coastal treasure that is Laguna Beach! We deeply appreciate your work and appeal to you for support.

With sincere gratitude,

Judy Teverbaugh

40+ year resident of Laguna Beach

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

whatagood puppy <pmmilne2@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:48 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

The proposed changes to the Downtown Specific Plan should be returned to the City of Laguna Beach for more work. Laguna Beach is a very special place, one of just a few places nationwide in which the ENTIRE city is recognized as an Historic American Landscape, a program, like the Historic American Building Survey and the Historic American Engineering Record, overseen by the National Park Service.

Our historical and walkable downtown is a huge economic resource, as well as an aesthetic and historic one. The proposed changes to the DSP fail to protect the historical character of downtown, and in some cases even damage that character. The City's analysis does not accurately reflect that damage. As proposed, the changes would:

- Arbitrarily reduce the number of identified **historic resources in the downtown** from 65 to 27;
- Remove all references to the Historic Resources Inventory for downtown, even though Inventory properties are historic resources and are vital to the character of downtown;
- Allows replacement of nonconforming older buildings up to the nonconforming height, which creates an incentive for demolition;
- Currently historic buildings have parking get parking credits but, the proposed updates to the Downtown Specific Plan reduce parking requirements for many businesses, and so eliminate an incentive for property owners to preserve their buildings and place them on the Historic Register;
- Eliminates Heritage Committee review for projects involving properties that are listed on the Inventory.

Please do not approve this document as is, but instead return it to the City for a better analysis and more robust protections.

Penelope Milne

Public Comment on December 15 2021 Agenda Item W18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Gwen McNallan <gmcnallan@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:49 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear California Coastal Commission,

I am writing to express my support of the certification of the Local Coastal Program Amendment (LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2), updating the City of Laguna Beach Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) with the modification proposed.

This updated plan is the result of City staff working with our community from 2012 to 2020 through numerous public meetings and 20 Planning Commission meetings to reach a consensus among the majority of the community on the revisions proposed related to business permitting and parking requirements. For these reasons, I urge you to certify the updated plan for the city of Laguna Beach.

The Laguna Beach Downtown is both the face of our beautiful city and the economic engine. Customer preference is shifting away from retail businesses and towards experiential land uses, such as food service, tasting rooms, and the like. This was confirmed by the City's Retail Market Evaluation Study, which found that restaurants are significantly outperforming retail stores in the Downtown. Additionally, the vacancy rate of retail spaces in Orange County is up 15.4% over the past year.

Unfortunately, the well-intentioned permitting and parking regulations in the Laguna Beach Downtown have been overly restrictive. As such, our Downtown has struggled to find high quality tenants and innovative businesses, and there has been a lack of property investment. The updated plan provides greater flexibility in allowed land uses by providing a more straightforward and streamlined business permitting process, with realistic parking requirements.

Most properties in the Downtown were not designed to meet the current parking requirements. In many cases, the parking requirements are so high that each site would need to be developed with a multi-level parking structure to accommodate the parking, leaving little to no room for the business that the parking is intended to serve. Because most sites do not have sufficient parking, business are not allowed to change their use (e.g., retail to restaurant), which has caused the businesses to stagnate. Parking for various independent uses is "shared" throughout the Downtown and augmented by on-street parking, and as a result, the overall demand generated by Downtown patrons is less than the sum of the City's parking requirements. The updated parking requirements are practical and are supported by the City's parking data.

Over the past several years, cities throughout the country have been contemplating how to enhance their downtowns and create a sense of place. Laguna Beach is doing the same by updating its DSP. The updated DSP will breathe new life into the Downtown and make it a great place for both residents and visitors alike.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gwen McNallan

Laguna Beach resident

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Carolyn Smith Burris <carolynsmithburris@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:51 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Please reject the proposed plans to change our Downtown Specific Plan. I am a third generation and I think it would be a big mistake. I have been apart of the process with my grandparents hotel, the Coast Inn. I know there is an increase is changing the historicalness in our town for sometime now. Please help us retain its rich history.

Thank you,
Carolyn Smith



Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Sonnier Francisco <sonnierfrancisco@hotmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:56 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear South Coast Coastal Commission,

I am formally requesting that you reject City of Laguna Beach's most recent proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan (DSP), which will adversely impact the City's environmental resources, inclusive of its unique village character, Register-eligible and -listed historic buildings, and multitude of cultural, and visual resources.

Laguna's existing Downtown Specific Plan celebrates the historic fabric of downtown as part of its fundamental "village" and community character and codifies protections for it. The proposed revisions adversely impact the City's environmental resources to:

- arbitrarily reduce the number of identified historic resources in the downtown from 65 to 27;
- remove all references to the Historic Resources Inventory, even though properties identified as historic in the Inventory are historic resources under CEQA and are vital to the character of downtown;
- allow replacement of nonconforming older buildings up to the nonconforming height, establishing an incentive for demolition;
- allow and promote inappropriately designed and constructed second story additions to historic buildings;
- reduce parking requirements for many businesses, which eliminates an important incentive for property owners to preserve their buildings and place them on the Historic Register;
- eliminate Heritage Committee review for projects involving properties that are listed on the Inventory.

As you are an agency required to disclose impacts to projects and policies subject to CEQA review, a careful consideration to adopt alternatives must be taken to avoid or mitigate for impacts, where feasible. The proposed revisions to the DSP will certainly result in a loss of community character due to the removal of its protections.

Buildings that would be affected include, but are not limited to: 306 Third Street (1929, Water District Building), 292-294 Forest Ave (1940, Hobie), 280-282 Forest (1917 commercial building), 245-55 Forest Ave. (1928, brick commercial building), 302 Forest (1935, Excelsior Creamery Building), 439 Forest Ave. (c. 1925, Live Wire Cleaners), 278 Ocean Ave. (1920, Laguna Beach Historical Society Headquarters), 312 Ocean Ave. (1920, residents of one of the first Black families in Laguna), 404 and 418 Ocean (circa 1920 beach cottages), 217 Broadway (Carmelita's/Laguna Beach Motors).

Thank you for your attention to this request.
Sonier Francisco

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Carol Nilsen <cznilsen@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 4:58 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Carol and Roger Nilsen
669 Canyon View Drive
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

California Coastal Commission

Dear Commissioners,

We have lived in Laguna Beach for 40 years, Carol's grandfather built a beach house here nearly 100 years ago, and Carol herself taught here for over 30 years. Our roots here are deep.

These roots grow from the authentic community character that we find all over our town. Our beautiful Water District Building at 306 Third Street, the charming building at 439 Forest that houses our cleaners, the old cottage at 278 Ocean that is home to Laguna's Historical Society, are just a few of the many unique and highly individualized buildings that help create a town whose character we prize and that many visitors delight in experiencing.

These and other historical buildings contribute to the aesthetic experience of being in Laguna. We who live here are lucky enough to be able to go about our daily lives actually using these buildings as we do business, experiencing these vulnerable old places not as exhibits of what once was, but as fully functioning buildings where we shop, run errands, and meet friends.

The visual character of these places is key to the unique and irreplaceable character of Laguna Beach. These are quirky, individually designed and built historical places, the antithesis of mass-produced structures found in new shopping centers and malls. Each building contributes its own personality to our town, and our town offers a sense of past meeting the present to which visitors and residents alike are intuitively drawn.

We are strongly opposed to the proposed action because it threatens so much of what makes Laguna the extraordinary place it is.

Sincerely,
Roger and Carol Nilsen

California Coastal Commission
Long Beach, CA

Re: Public Comment on December 15, 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Commissioners:

I urge you to consider the lack of provisions to protect the historical resources of the downtown area of Laguna Beach in this update to the Downtown Specific Plan and direct that the City and coastal staff revise the plan to preserve those resources.

Any developer can build a new cute historical-looking town if they wish, but it will not have genuine historical character. Laguna Beach is one of the few coastal towns that offers this to the public. We are offering beauty and we are offering the experience of history. Without those elements Laguna Beach would be just another stop along the Coast Highway.

Laguna Beach and its Greenbelt has been recognized by the National Park Service as a Historic American Landscape. That landscape includes the town and its art heritage. See attached pdf of the book that is part of that HALS submittal.

The City's update of the Specific Plan has deleted nearly 40 historical properties from consideration and has incorporated other policies that will indirectly threaten historical resources.



1920s South Coast Highway
Isch Building and
surrounding shops



2021 South Coast Highway
Isch Building and
surrounding shops



1920s South Coast Highway
At Ocean Avenue



2021 South Coast Highway
At Ocean Avenue

A hundred years of history can still be experienced in our Laguna Beach. At the same time this is a living active downtown, proving that we cannot only live happily within a historical setting, we can thrive and offer a unique perspective for our visitors and residents.

The current version of the Downtown Specific Plan is a threat to this vision, opening the opportunity to homogenize it and modify its unique character. Please vote to direct revisions that will protect the historic character, as stated in detail by Preserve Orange County and the Laguna Beach Historic Preservation Coalition. Preserving history is one of the key goals of the California Coastline Preservation and Recreation Plan cited in the Coastal Act. Yet it seems too often overlooked as a Coastal Commission emphasis. This project is an opportunity to emphasize it once again.

Ann Christoph
Landscape Architect and former mayor of Laguna beach

31713 Coast Highway
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

949-499-3574



This book celebrates Laguna Beach and its greenbelt, which have been designated a historic American landscape by the National Park Service, Department of Interior, and presents the nomination documentation that is housed in the Library of Congress. It is dedicated to the generations of devoted people responsible for shaping the city's character and traditions.

Laguna's mountains and dramatic canyons, coastal cliffs, and ever-changing ocean views attracted plein air artists and others beginning early in the last century, and from the beginning, its residents were dedicated to protecting and embellishing it. The fortunate confluence of geography, history, and community resolve has resulted in the preservation, in the face of the surrounding suburban sprawl, of an authentic small town and a vast area of protected open space that provides breathing room for all of us.

LAGUNA BEACH and the Greenbelt

Celebrating a Treasured Historic
American Landscape

LAGUNA BEACH AND THE GREENBELT





Laguna Coastline (Joseph Kleitsch) Ca. 1926 – Collection of John and Patricia Dilks

Laguna Beach and the Greenbelt

Celebrating a Treasured Historic
American Landscape

Committee for Preservation of the Laguna Legacy

Laguna Beach and the Greenbelt
Celebrating a Treasured Historic American Landscape

Historic American Landscape Survey - National
Park Service HALS - CA123

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ISBN: 978-1-5320-1507-6 (sc)
ISBN: 978-1-5320-1508-3 (e)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017900506

Print information available on the last page.

iUniverse rev. date: 02/01/2017

Front cover: Laguna Coastline (Joseph Kleitsch) Ca.
1926 – Collection of John and Patricia Dilks

Back cover: Laurel Canyon (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



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Foreword

The genesis of this project lies in a visit to Laguna Beach by Noel Vernon, professor at Cal Poly Pomona, on August 10, 2009. Vernon was the American Society of Landscape Architects coordinator for the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) and introduced the program to Ann Christoph, Vonn Marie May, Ted Wells, and Tom Osborne. At that meeting Christoph suggested nominating the city of Laguna Beach and the Laguna Greenbelt as a Historic American Landscape. The nomination would emphasize the fact that the dramatic and scenic landscape had been the basis of the development of Laguna Beach as an art colony, with a tradition of environmental awareness and protection, and ultimately as a center of citizen-generated landscape preservation.

The HALS nomination idea was discussed for years and was well received, but it was not acted upon until Ron Chilcote organized a committee that met for the first time on March 9, 2015. The group agreed that the greenbelt, the legacy of plein air painting, the seascape and bluebelt, and Laguna Beach as a special place all pointed to a need to identify the history and effect of this unique landscape: to describe its characteristics, document its importance, and record its past so that present and future generations would recognize its significance.

With knowledgeable and enthusiastic members, the committee coalesced to produce the nomination application.

The Committee for Preservation of the Laguna Legacy members were as follows:

Bob Borthwick, landscape architect; former member, Open Space Commission, City of Laguna Beach; board member, Laguna Greenbelt; board member, Temple Hills Community Association; prepared city's Landscape and Scenic Highways Element and Resource Document

Mark Chamberlain, photographer; director, BC Space Galley; member, Laguna Bluebelt and Transition Laguna

Ron Chilcote, professor, University of California, Riverside; former member, Laguna Beach Unified School District board; board member, Laguna Greenbelt; coordinator, Temple Hills Community Association

Ann Christoph, landscape architect; former councilmember and mayor, City of Laguna Beach; board member, South Laguna Civic Association and Village Laguna; prepared city's Landscape and Scenic Highways Element and Resource Document

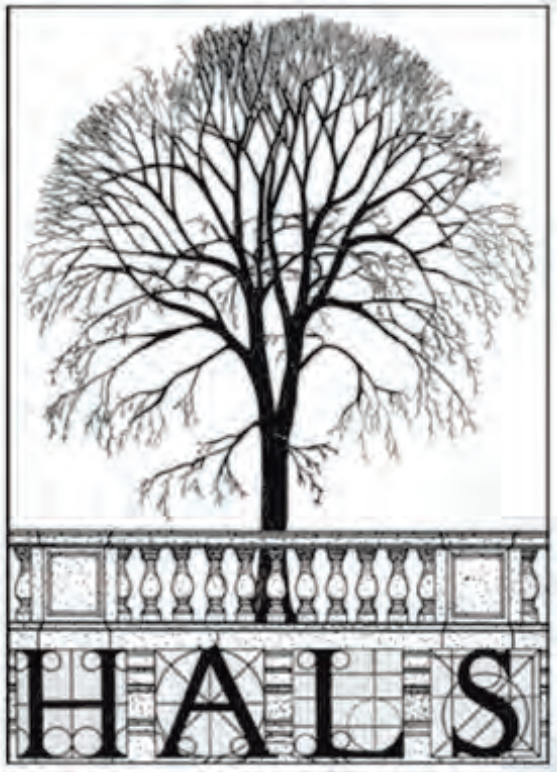
Harry Huggins, retired Orange County Parks administrator; former staff liaison to the Coastal Greenbelt Authority; board member, Laguna Greenbelt; board member, Friends of Harbors, Beaches and Parks; organizer and coordinator of the 1989 Walk in the Canyon

Eric Jessen, retired chief, Orange County Parks; board member, Laguna Beach Historical Society

Tom Lamb, photographer; board member, Festival of the Arts, Laguna Beach; participant in drafting the original HALS legislation

Barbara Metzger, editor; former Design Review Board member and Planning Commissioner, City of Laguna Beach; board member, Village Laguna

Verna Rollinger, former councilmember and retired city clerk, City of Laguna Beach; vice president, Village Laguna; board member, Temple Hills Community Association



Low Tide (Clarence Hinkle) Ca. 1922 –
Laguna Art Museum (LAM)

In cooperation with the Library of Congress, the National Park Service administers the Historic American Buildings Survey (since 1933), the Historic American Engineering Record (since 1969), and the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS), begun in 2000 in cooperation with the American Society of Landscape Architects. These programs encourage and facilitate the documentation of the history and characteristics of important buildings, engineering projects, and landscapes. Over 40,000 structures and sites have been documented nationwide. The archives produced through these programs are housed in the Library of Congress. According to the National Park Service (n.d.),

Historic landscapes are special places. They are important touchstones of national, regional, and local identity. They foster a sense of community and place. Historic landscapes are also fragile places. They are affected by the forces of nature, and by commercial and residential development, vandalism and neglect. They undergo changes that are often unpredictable and irreversible. For these reasons and for the benefit of future generations, it is important to document these places.

As a result of the local committee's work, Laguna Beach and its greenbelt have been recognized as a Historic American Landscape, and this publication presents the documentation on which the designation is based. The committee acknowledges the help of the following: for research assistance, Janet Blake, Laguna Art Museum; Lisette Chel-Walker, City Clerk; Nelda Stone, Laguna Beach Library; For guidance in preparing the submittal, Alison Terry, landscape architect and ASLA HALS liaison; for assistance in preparation of maps, Alison Terry, Lance Vallery, and Scott Thomas; for preparing the initial layout of this book, Tom Lamb; for permission to include art work from their collections, the City of Laguna Beach, the Festival of Arts, the Laguna Art Museum, and John and Patricia Dilks; and for facilitating publication and distribution, Laguna Wilderness Press and the Foundation for Sustainability and Innovation.





Sycamore Hills
(Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010

1

The Place and Its Significance

Laguna Beach and its greenbelt are worthy of designation as a Historic American Landscape because the city's beautiful and dramatic natural setting is intricately related to the community and artistic tradition that grew from it. Its geological formations, natural vegetation, and coastal location attracted artists beginning around the turn of the last century. The artistic influence and the character of the landscape shaped a unique community. Laguna's history, including isolation from other development movements, its role as art colony, and its leadership in environmental preservation all stem from the characteristics and disposition of the landscape itself. The following sections elaborate on these complex and remarkable interrelationships.

Laguna Beach and its preserved open space environs rest within Orange County, California between the 405 Freeway in the north, Newport Coast Road to the west, the city of Laguna Niguel to the east, and Dana Point to the south. Laguna Beach is a city of some 23,000 set between the Pacific Ocean and the hills and surrounded by 22,000 acres of protected open space. The city describes itself on its web site as "a unique beach community and artists' colony" and says that residents enjoy "the ambiance provided by the sandy beaches, canyons, and coastal hills" and "a pedestrian environment and scale which is unique in Southern California." In its "Design Guidelines: A Guide to Residential Development" (City of Laguna Beach 2010) it says that it is "committed to protecting its unique character" through the application of criteria for sensitive urban design that "emphasize respect for context, design creativity, compatibility of scale, and the pedestrian experience."

The Laguna Beach landscape, with its mountains and dramatic canyons, coastal cliffs, caves and arches, and

ever-changing ocean views, is unique in its region, state, and nation and has provided the setting and inspiration for a remarkable history. First inhabited by Native Americans who subsisted on fishing, seed gathering, and hunting, much of the area was excluded from the early Spanish ranchos. The rough Laguna landscape wasn't easy to traverse, and there was other abundant land with gentler terrain more suitable for ranching. Therefore it was still available for homesteading beginning in 1871. In the early 1900s artists discovered the village of Laguna Beach and its surroundings as providing inspiring subjects for their plein air paintings. With the exhibition of these paintings nationwide, Laguna Beach became a desired destination.

Up until the 1960s the open space surrounding the city was undeveloped. Orange County had been established in 1888, but population growth, especially in its southern half, had been slow until the 1950s. When the population of the county suddenly doubled in the 1960s (from 703,925 in 1950 to 1,420,386 in 1960) while Laguna Beach grew modestly (from 6,661 to 9,288 in that decade) (California State Data Center 2013), the local bookstore owner James Dilley, who had visited and studied the Garden Cities near London, foresaw that the urbanization of Los Angeles and its suburbs could creep all the way to Laguna Beach—that

the open lands surrounding the city were in jeopardy. In response, in 1968 he founded the Laguna Greenbelt, which would work over the coming years to preserve the natural landscapes encircling the town on the north, east, and south. The addition of marine life reserves along the Laguna coast in 2012 meant that the city was entirely surrounded by natural preserves.

From the beginning, residents were dedicated to protecting the landscape, preventing development that was inappropriate for its setting, and embellishing the town with beautification projects. The most dramatic of these efforts was the citizen initiative limiting all building heights to 36' in 1971. Protection of the village character has been the focus of citizen-based planning efforts. The fortunate confluence of geography, history, and human resolve has resulted in the preservation, in the face of the county's suburban sprawl, of an authentic small town and a vast area of protected open space that provides breathing room for the whole county. Long protected by its topography and remote location, the city had time and opportunity to develop the character that prepared it to embrace the environmentalism sweeping the country in the 1960s and put it to immediate use in guiding the city's development. This is a success story, and it is ongoing.



Laguna Vista
(Benjamin Chambers Brown) 1915 – LAM



Our Coast
(Gleason J. Duncan) 1930 - LAM



Blue Sky and Sea (Frank Cuprien) 1930 – LAM



The Old Post Office (Joseph Kleitsch) 1922-1923 - LAM

Origins and Early History

Originally the Laguna area was home to Native Americans known as the Acjachemen, and remnants of their cultures are scattered in and around Laguna Beach (see, e.g., Brown, O'Neil, and Steely 2006, Table 2). The Orange County coast is known to have been heavily populated during the Late Prehistoric and Contact Periods, and a few of these settlements in the vicinity of Laguna Beach are known by name. The place-name 'Tom-ok' may be a reference to the Laguna lakes (O'Neil and Evans 1980), and Nawil is associated with a site in Emerald Canyon in Laguna Coast Wilderness Park (O'Neil 1988, 112). Locales where Contact Period sites might be expected, such as Laguna's coastal bluffs, are almost continuous shell middens (O'Neil 2006). There is soil flecked with charcoal on every ridge that ends at the sea between Corona del Mar and Dana Point (Chilcote 2014). Some sites are believed to have been occupied for thousands of years. A WPA-funded excavation at Goff's Island in 1939 revealed a significant coastal village and burial ground (Winterbourne 1939), and Morris-Smith (1979) has studied a burial ground in a cave in Sycamore Hills and identified many sites elsewhere.

The Acjachemen generally resided in permanent, well-defined villages of 35 to 150 persons in houses of brush or tules lashed to a frame of poles. Sandstone caves in the canyons served as temporary or special-use camps. A village might consist of a single patrilineage or an entire clan, and each had its own resource territory but maintained ties to others in the area through economic, religious, and social networks (O'Neil 2006). Kinship was patrilineal and most residence patrilocal (O'Neil 2002). Although water was scarce, seed-bearing plants were abundant during the summer and fall, and the rocky shores and bays were full of

sea life. Acorns were the single most important food source. The principal game animals were deer, rabbit, jackrabbit, wood rat, mouse, ground squirrel, antelope, and quail and other birds. Sea mammals, fish, and crustaceans were hunted and gathered from both the shoreline and the open ocean using reed and dugout canoes (O'Neil 2006).

In 1769 the Franciscan priest Juan Crespi, traveling with the Spanish governor, Gaspar de Portolá, and his soldiers, described Aliso Canyon as follows: "All the valleys and hills on both sides are of pure earth, well-covered with grass, and without a single stone. So we went on over very open country, with hills and broad mesas, ascending and descending through three or four little valleys of good soil well-grown with alders" (Meadows 1966, 41). The Indians, whom Crespi found passive and friendly, soon became subject to the Franciscan mission established on November 1, 1776, as San Juan Capistrano, the first permanent Spanish settlement in Orange County (Chilcote 2014).

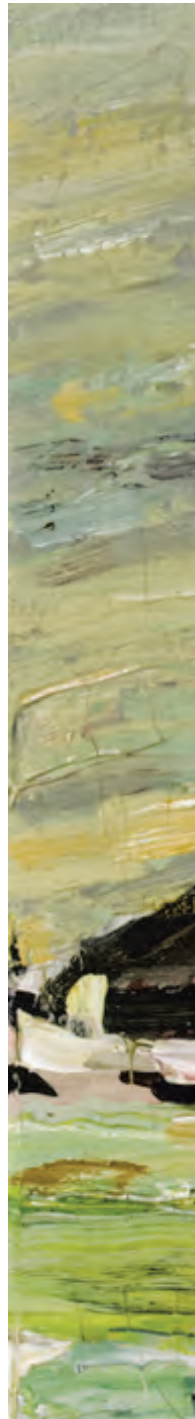
During the 1840s most of what is now Laguna Beach was excluded from the two surrounding land grants (the Rancho San Joaquín, later the Irvine Ranch, and the Rancho Niguel, later the Moulton Ranch), and therefore it was subject to homestead claims once California became an American state. This exclusion had everything to do with the development of the city and its landscape in its present location and pattern.

To the north of Laguna Beach the 48,803-acre Rancho San Joaquín was created by two grants (April 13, 1837, and May 13, 1842) to José Sepúlveda. The first, known as Ciénega de las Ranas, extended from above Newport Bay to Red Hill in Tustin, and the second, La Bolsa de San Joaquín, included Laguna Canyon Creek. To the south the 13,316-acre Rancho Niguel was granted to Juan Ávila and his sister Concepción (June 21, 1842) and included land on

both sides of Aliso Creek between Laguna Canyon and the mission lands of San Juan Capistrano (Chilcote 2014) . José Serrano, who in 1842 was granted lands where present-day Laguna Hills is located and established the Rancho Cañada de los Alisos, had been grazing his cattle in Aliso Canyon since 1836 (Meadows 1966, 100–102). From the 1850s on, cattle roamed the area now known as Laguna Beach, although the drought of 1862–64 brought devastation: “For years dry bones lay around the dried up water holes where the cattle had come to drink and where they had died by the thousands piling on top of each other. For years the dry bones were ground up for fertilizer” (Ramsey and Ramsey 1976, 100).



Rain on the Hills (Arthur Grover Rider) 1935 - LAM

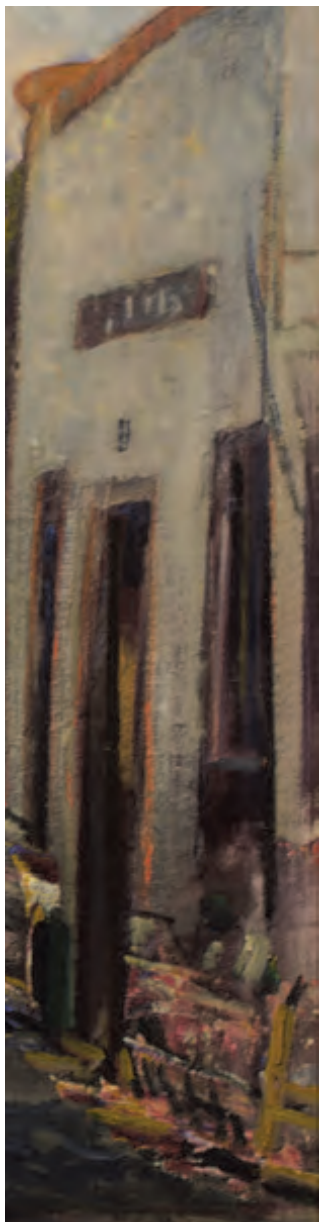


Old Barn (Clarence Hinkle) Ca. 1918 - LAM





The White House (Joseph Kleitsch) 1930 – City of Laguna Beach Art Collection (CLB)



Laguna Road (Joseph Kleitsch) 1924 – CLB

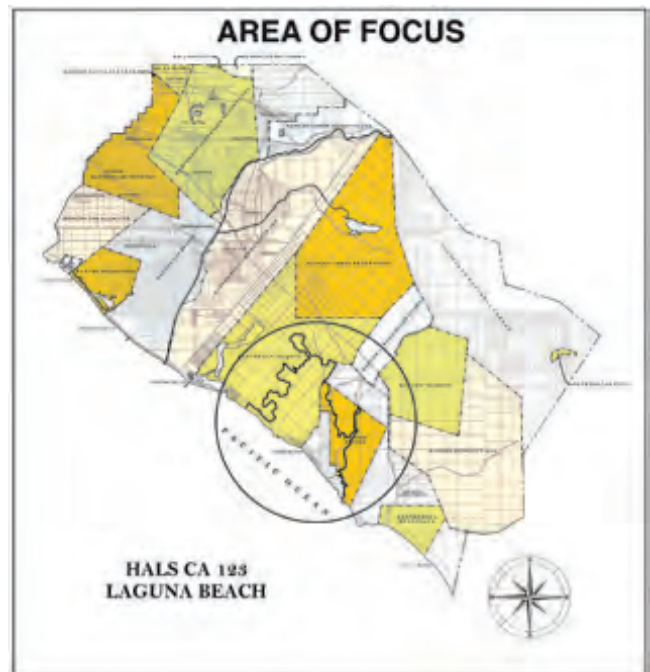
James Irvine, an Irishman who had come to San Francisco in 1848 and made his fortune as a merchant in the California gold rush, purchased Rancho San Joaquín from José Sepúlveda in 1864 and Rancho Lomas de Santiago from William Wolfskill in 1866. In 1876 he established the Irvine Ranch. With his death in 1886 the ranch passed to his son, James Irvine II, who assumed control in 1893 at the age of 25. He moved his family from San Francisco after the earthquake in 1906 (Irvine Ranch [2001]) and shifted much of the ranch from cattle-grazing to irrigated crops, growing acres of oranges and vegetables. The ranch continued, however, to run cattle on the Laguna hillsides well into the 1990s.

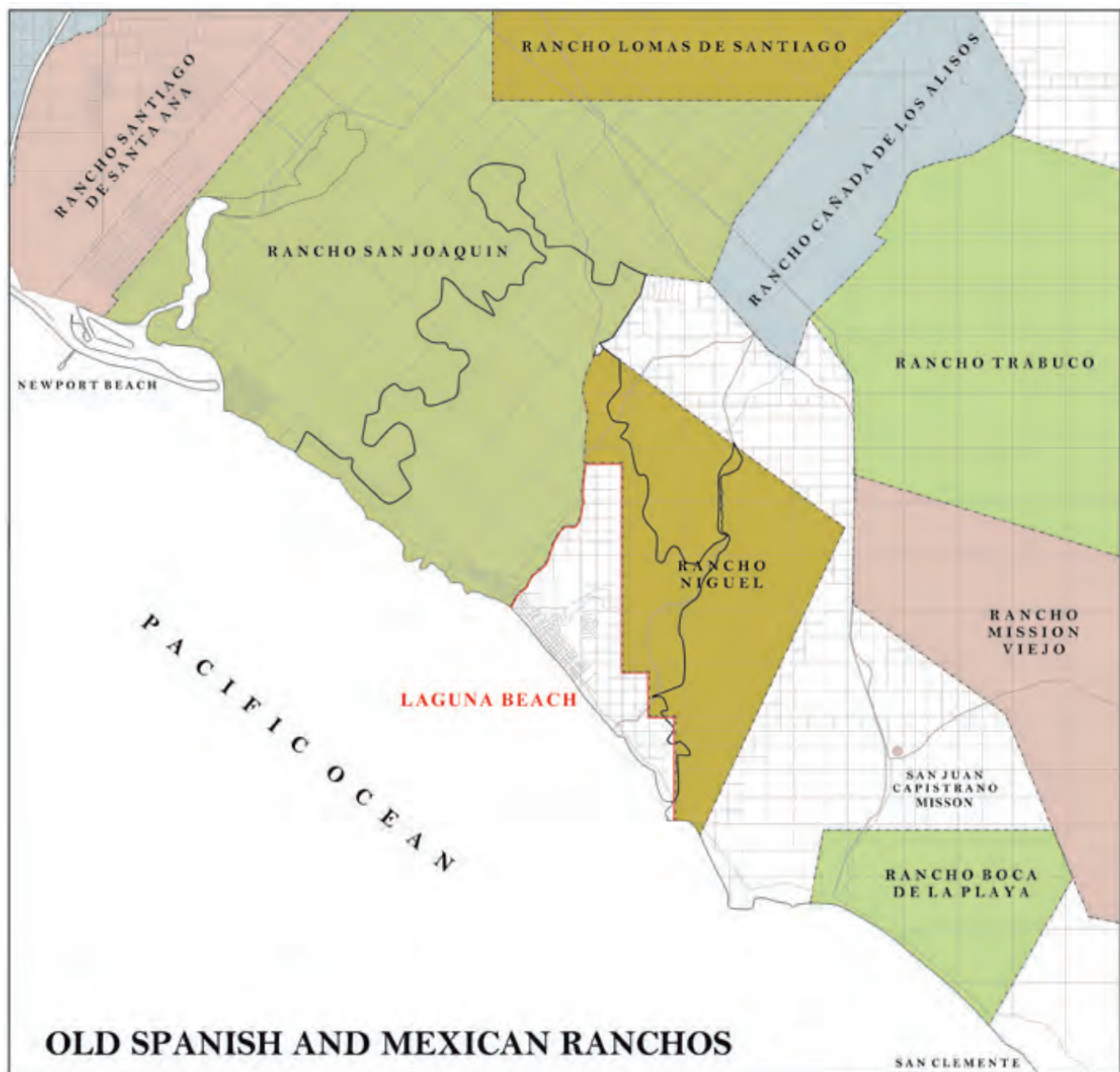
Over the years Rancho Niguel passed through many hands, in whole or in part, and by 1874 was largely owned by Cyrus B. Rawson. Lewis F. Moulton, who ran sheep on rented land from Oceanside to Wilmington, rented 1,600 acres of Rancho Niguel from Jonathan Bacon in 1881 and the rest of the ranch, 17,000 acres, from Rawson in 1884. In 1894 he bought Rawson's acreage and sold a one-third interest to Jean-Pierre Daguerre. In 1899 the two men bought Bacon's piece and later other property to put together the nearly 22,000-acre Moulton Ranch. After Daguerre's death in 1911 (when his one-third share went to his widow), Moulton shifted from sheep to cattle—according to his daughter, Charlotte Moulton (1932), because the development of the area had made it difficult to move sheep to distant pastures in dry years.

Homesteaders filed claims on land south of the Irvine Ranch and Laguna Canyon Road and west of Rancho Niguel beginning in 1876. Beryl Viebeck's (1996) map shows 39 claims arranged in a north-south-oriented patchwork following the U.S. township-and-range survey system. The first settler, Eugene Salter, started a homestead in Aliso Canyon, and in 1871 his abandoned cabin was occupied by

George Thurston and his family. Members of the Thurston family remained for fifty years on what is now the golf course of the Ranch at Laguna Beach, located along Aliso Creek just before it reaches the sea (Thurston 1947). As early as 1875, the federal government deputy surveyor E. G. Nichols wrote in his field notes (City of Laguna Beach 2006, 3),

The land in this township produces but very little vegetation of any value and what little feed there is grows so high up among the rocks that it is almost out of the reach of stock. The water of Laguna Creek is quite salty. The ground rises half a mile from the ocean level to about 1000 feet. There are a few sycamore trees in the canon (sic) but the timber is chiefly Elder and Willow. There is a pleasant place on the beach at the mouth of this canon and it is quite a resort.





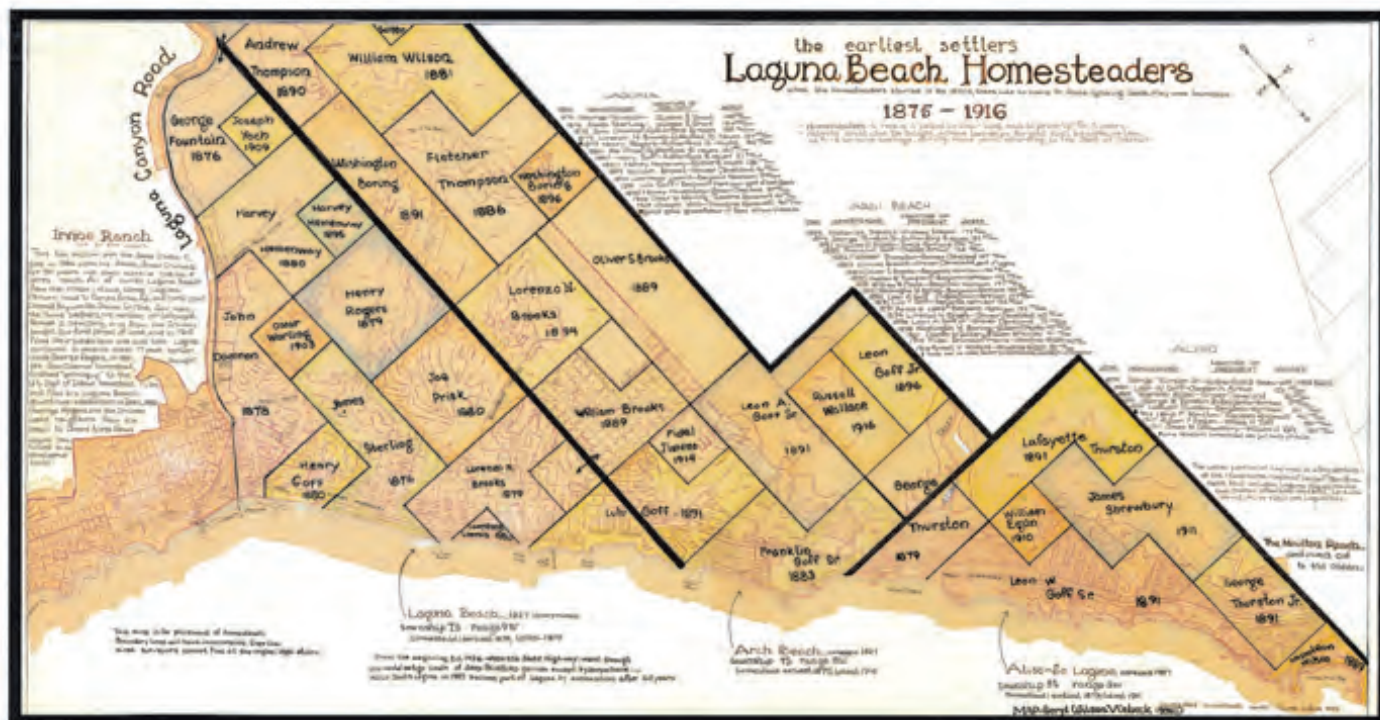
Nathaniel Brooks homesteaded at Arch Beach in 1876 and his brother William in Arch Beach Heights in 1889. In 1878 John Damron homesteaded the flat land of downtown and part of Temple Hills, and the next year Henry Rogers homesteaded an area from Temple Hills to Mystic Hills. Harvey L. Hemenway homesteaded 78 acres in Laguna Canyon in the 1880s, and Frank Goff settled on land north of Aliso Canyon in 1883. Later the Damron property was sold to George Rogers, whose creation of lots in the downtown was the town's first subdivision. Rogers's home stood on the site of the present city hall in front of the now-enormous pepper tree that he had planted (Viebeck 1995, 7). Adjacent to it Rogers established the first school. In 1888 a new school was built by Mormons in Laguna Canyon near the intersection of El Toro Road and Laguna Canyon Road, and in 1893 it was moved to Canyon Acres and in 1908 to Aliso Street (now Catalina Street), where it became the first Catholic church. In 1931 it was moved to the corner of Legion and Through Street, where it became

Joseph Kleitsch's studio. It was demolished to construct the Little Church by the Sea. The school house that is now Legion Hall was originally Laguna Beach Grammar School, built in 1908 on the south side of Park Avenue where the high school is now. It was moved to its present location on the corner of Legion and Catalina in 1928 (Jane Janz, personal communication, May 8, 2016).

The land on the north side of Laguna Canyon Road was owned by the Irvines and purchased from them by Howard G. Heisler in 1905, to be developed by Heisler, L. C. McKnight, and the Thumb brothers (Viebeck 1996). Eighteen-plus acres of the subdivision on the coastal blufftop were set aside as Heisler Park (City of Laguna Beach 2002). These subdivisions were followed by a number of tract maps that established a pattern of small lots intended for vacation homes. In 1911 subdivision shifted to Arch Beach Heights, where nearly 1,900 25' x 100' lots were created on a map with apparently no consideration of topography.



Mt. Baldy from Laguna Canyon (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Laguna Beach Homestead Map (© 1996 Beryl Wilson Viebeck, reproduced by permission)



Palmer Place (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Access to these lots began to be provided only in the 1930s and remained very limited until the 1960s. Joe Thurston and others filed the first of the tract maps for Temple Hills in 1921. The Diamond/Crestview area was subdivided in 1925 on very steep hillsides without resolving difficulties of access and construction (City of Laguna Beach 2006). By 1927, when the community was incorporated, the pioneers had already recorded tract maps over most of the shoreline. Some lots made available by the depression of the 1890s sold for as little as a dollar per front foot. The typical subdivision created a street right-of-way parallel to the coastline, with private ownership extending from the street to the mean-high-tide line (City of Laguna Beach 1988). After the 1927 incorporation, forty-seven annexations created the present-day boundaries of the City of Laguna Beach, some of the largest being Top of the World (1956), Bluebird Canyon/Arch Beach Heights (1965), Laguna Canyon (1966–1989) and South Laguna (1987).

A trail initially used by Native Americans extended through Laguna Canyon. This was to become the southeastern limit of the San Joaquín land grant and the Irvine Ranch. William Brooks facilitated travel through the canyon with the first stage line for a handful of residents and visitors, having successfully sued the Irvine Ranch, which in 1886 had closed off the old Laguna Canyon trail (Blacketer 2001). Water was available there for the cattle of the Irvine and Moulton ranches, each approaching the Laguna Lakes from its own side of the road (Ramsey and Ramsey 1976, 44). In 1907 Frank Richey, a beekeeper, drilled a well for his home in Laguna Canyon, and until 1945 (when his family removed the pump) visitors to Laguna frequently stopped there for water (City of Laguna Beach 1991). In 1914 Guy and Joe Skidmore built a water line from the canyon that supplied water to homes in Laguna Beach until 1926, when the brackish water persuaded voters to abandon the wells in favor of a new water district (Ramsey and Ramsey 1976; Chilcote 2014). In 1917 Laguna Canyon Road was paved by the county (Borthwick 2015).



Palmer Place (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Catalina Street (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Malcolm St. Clair residence, Carmelita Street (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



The Plein Air Painters

Because the 1769 Portolá expedition had turned inland up the Capistrano Valley and skirted the back side of the Niguel and San Joaquin Hills, and because the rancho grants excluded the Laguna area, the treasure of Laguna remained hidden, only to inspire later visitors. More than 100 years later, adventurers from the missions and pueblos found their way down Aliso and Laguna Canyons and, when they got to the coast, found a stunningly rich texture of sandy beaches and coves punctuated by steep cliffs and rocky promontories. Once word got out about Laguna's magnificent terrain and translucent ocean waters, artists were quick to follow. As art historian Bolton Colburn (2015) has put it, "Laguna Beach has long provided an inspiring and beneficial environment for the artist, one that has few equals anywhere. Historically, that was mainly due to the region's being remarkably beautiful and undeveloped at the turn of the twentieth century, a blank slate that allowed personal freedom and the sense that anything was possible." Among the first to arrive were Norman St. Clair and William Lees Judson, St. Clair a watercolorist and Judson the founding dean of the University of Southern California School of Architecture and Fine Arts. It was Judson who first brought art students down to Laguna to paint *en plein air*, outdoors, to capture the ever-changing atmospherics that soon became known as "Laguna light."

By 1918, when the population of the town was 300, there were enough full and part-time artists in Laguna to form the Laguna Beach Art Association. By this time Laguna was home to scores of prominent California plein air artists. From Europe came William Wendt of Germany and Joseph Kleitsch of Hungary, from the United States Edgar Payne and Anna Hills. Other luminaries were Frank Cuprien, Clarence Hinkle, and William Griffith,

Laguna Beach (Joseph Kleitsch)
1926 – Festival of Arts Permanent
Art Collection (FOAPAC)

and there were many others. Wendt's landscapes focused on the hillside, coastal bluff, and sea cliff terrain. Payne's canvases focused largely on crashing waves and the majestic Eastern Sierras. More than others, Kleitsch's work captured rapid development changes in the town during its transition from isolated seaside colony to resort. Cuprien kept his eyes on subtle sunset variations, while many of Hinkle's works dwelt on intimate domestic scenes. Numerous major publications document the lives and work of the plein air artists in Laguna Beach. A sampling includes *Plein Air Painters of California: The Southland* (Westphal 1982), *Loners, Mavericks, and Dreamers: Art in Los Angeles before 1900* (Moure 1994) and *California Art: 450 Years of Painting and Other Media* (Moure 1998), *Early Artists in Laguna Beach: The Impressionists* (Dominik 1986), *Joseph Kleitsch: A Kaleidoscope of Color* (Trenton 2007), *Edgar Payne: The Scenic Journey* (Shields et al. 2012), and *Miss Hills of Laguna Beach—Anna Althea Hills: Art, Education, Community* (Blake 2016).

The first of these concludes (Westphal 1982, 126), "Those early days of Laguna Beach marked a unique experience in American art. The artists to follow, including students of these exceptional painters, would never interpret nature as they did nor convey the rich quality they achieved."

Beatrice Whittlesey, a longtime Laguna Beach resident and for a time in the 1960s a member of the city's planning commission, spent several summers in Laguna Beach beginning in 1906. She later wrote that her father, the Los Angeles architect Austin Whittlesey, had hired Norman St. Clair to do the renderings of his architectural drawings, and St. Clair had shown him watercolors of Laguna Beach. "Dad said, 'If it's that beautiful, we'd better go there'" (Whittlesey 1985, 5). Merle and Mabel Ramsey (1975, 1–2) described summer visits to Laguna Beach at the turn of the century as follows:



South Laguna character, small street and large trees (Ann Christoph) 2016



Flower Stalls (Virginia Woolley) Ca. 1930 – FOAPAC



Gazebo Pier (William Griffith) 1931 - CLB



Site of City Hall, Laguna Beach (Roy Ropp) Ca. 1926 – CLB



House by the Sea (Virginia Woolley) 1930 - CLB

A trip to Laguna Beach was prepared for and talked about for many days as Santa Ana was the nearest city. This meant there would be 20 miles of slow driving by horse and buggy which would take at least half a day. Coming down the dusty canyon, you would hope at every turn to glimpse the ocean. Then, thinking that the trip would never end, the eucalyptus trees came into view. You were sure the wide ocean would be next! Yes, there were the white tents along the beach. . . . All else was forgotten. . . . You were now in Laguna Beach, away from any cares and worries.

Laguna Beach in 1924 was contrasted with Huntington Beach in an article in the *Los Angeles Sunday Times* (Starr 1924) as follows:

Laguna Beach beckons to artists, writers and globe trotters. She is unique and individual and wants to stay that way. Huntington Beach, on the other hand, encourages the oil prospector and the industrial wizard. Both have beaches quite different in topographical features, each beautiful in its own way. . . . Aristocratic Laguna Beach wants to be known as the “Riviera of America.” . . . A paved boulevard from Santa Ana, winding among rolling green hills is at present the only access to this beach, while completion of the coast highway through the town means much to its future development. . . . The variety of marine growth at Laguna Beach is said to be the finest on the Pacific Coast, and the delicate white orpine flowers which cover the hills back of the town are held in such high esteem that residents of Laguna Beach never cut them or retard their growth.

A year-round population of 1,500–2,000 was reported to increase in summer to 5,000–10,000, with auto camps in Laguna Canyon and on Aliso Beach. Reporting on development, the *Times* listed a new two-story business block, a new bank, a dance hall on the beach, a theater, a bathhouse, a library, and three churches, in addition to the Pomona Marine Laboratory.





Temple Hills (Joseph Kleitsch) 1926 - FOAPAC



Eternal Surge (Edgar Payne) 1920 – LAM



The Fog Bank (Frank Cuprien) 1914 - LAM



It Rained the Next Day, Sunset #5 (Frank Cuprien) 1938 - LAM



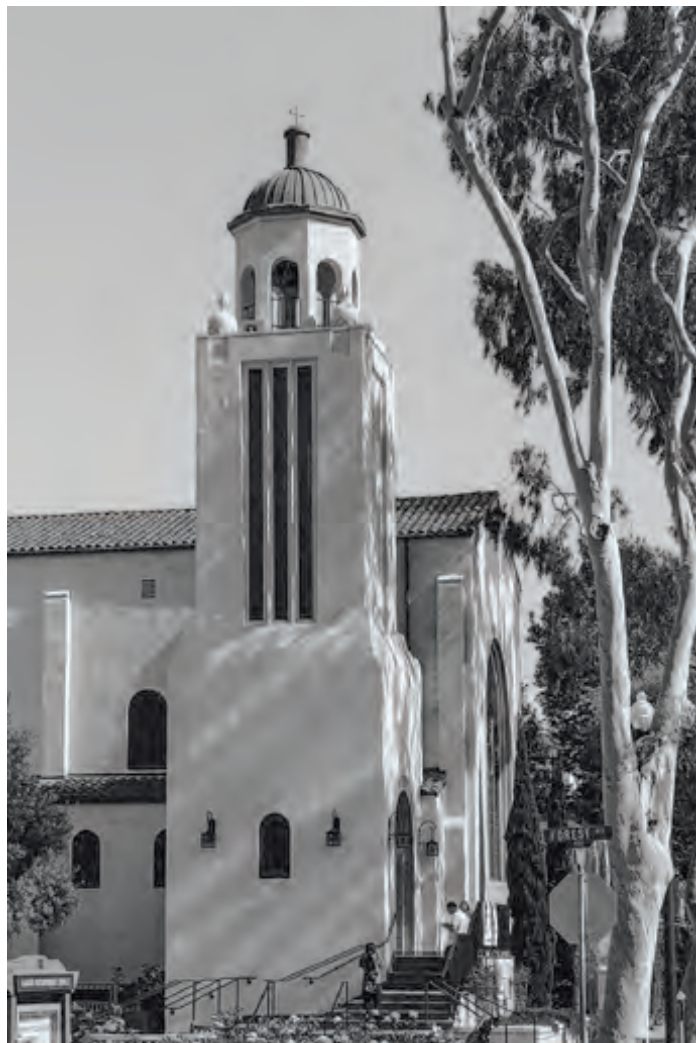
Sunset Heisler Park (Jacobus Baas) 2010 - FOAPAC



The City Beautiful

The city was valued for its beautiful landscape from its very beginnings. The plein air painters who settled and worked here recorded its natural features, and present-day urban designers such as Steven Kellenberg (2013) appreciate it for the authenticity and eclecticism of its architecture, the diversity of its landscapes, its varied street grids, its downtown core, its openings to the surrounding hills, and its street-end views of the ocean. Secluded by its surrounding hills, overlooked by the early explorers, and left out of the nineteenth-century land grants, it was settled late and homesteaded in small plots that were individually subdivided, creating a patchwork of neighborhoods rather than any uniform grid pattern. Its coastline mirrors this small scale, consisting of a series of named coves rather than long open beaches. The plein air painters who were prominent among the first settlers helped spread the word about Laguna's charms.

From the beginning, too, residents took every opportunity to preserve and enhance its beauty. For example, in January 1925, the Laguna Beach Woman's Club (founded in 1922) called a meeting of representatives of organizations in the city to launch a campaign to make Laguna Beach "the Paradise of the Pacific" (*Laguna Beach Life*, January 16, 1925). Dr. William C. Minife, who spoke at the kickoff meeting, talked of Laguna's "glorious natural scenery with its superb coastline of fantastic rocks, crystal coves, sandy bays, bold headlands, and curving beaches," its "majestic hills," and "the wonderful canyon drive by which the visitor enters Laguna." The Woman's Club secured (from Ernest L. Bowen) the donation of 700 Monterey cypress trees to be distributed free for planting on Arbor Day that year with the goal of helping "put Laguna Beach to the fore as a bower of loveliness and a hillside of grandeur" (*Laguna Beach*



Presbyterian Church, Forest Avenue
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016

North Laguna (Ken Knutsen) Ca. 1950 – FOAPAC



The White Barn (Anna Hills)
Ca. 1900 - FOAPAC

Life, February 13, 1925). The celebrated landscape architect Florence Yoch, who came from a Laguna Beach family, recommended planting “thousands of trees” and provided a list of trees that would do well in Laguna (*Laguna Beach Life*, March 20, 1925). Joe Thurston gave the city a 12–15-acre grove at the top of Temple Hills for a park (*Laguna Beach Life*, April 3, 1925). The Laguna Beach Garden Club, established in 1928, focused on planting trees, preventing existing trees from being cut down, and keeping billboards off the highway. At the club’s urging, the City Council established a three-member Park and Tree Board that was to have “free rein” in handling all matters having to do with street trees and the vegetation in parks (*South Coast News*, November 3, 1933). Photographs of newly built houses in “the Laguna spirit” were often prominently featured in the pages of *Laguna Beach Life*, along with renderings and floor plans of ready-cut houses “suitable for Laguna.” The new headquarters of the Chamber of Commerce built in 1925 was designed by the painter Frank Cuprien to “harmonize with the natural beauties of the town” (Laguna Beach Historical Society 1992).

The Chamber of Commerce was standing in for local government at the time, and when a need for services (for example, a fire truck, restrooms at the beach, water, sewerage) was perceived it took on the task of raising the funds and organizing the community to get those services provided. A letter to *Laguna Beach Life* from Joe and Guy Skidmore argued that incorporation as a city would spread the cost of improvements more equitably (*Laguna Beach Life*, July 15, 1921). Another argument for incorporation, voiced by Frank Cuprien at the Woman’s Club meeting mentioned above, was that it would permit creating a building code to control the look of the town as it grew (*Laguna Beach Life*, February 13, 1925). According to Don Meadows (1963, 250), Laguna Beach in these years was

an art colony in which the temperament of the artist was being submerged by business and progress. To save the distinctive features of the community, the older residents, who fondly called themselves “Lagunatics,” started a movement for incorporation. A vote was put before the people and with little opposition the City of Laguna Beach was incorporated in June 1927. . . . People with the Laguna spirit were placed in office and the town went ahead with physical improvements while retaining the atmosphere of the old art colony.

After its incorporation, the city’s first improvement district was a comprehensive sewage treatment system to preclude contamination of the beach. The *South Coast News* (February 1931) printed a rendering of the building as it would appear when completed that reportedly “caused several people who did not like the idea of a plant of this nature being erected in Laguna Canyon to change their ideas.” The headline read “NEW LAGUNA SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT IS ATTRACTIVE IN DESIGN.” The building was Mediterranean in style, and the sewer digester tower (which remains today and is on the city’s historic register) had a circular staircase at the top and was roofed with red Spanish tiles. The vent that still stands high on the hillside behind it, which looks like a lighthouse, has a similar roof. A survey of public works buildings at the time (Short and Stanley-Brown 1939, 461) identified the structures as “a departure in the design of a treatment plant,” and Charles Epting (2014, 122) has described the building as “the most interesting sewage treatment plant in the county” for its “artistic design.”

M. F. K. Fisher, writing from Laguna Beach (disguised as the fictional “Olas”), wrote in 1934 (Fisher 1982 [1935], 63):

Artists, old settlers, young enthusiasts for life in the raw with no hate and no golf clubs, want to keep it just as it is. . . . Olas’ other lovers, just as sincerely, want to exploit to the bursting point its strong and attractive character. . . .





Main Street, Laguna
(Clarence Hinkle)
1918 – FOAPAC

Streets are being smoothed and straightened. Old eucalyptus trees . . . are being smoothed and straightened. Old eucalyptus trees are uprooted to make way for curbing. “Desecration!” the artists shriek. “Necessity,” soothe the progressives, and they plant more trees in much more orderly rows.

The April 1930 issue of a local magazine called *The Racket* (quoted in Murphine 1980) expressed the concerns of some early residents about the growth of the city:

What we want is for those who are determining what Laguna is to be at present, and how it will be in the future, to be a bit careful what they do. Laguna HAS lost its charm of 10 years ago. People came here too rapidly and did things too rapidly. . . . They put in improvements not thinking that the improvements might be ugly and detract from the natural beauty of the place. . . . We believe what Laguna needs now, more than ever, is to develop an aesthetic sense—an ideal of beauty combined with utility.

Another local observer, C. E. C. Burnett, promoted a practical solution:

The town is changing. It is no longer a little artists’ colony. [There are] hundreds of us who, though not artists, appreciate the beauty of the community and its cultural surroundings. . . . Scientific city planning is our only salvation. Without it the beauty with which nature has endowed us will be marred almost beyond repair.

As commercial establishments increased in number, he explained, they were understandably moving from the downtown basin north and south on the Coast Boulevard (a garage on the corner of Jasmine Street, a real estate office on Cliff Drive, a super service station on the corner of Myrtle Street), and this was causing “howls” from residents about the intrusion. He saw zoning as the solution and recommended that readers write the Chamber of Commerce calling for a zoning survey (*South Coast News*, February 24, 1933).



Hotel Laguna, Coast Highway (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



These community concerns led to the passage of three urgency ordinances, two in 1928 and another in 1936, that established an “A” zone (essentially the downtown basin), in which business was permitted, and a “B” zone (the rest of the town), in which only residences, hotels, churches, clubs, and educational or philanthropic institutions were allowed. The City Council retained the authority to permit an otherwise unpermitted use and might hold a public hearing to help determine whether that was proper. The 1936 ordinance set a 50 percent maximum lot coverage in the residential zone and established side yard requirements and a minimum lot size of 1,900 square feet.

The city’s first Land Use Plan, Ordinance 209, adopted in 1940, replaced the provisions of these early ordinances with a scheme of residential, commercial, and industrial zones graded by intensity of occupation and was designed to “regulate and restrict the height and bulk of buildings and to regulate the area of yards, courts, and other open spaces about buildings” (City of Laguna Beach 1940).



Lumberyard Building, Forest Avenue (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Cope Residence, Glenneyre and Park Avenue (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Building heights were limited to two stories or 30' except in the general business and industrial districts, where the maximum was four stories or 50'. Exceptions were specified for rooftop architectural features, and for buildings on a 25 percent slope a third story on the downhill side might be permitted. The minimum size of a building site in the R-1 district was set at 6,000 square feet. By this time there was a planning commission, and it was charged with making judgments on requests for variances and adjustments. A permit from the building inspector was required for new construction and alterations of or additions to existing buildings.

The city's first General Plan, developed through public meetings inviting community input and adopted in January 1959, included among its goals the following (City of Laguna Beach 1959, 1):

The city should continue to be both a residential and a resort community—and these divergent identities should be smoothly blended. The physical beauty of the area, especially of the coastline, should be preserved. Energetic effort should be made to maintain Laguna's individuality and identity. Over-all, the esthetic appeal of the city should be accentuated.

The plan recommended “keeping residential and commercial development in the central area low, consistent with the established character of Laguna. . . . Tall buildings imply ‘metropolis’—an image which is in conflict with the ‘village’ character of Laguna Beach which this plan seeks to maintain and enhance” (p. 13). It also recommended that Main Beach be extended to the Coast Highway and “developed for controlled community use” (p. 27).

The idea of public acquisition of the Main Beach had been discussed since before the city was incorporated, and bond issues were submitted to voters in 1955 and in 1959 but fell just short of the required two-thirds majority.



Office and shops, Coast Highway, South Laguna (Ann Christoph) 2016



Part of the impetus for these efforts was the threat of large commercial structures. One of these had been approved by the planning commission in 1958 and the approval reversed by the city council after a public outcry. In 1968 a nonprofit corporation was formed to issue thirty-year bonds for the park, to be paid off with the Festival of Arts's lease payments for Irvine Bowl, and the property was purchased for the city.

By this time development was reaching southern Orange County, and so was the nationwide environmental revolution, producing Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), Ian McHarg's *Design with Nature* (1969), the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency, Earth Day, the passage of the California Environmental Quality Act in 1970, and the establishment of the California Coastal Commission in 1972. Laguna Beach citizens were inspired by this new thinking. (At the invitation of the local landscape architect Fred Lang, Ian McHarg came to speak to the Citizens' Town Planning Association in the early 1970s.) In response to the threat of inappropriate development, they adopted a set of measures to preserve and enhance their natural and built environments that has survived to this day.

South Laguna citizens, inspired by the threat of development on what was then a private beach, persuaded the Orange County board of supervisors to buy Aliso Beach. Access standards to control and slow development were established in 1964, and the city set a population limit of 24,000 and rezoned multifamily properties to match that objective.

In 1965 the University of California, Irvine, opened its campus, bringing new ideas to Laguna Beach with the faculty members who came to live in the city. "The UCI people inserted another point of view into the community dialog. They could frame issues from an academic perspective" (Randy Lewis, personal communication, October 9, 2015).



Water District building, Third Street (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



They added substance and activism to Laguna's planning efforts, often focused on preserving open space and the traditional village character of the town.

In the late 1960s Laguna Beach began to be dramatically influenced by the social changes going on throughout the country. A liberal-minded counterculture, influenced by the university and art environment, was emerging. It emphasized harmony with nature, social justice, communal living, artistic experimentation, musical transformation, search for enlightenment, promotion of peace, and drug exploration. It became visible with the long-haired youth movement. In 1965 the Sawdust Art Festival, with its casually styled booths and innovative art, was started as a counterpoint to the more traditional Festival of the Arts. A controversial group called the Brotherhood of Eternal Love moved to Laguna Canyon, which became its headquarters for distribution of psychedelic drugs including LSD, marijuana, and hashish. These drugs were initially promoted as tools for enlightenment, but the operation soon became a worldwide illicit drug enterprise. The Brotherhood also founded Mystic Arts World, a hippie boutique that included a gallery of psychedelic art, curated by Dion Wright, one of the original exhibitors at the Sawdust Art Festival.

At Christmastime in 1970 a "happening" that was billed as a spiritual awakening was held in Laguna Canyon. It attracted an estimated 25,000 participants for what has been described as "Woodstock West." The event was tolerated for three days before it was dramatically closed down by the city with the support of law enforcement from across Orange County. A strict drug enforcement policy was subsequently enacted.

This was a critical time for the city, and, while many saw the crackdown as the end of the "hippie era" in Laguna Beach, the ideas spawned by the 1960s movement had taken hold in the community. When subsequent plans were promoted



Canyon Reach (John H. Hinchman) 1925 – LAM

for massive development of the coastal region for tourist hotels, the citizenry resoundingly rejected the proposals and launched an active campaign for preservation of the village character of Laguna Beach. These attitudes prevail to this day and are manifested in the many environmental preservationist groups still active in the city.

Consultants were hired in 1967 to update the city's general plan, and they presented the city with a plan that included resort development, with triple the population, and a coastal freeway. After a public hearing at which Laguna Beach residents rejected this proposal, a 23-member citizens' advisory committee came up with different goals (City of Laguna Beach 1969; McElroy 1971), including maintaining the integrity of the contour of the hills and of the coastline, preserving natural wilderness, maintaining a village atmosphere, preserving a community of individuality and diversity, regulating the height and mass of buildings, and respecting urban aesthetics.

A high-rise hotel was in fact built on Laguna's oceanfront in those years, having received a variance to build to 58'. (Maximum building heights in the city's two commercial zones were 30' and 50' at the time.) In the planning commission's hearings on the proposal in January 1971, a maximum height of 70' was being considered. One of those hearings drew some 250 people, all but a few opposed to the idea. As Phyllis Sweeney later wrote,

The citizens were outraged. Residents stormed the Planning Commission meetings. At one meeting, Judy Ronaky, the Commission clerk, read 47 letters in opposition. The commissioners' response was that the objections were from only a small vocal minority. No one would listen. People were meeting in each other's homes. Arnold [Hano], Fran [Englehardt], Joyce Dusenberry, and others formed a committee.

Other members of this early group, already calling itself Village Laguna, were Roger McErlane, Bill Leak, Thomasina Gunn, Joe Tomchak, Nate Rynn, Mildred Hannum, and Corky Smith. Eventually the planning commission settled on a 50' maximum height, and before the recommendation could reach the City Council a citizens' group of five filed a notice of intention to circulate petitions for an initiative that would modify the building code to limit buildings citywide to 36' above the highest point of grade. The attorney Ralph Benson, the engineer Merritt Trease, the environmental biologist Philip Rundel, Arnold Hano, and Marjory Adams Darling signed the notice, which appeared in the *Laguna News-Post* on February 13. Then, when the required waiting period was over, volunteers, led by Phyllis Sweeney, began collecting signatures. The goal was 1,140 signatures, 15 percent of the city's registered voters, and in the end 3,049 signatures were certified as valid. Faced with these figures at its May 19 meeting, the City Council called a special election to decide the issue on August 3. On election day, 62 percent (4,920) of Laguna's registered voters turned out (a record, according to the City Clerk), and 75 percent of them voted yes (*Laguna News Post*, August 4, 1971; Village Laguna 2011).

When the time came for the city to develop its Local Coastal Plan under the California Coastal Commission, the city council decided to have nearly all of the city (excluding only Sycamore Hills), instead of simply the first 1,000 feet from the shoreline, included in the coastal zone to achieve an additional layer of protection. Preparations for an update of the General Plan resulted in the adoption of the first Land Use Element in 1972. The current version, adopted in 2012, addresses the following goals among others: create a community that is sustainable, resilient, and regenerative; preserve, enhance, and respect the unique character and identity of Laguna's residential neighborhoods; preserve, enhance, and respect the unique, small-scale village



Contemporary Laguna and its greenbelt, showing the boundaries of the Historic American Landscape

Historic American Landscape Survey:

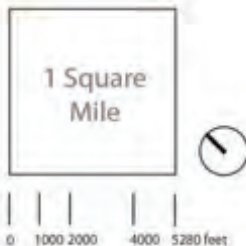
The Laguna Greenbelt Open Space Preserve Laguna Beach, California

The Laguna Greenbelt is comprised of the following public open space:

- A Laguna Coast Wilderness Park
- B Aliso & Wood Canyons Wilderness Park
- C Crystal Cove State Park
- D City of Irvine Open Space Preserve
- E City of Laguna Beach Open Space
- F Orange County Transportation Authority

HALS - CA123

Prepared By:
Committee for Preservation of the Laguna Legacy
VALLEYSTATISTICS



character and individual identity of Laguna Beach's commercial areas; and protect, preserve, and enhance the community's natural resources.

The Open Space and Conservation Element, adopted in 1973 and most recently amended in 2005, contains descriptions of the city's natural surroundings and detailed policies for, among other things, the maintenance of the shoreline in its natural state, the protection of tide pools and marine habitats, the improvement of public access ways to the beaches, the development of trails, the preservation of the canyon wilderness, the preservation of public views from the hillsides and along the shoreline, the preservation and restoration of natural drainage channels, streams, lakes, and marshes, and the preservation of steep slopes and natural topographic features. The implementation of one of its policies, "Encourage inaccessible hillside property to be dedicated to the city as permanent open space," began with the approval of Tract 10054 on Park Avenue and Alta Laguna Boulevard and Tract 7367 between Skyline Drive and Pacific Avenue in 1982. Citizen devotion and activism has produced a number of city parks—Heisler Park in the 1920s, Bluebird Park in the 1950s, Main Beach Park in the 1960s, Village Green in the 1970s, and Treasure Island Park in the 1990s.

A heritage tree ordinance, adopted in 1975 and amended in 1998, recognizes and protects trees of large size, historical significance, or unique appearance. The protection of these trees is accomplished through a permit process that reviews proposals for major pruning, removal, or construction close to the trees. A list of heritage trees prepared in 1995 included 42 trees; now there are 113. The Landscape and Scenic Highways Resource Document, adopted in 1995 and now in the process of being converted into an element of the General Plan (City of Laguna Beach n.d.), offered a profile of the landscaping associated with each of the city's distinctive neighborhoods and a series of suggestions for

maintaining and enhancing it, including information on water conservation, fire safety, view preservation, soil stability, and control of invasive plants.

The Historic Resources Element, adopted in 1981 and amended in 2006, has as its objectives to preserve and enhance structures of historic significance in Laguna Beach and ensure that neighborhoods with a preponderance of older homes be maintained as cohesive units through consistency of size, scale, and character; to encourage an appreciation of history and historic preservation in the city; and to promote community awareness of local history and enhance recognition of the city's historic role as an important art colony and seaside resort. An inventory of historic resources produced with federal, state, and county funding under the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act identified more than 700 houses eligible for listing on the city's historic register, and some 300 homes are now protected by such listing.

In a survey conducted by the League of Women Voters of Orange Coast in February 1980 on the future of Laguna Beach, 83.5 percent of the 1,137 respondents chose 20,000 as the target population for the city (which had 16,000 at the time) and 60.2 percent said they would like to see tight restrictions on new building to reduce the impact of traffic and noise on existing residential areas, avoid extending existing roads, preserve the natural contours of the hillsides, and control the costs of additional police and fire protection, schools, and infrastructure (League of Women Voters of Orange Coast 1971).

To implement the policies contained in the General and Specific Plans, the city established design review of proposed development in 1972, excluding for the moment single-family residences. In response to

neighborhood concerns about out-of-scale development, the design review requirement was extended to residences in 1986. (Additions to single-family residences less than 50 percent of the gross floor area that do not create a new upper story or exceed 15' above the adjacent ground elevation and are not in environmentally sensitive areas are exempt.) The city's "Design Guidelines: A Guide to Residential Development" (2010) summarizes the General Plan policies that apply. The design criteria specified in the zoning code include, in addition to General Plan compliance, access, design articulation, design integrity, environmental context, historic preservation, landscaping, lighting and glare, neighborhood compatibility, privacy, public art, sustainability, water features, and view equity.

The Downtown Specific Plan, adopted in 1989 and most recently amended in 2008, was designed to protect the downtown's eclectic mix of architectural styles, small-scale buildings, pedestrian orientation, rich variety of shops and services, and sense of community. The plan describes the "unique charm of the downtown" as, "in no small measure, created by its physical setting as well as by the small scale and diversity of building styles. That the downtown basin is located on the flat delta area at the mouth of Laguna Canyon, surrounded by steep canyons and bordered by the Pacific shoreline with only two roads providing access, established a physical separation from other regions of the city and contributes to the area's having a special identity" (City of Laguna Beach 2008, II-1). New uses in the downtown are subject to a conditional use permit to allow the planning commission to maintain a variety that serves both visitor and resident needs. Building heights in the plan area are limited to 12' (though

two-story buildings exist there) to ensure the preservation of a varied and pedestrian-friendly streetscape.

A planning process called Vision 2030 funded by the city and involving some 2,000 residents concluded in 2001 that one of Laguna's "core values" was that "Lagunans accept the responsibility of stewardship for the town we love, for both its people and its environment, and are willing to commit to its preservation and enhancement." Its proposals for future design enhancements included integrating Laguna Creek into a naturalistic stream through the downtown and the village entrance; developing a program to preserve the character, uniqueness, and diversity of individual neighborhoods; publishing a manual describing the unique characteristics of Laguna, its history, and its philosophical attitudes; expanding the city's efforts at historic preservation; systematically increasing the amount of open space in and around the city; and ensuring that landscape features throughout Laguna are rigorously maintained and preserved (City of Laguna Beach 2001).



Lifeguard tower, Main Beach, Coast Highway (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Shop, Coast Highway (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Water District building, Third Street (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Monument Point looking South (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Picnic Beach looking North (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Laguna Beach (Clarence Hinkle) 1929 - LAM



Seascape (Clarence Hinkle) Ca. 1918 – FOAPAC



The Greenbelt and the Bluebelt

In 1968 James W. Dilley, the owner of a local bookstore and founding member of the Citizens' Town Planning Association, set up a subcommittee called Citizens for the Greenbelt that circulated a petition titled "A Matter of Urgency" calling for support for the idea of a greenbelt surrounding the city. The subcommittee became Laguna Greenbelt, Inc., in 1970. Dilley persuaded the Orange County supervisors to adopt the concept of the Laguna Greenbelt in 1971, and in 1973 the concept was given priority in the Open Space Element of the Orange County General Plan. The California Coastal Commission recognized the greenbelt concept in 1975 (Laguna Greenbelt n.d.).

The 1970s and 1980s saw recurrent citizen efforts that led to a spate of additions to the Laguna Greenbelt: Sycamore Hills in 1978, Aliso, Wood, and Mathis Canyons, 80 acres in Laguna Beach's Top of the World area, other properties in Laguna Beach. and 2,888 acres of beach and back-country land, including Moro Canyon, between Laguna Beach and Newport Beach, in 1979. In the 1980s with the leadership of Fred Lang and the South Laguna Civic Association a 20-acre parcel south of upper Three Arch Bay, 130+ acres on the slopes of Niguel Hill, and hillside properties including Badlands Park were dedicated as open space. After Jim Dilley's death in 1980, Tom Alexander became president of the Laguna Greenbelt, and with Larry Ulvestad he advanced the idea of establishing an Orange Coast National Park that would consolidate the coastal area from Laguna Beach to Corona del Mar. All the pieces of legislation were in place when Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980 and his opposition to park legislation in general caused the Laguna project to collapse. Fortunately, the state stepped in at this point and acquired the area now known as Crystal Cove State Park.



Canyon Hills (William Griffith)
1935 - CLB



Canyon Light on The Tell (Jerry Burchfield and Mark Chamberlain) 1989



The Laguna Canyon Project - The Tell (Jerry Burchfield and Mark Chamberlain) 1989

Although the struggle to save Sycamore Hills had ended with its purchase, preventing the construction of 2,000 homes there, Laguna Canyon was not yet safe from development. The Irvine Company had secured approval for the construction of 3,200 homes on 2,150 acres in the canyon, and despite public opposition the project appeared inevitable. In 1980 the photographers Jerry Burchfield and Mark Chamberlain, who recognized the canyon as the last remaining natural corridor to the ocean in Orange County and one of the largest open spaces in Southern California, initiated the documentation of the threat to its survival. They set out to photograph, day and night, every inch of the nine miles from the Santa Ana Freeway to the ocean at ten-year intervals (1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010). Their aim was “to bring the area into sharper focus as a microcosm of a larger universe and, hopefully, elevate the discussion regarding the definitions and connotations of ‘progress’ in today’s world” (Chamberlain 1988, 17).

In 1989 Burchfield and Chamberlain conceived and coordinated the mounting in Sycamore Hills of a 636'-long public mural named The Tell, made up of 100,000 photographs contributed by the community, and held a public rally against the future development (Chamberlain n.d.). The Great Walk to the mural drew an estimated 8,000–10,000 people and served as a catalyst for saving the canyon. The protest soon resulted in an agreement between Laguna Beach and the Irvine Company for the city’s acquisition of five canyon parcels. A city bond measure approved by almost 80 percent of Laguna voters raised \$20 million toward the purchase price of \$78 million by means of a property tax increase on every property in the city for 20 years (Laguna Greenbelt n.d.).

Two major highway construction projects brought landform changes to the canyon landscape that were protested by Lagunans to no avail, but in both cases Laguna Beach citizens’ concerns received some consideration. The six-lane San Joaquin Hills Toll Road, built in the mid-1990s, was

the subject of the February 1992 Great Laguna Canyon Cover-up, when an estimated 2,000 participants lined up along Laguna Canyon Road holding up sheets to mark the eventual width of the highway. About 500 people hiked from Laguna Beach’s Top of the World to join the rally, following the planned route of the highway (*Los Angeles Times*, March 1, 1992). The Laguna Canyon Conservancy, which organized the event and had also been decisive in mobilizing the 1989 Walk, collected signatures from people promising to boycott the toll road if it was built, and today there are still Lagunans who are keeping that promise. The right-of-way, however, belonged to Orange County as a result of the arrangement to purchase Sycamore Hills, and despite vigorous opposition by the city and legal action by the Laguna Greenbelt and the Laguna Canyon Conservancy the road was built.

The widening of Laguna Canyon Road from near the 405 Freeway to just north of the toll road had long been pursued by the county and opposed by the city. (The original plan had been for a freeway, but the alignment for that had been rescinded in 1976.) The sales agreement for the canyon had, however, included the understanding that the road would be widened, and in 1992 the county established a committee with representatives from the cities of Laguna Beach and Irvine, the California Department of Transportation, the homeowners’ associations of Leisure World and Aliso Viejo, the Irvine Company, and the Laguna Beach environmental and business communities to review potential alternatives for the roadway (LSA Associates, Inc. 1992). After a year and a half it came up with a plan for a realigned four-lane road that avoided the canyon’s lakes and included three wildlife undercrossings (*Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 1994). The plan had a split-grade design to minimize grading, undergrounding of utilities, no street lights, minimal signage, minimization of roadway cut slopes, and planting with native grasses, shrubs, and trees (LSA Associates, Inc. 1992). The public response to the environmental impact report on the road proposal in 1994 led to the establishment of the



The Viking Studio (Virginia Woolley) 1930 – LAM

Laguna Canyon Road Design Oversight Committee, composed of Laguna Beach residents, which over a period of years supervised the road's eventual design (Sutliff 2001). The road widening was completed in 2006. The abandoned section of the road is still visible to the east, marked at one point by a line of trees said to have been planted by the plein air painter Anna Hills in the city's very early days. The community continues to oppose any widening of Laguna Canyon Road oceanward of El Toro Road. This is a policy of the Land Use Element of the General Plan, and public support for it was reaffirmed by the conclusions of a task force convened to consider possible road improvements in September 2015.

The continuing efforts of the Laguna Canyon Conservancy, founded by Councilmember Lida Lenney and long led by Carolyn Wood, and the fundraising of the Laguna Canyon Foundation, founded in 1990, under executive director Mary Fegraus and president Michael Pinto, kept interest in land acquisition alive. The gift by the Irvine Company in November 2001 of a 173-acre parcel that the city had agreed to purchase but had been unable to fund completed the acquisitions desired by the thousands of Lagunans who had walked to Sycamore Hills to preserve the canyon a decade earlier. The 2000 Parks Bond Act, a state ballot initiative for which Laguna Beach residents (Laguna Greenbelt, the Laguna Canyon Conservancy, and Village Laguna) collected signatures brought the city \$12 million for parks and open space, facilitating further purchases in Laguna Canyon and in the city's interior canyons until the money was depleted near the end of the decade. A report on the city's open space acquisitions since 1979 prepared by the city manager (Frank 2010) includes some 3,100 acres at a cost to the city of \$35,162,000. An initiative sponsored by the Laguna Greenbelt, the Laguna Canyon Conservancy, Village Laguna, the Temple Hills Community Association, the Top of the World Neighborhood Association, and the South Laguna Civic Association that would have created a parcel

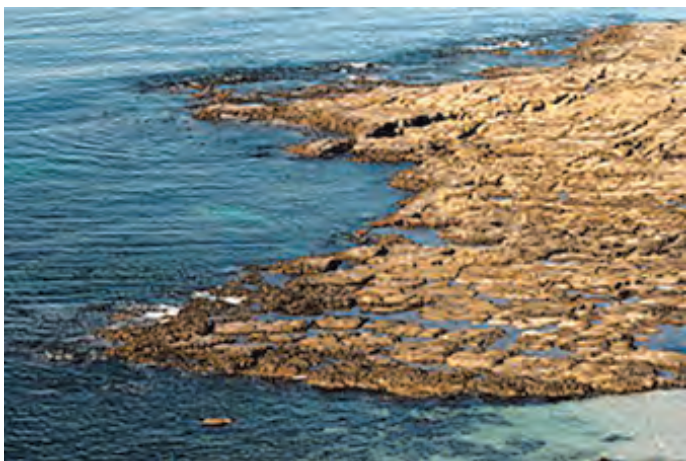
tax to fund the purchase of land to add to the inner greenbelt received 45 percent of the vote in 2012. Even though the initiative failed to pass, since then there have been additional purchases by the city, including 56 acres in Rimrock Canyon. Today only some 400 acres of naturally vegetated hillsides and canyons within the city limits remain in private hands. At the urging of the former city manager, Ken Frank, and others, the city council voted in 2015 to consider allocating \$300,000 every year for ten years to the Open Space Fund for the purchase and maintenance of open space.

In an effort to preserve the plant and animal life of the intertidal zone, the city initiated action to create a state-protected marine preserve along part of its shoreline in 1968. This was followed in 1974 by the creation of the Glenn E. Vedder Ecological Reserve, along the base of Heisler Park, in which marine life, plants, large fish, shells, and rocks cannot be removed or disturbed except for scientific study (City of Laguna Beach 2006). The Friends of the Sea Lion (now the Pacific Marine Mammal Center), which rescues, rehabilitates, and releases marine mammals, was founded by Laguna lifeguards Jim Stauffer and John Cunningham and veterinarian Rose Ekeberg in 1971. In 1976 the city offered the organization a barn in Laguna Canyon recently vacated by the SPCA, and the program continues there with heavy involvement by volunteers to this day (Pacific Marine Mammal Center 2015).

In the wake of destructive storms in the winter of 1983, the city undertook a study of its distinctive coastline that became known as the "Guidelines for Shoreline Protection" (1988). The study's introduction described the need to balance the public's desire for sandy beaches for recreational purposes against the desire of the private sector to protect its shorefront property and found the two desires closely related: "The stewardship of this land should minimize any actions that tend to diminish this valuable resource, thereby not only protecting the long-term economic value of the property but



Sea Grass King Tide (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Beach Terraces (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Bird Rock , Main Beach (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Study for My Citadel (Frank Cuprien) 1925 – LAM



Spring in the Canyon (William Wendt) 1926 – LAM

also preserving the first line of defense against wave attack” (City of Laguna Beach 1988, 1). The research revealed that fully a third of the city’s beach frontage was backed by some kind of structural device and that these devices were often in distress, were causing accelerated scour on either side to the detriment of neighboring properties, and raised fundamental aesthetic questions. The General Plan already prohibited new shoreline protection devices unless there was clear evidence that existing structures were in danger from erosion and unless they were designed to eliminate or mitigate adverse impacts on the local shoreline sand supply. The “Guidelines” spelled out the design considerations for evaluating proposals for new devices and made recommendations for monitoring beach behavior over time.

In the late 2000s, following the state legislature’s passage of the Marine Life Protection Act in 1999, the opportunity to have Laguna’s coastal waters included in a network of state marine protected areas engaged the community’s attention. With leadership from the Laguna Bluebelt Coalition, the city council voted to ask that the entire coastline of the city be given protection. After an intense two-year campaign, three marine protected areas were designated off Laguna’s coast for a five-year period: a marine reserve (the highest protection) from Abalone Point to Aliso Beach, a no-take marine conservation area (in which no marine life may be killed but in which the sewer outfall pipe can continue to operate) from Aliso Beach to Secret Cove, and a marine conservation area with less protection from Secret Cove to the Dana Point Headlands. All the tidepools from Crystal Cove to Dana Point were given the protection of a marine reserve. The Laguna Bluebelt Coalition conducts advocacy and education about local marine resources and assists in the enforcement of environmental protection and ocean water quality regulations. Another local environmental organization, the Laguna Ocean Foundation, founded in 2003 in response to the Vision 2030 process mentioned earlier, runs a tidepool docent program that has trained more than 200 volunteers to provide interpretive education in local intertidal areas.



Sunset #3 (Frank Cuprien) 1936 – LAM



Sunset #2 (Frank Cuprien) 1938 – LAM



Untitled, sunset (Frank Cuprien) 1929 – LAM



Laguna Sunset (study) (Frank Cuprien) 1930 - LAM



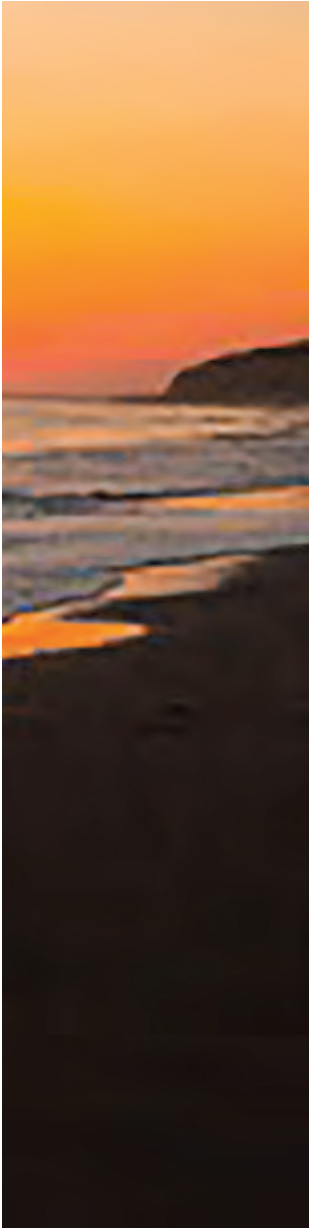
Golden Shores, Laguna Beach (Carl Oscar Borg) 1920 – LAM



The Landscape

The San Joaquin Hills are a defining feature of Laguna Beach. Extending from just south of the city boundary near Salt Creek to north of Crystal Cove, they separate the alluvial plain (the former agricultural area) of Orange County from the coast. Laguna's outcrops, cliffs, boulders, sea caves, and arches are the visible expression of the underlying geological structure, composed primarily of Topanga sandstone and San Onofre breccia. The unusual volcanic intrusion that forms Abalone Knoll also creates the vertical post-pile formation that is exposed in Irvine Cove at the north end of the city, Seal Rock, and the cliffs near Crescent Bay.

The enclaves formed by these hills are the basis for the city's character. The slopes on the coastal side are composed of terrace material eroded over the years from the hillsides and include relatively deep soils that were farmed by early homesteaders. They were among the first to be developed, as they were easy to reach and build upon. The coastal terrace, traversed by the Coast Highway and flanked by urban development, terminates at wave-cut sea cliffs that may rise to nearly 140'



Sunset (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



The Golden Hour, Laguna Beach
(Frank Cuprien) 1923 – LAM

above sea level. The alluvial central basin was formed with the rise of sea level after the last ice age and was swampy when the first settlers arrived in the area. The summits of the hills at Top of the World, Arch Beach Heights, and South Laguna are capped with sandy marine terraces reflecting uplift from sea beds millions of years ago. An 1885 topographic map illustrates the underlying landforms and drainage that are the basis for many of the city's development patterns (U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey 1885).

Ranch boundaries and the constraints posed by local hillsides and canyons discouraged or precluded development and created the opportunity for the conservation of the large areas of preserved open space. What is now known as the Laguna Greenbelt encompasses some 22,000 acres within and outside of the city limits and includes city-owned open space parcels, Laguna Coast Wilderness Park, Crystal Cove State Park, and Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park. Approximately 400 acres of privately owned land remain in naturally vegetated open space on the edge of urban development, mostly adjacent to publicly owned open space lands. Along with natural open space, Laguna Beach has community and neighborhood parks that define the local landscape. These include Heisler Park, Main Beach Park, Treasure Island Park, Alta Laguna Park, Moulton Meadows Park, Lang Park, Bluebird Park, Riddle Field, and a number of neighborhood pocket parks throughout the city (City of Laguna Beach 2015; Borthwick 2015; County of Orange 2006).

The Laguna Greenbelt is one of the last remaining sanctuaries for many plants native to southern California. About 100 species are found in Laurel and Willow Canyons alone. The area supports a variety of native southern California wildlife, including mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, and mule deer and more than 100 species of birds. Sensitive species in the area include California gnatcatcher, cactus wren, orange-throated whiptail, and coast horned lizard. Laguna Beach is part of an ecological "hotspot," one of twenty-six in the world so designated because of the diversity of their habitats and

species (Brown 2002). (Mediterranean habitat covers only 2 percent of the earth's surface but contains some 20 percent of its species.) Its San Onofre breccia areas, mostly in the southern part of the city, are favorable for southern maritime chaparral, a globally rare vegetation association known as "elfin forest." This association includes plants that are normally found in disparate areas of inland California and Mexico, among them California lilac, mountain mahogany, scrub oak, toyon, laurel sumac, chamise, and lemonade berry, as well as smaller shrubs such as bladderpod and bush rue, alongside the summer-deciduous crownbeard, sages, and sagebrush. An endemic succulent, Laguna Beach dudleya, occupies niches in the rocky cliffs. The drier areas of the city underlain by Topanga sandstone support coastal sage scrub, with sage, sagebrush, prickly pear cactus, lemonade berry, laurel sumac, and toyon. Coast live oaks and Mexican elderberry grow in spots where water collects or flows.

The two principal streams that flow through Laguna Beach—Laguna Canyon Creek and Aliso Creek—have produced canyons that reveal the two major geological formations of the town. In Laguna Canyon large sandstone boulders, caves, and cliffs of the Topanga formation provide habitats for California sycamores, coast live oaks, and coastal sagebrush. The blue-gray conglomerate San Onofre breccia formation at Aliso Canyon is hard enough to support vertical and overhanging cliffs, producing the escarpments that have led Aliso Canyon to be described as "Laguna's Yosemite." Smaller streams and their arroyos originating in the local hills bisect the coastal landscape and are reflected in the undulating patterns of the city's street system.

Laguna Canyon is approximately 8 miles long and 1 mile wide at its widest points. Its hillsides have fairly shallow soils and thus support mostly shallow-rooted coastal sagebrush. The flat canyon bottoms have somewhat deeper soils and support California sycamores, coast live oaks, and arroyo willow, along with larger native shrubs such as toyon. Similar vegetation probably once grew in the lower reaches of Aliso Canyon,



Landscape (William Wendt) 1912 – LAM

but it was more intensely farmed and grazed. Part is now a golf course. In Aliso Canyon coastal sage scrub is widespread on the slopes, southern maritime chaparral near the coast, and annual grassland primarily along Aliso Creek, in lower Wood Canyon, and at Moulton Meadows. Riparian vegetation and grassy wetlands/marsh are found along the length of the creek, and significant concentrations of native grasses occur in the western portions of the wilderness park. Sensitive species include many-stemmed dudleya, Pomona rattlesnake, Orange County Turkish rugging, Palmer's grapplinghook, aphanisma, Western dichondra, Laguna Beach dudleya, scrub oak, hummingbird sage, ocean spray, and crownbeard. The wilderness park also serves as refuge for, in addition to the sensitive species mentioned above, the Southwestern pond turtle, the Pacific pocket mouse, the great egret, the black-shouldered kite, the Northern harrier, the sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, the ferruginous hawk, the yellow warbler, and the yellow-breasted chat.



Pattern Lake (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010





Laguna Beach (Frederick Melville DuMond) 1911 - LAM



The Community

Throughout the city's history, its physical shape, with its enclosed downtown, where residents often meet face to face, has contributed to its sense of community. (It's reported that, when home mail delivery replaced the distribution of the mail at the post office every evening, people complained that they missed that daily gathering.) This self-containment is reflected socially in the proliferation of homegrown community organizations in the arts (the Laguna Playhouse, the three summer art festivals, the craft guild, and several concert series and once a ballet company and a chamber music society) and in the area of human needs (the community clinic, founded in 1970; an HIV/AIDS services agency that has since outgrown its local premises and moved to a neighboring community; a youth shelter; a long-term homeless shelter and an overnight sleeping location (the latter funded by the city but dependent for food service on community volunteers); a residence for developmentally disabled young adults; a support group for the library; an English-as-a-second-language program with free child care; a managed day workers' center; and a food distribution center). It is also reflected in the community's wholehearted compassionate response to victims of the periodic natural disasters—floods, landslides, and wildfires—that are part of life in Laguna Beach.

The way Laguna Beach looks today reflects the diverse conditions of its natural environment. Thirteen subareas including thirty-eight neighborhoods distinguished by their topography, scale, settlement and street patterns, landscape, and architecture have been identified in the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element of the General Plan (City of Laguna Beach n.d.). The uniqueness of these neighborhoods can be traced to the geographical and historical conditions of their settlement.



*Movie Theater,
Coast Highway*
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Sewer Building, Laguna Canyon Road
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016



*Verizon Building,
Broadway and Beach*
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016

In the late 1800s, much of the land that is now Laguna Beach, left out of the large ranches surrounding it, was still available to be claimed under various federal laws intended “to encourage the growth of timber on the western prairies.” The Timber Culture Act of 1873, 1874, and 1878 required an applicant for 160 acres to plant 15 acres to timber within four years. Eucalyptus trees, either blue gums (*Eucalyptus globulus*) or sugar gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*), were chosen as the timber crop,

At the end of eight years after planting 2,700 trees per acre, the act required at least 675 trees to have survived. Because of the low rainfall, many of the claims in Laguna were much smaller than 160 acres, most covering about 40 acres. The Timber Culture patents granted in Laguna Beach were located where Thurston Middle School now stands (1895), Aliso Canyon beyond the golf course (1896), Old Top of the World (1898), and West Street and Paso del Sur (1910). Other homestead claims that resulted in the planting of groves were located in Thurston Park, Mystic Hills, Bluebird Canyon, at the eastern end of Aliso Canyon, at Third Avenue and Mar Vista, and at the top of Eighth Avenue at Hillhaven Ranch Way. Parts of these original groves still survive.

The oldest sections of Laguna Beach developed at the turn of the twentieth century. Small plots of homesteaded land were individually subdivided, patchwork-style, and often did not match the street patterns of adjacent parcels. There was no standardized tract development, no phasing of homes, and no overall master plan. Instead, development occurred gradually over time, influenced by the homestead and rancho boundaries, traditional small-town design approaches (the grid street system, ease of pedestrian access to shops and community services) and the artistic community, which emphasized aesthetics, creativity, and individuality.

The downtown and coastal shelf areas were developed first, from the late 1800s through the 1940s. These neighborhoods generally have a grid street system, with many streets taking access directly from Coast Highway. The pattern of streets parallel to the coastline with lots extending to the mean high tide line allows for easy and direct access to beaches, the highway, and downtown businesses, and it is an important component of the pedestrian-scale village ambiance. Bungalows and cottages, originally used as vacation homes, with informal, mature plantings provide a diverse and human-scale landscape.



Saint Francis by the Sea, Park Avenue (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



I. Barker, Center Street
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016



H. Noppenberger, Mar Vista Avenue
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Halliburton house, South Laguna (Ann Christoph) 2011



Schroeder house, designed by Josef van der Kar using components produced by Gropius and Wachsmann (Thomas A Lamb) 2016

In many pre-1960 neighborhoods, pads for residential construction were not graded when the streets were created. As a result, structures were designed to fit the topography, and this encouraged diverse architectural solutions. Varied street layouts reflecting multiple development approaches over time add to the diversity of the town. The resulting structures and roadway configurations contribute to the eclectic landscape and uniqueness of the city. After World War II, development of other neighborhoods was facilitated by the extension of city streets, including Park Avenue and Temple Hills Drive to Top of the World, Summit Drive, Alta Vista Way, and Nyes Place to Arch Beach Heights, and smaller-scale extensions such as Bluebird Canyon Drive and Paso del Sur. These newer neighborhoods, designed with curving streets and larger homes, generally do not have the pedestrian accessibility or small-scale character of the earlier ones. Dramatic views of the ocean, coastline, canyons, and town are prominent features. Over the past fifty years or so, plantings in these neighborhoods have matured, blending the architecture with its hillside setting (City of Laguna Beach n.d.).

The early beach houses of Laguna were basically permanent replacements of the early tent shelters, often constructed without foundations and usually single-walled. They were used primarily as weekend retreats from the city. By 1920, as the town had gained distinction as an art colony and vacation spot, the demand for services for vacationers increased, and those who had been seasonal residents began to make Laguna Beach their permanent home. Almost every house built in Laguna Beach before 1927 had its roots in the Craftsman tradition. In contrast to most cities, whose older buildings are concentrated near the city center, Laguna Beach was settled by people with a preference for the seclusion offered by open spaces, who often built in scattered locations away from the center of activity (City of Laguna Beach 1981, 14).



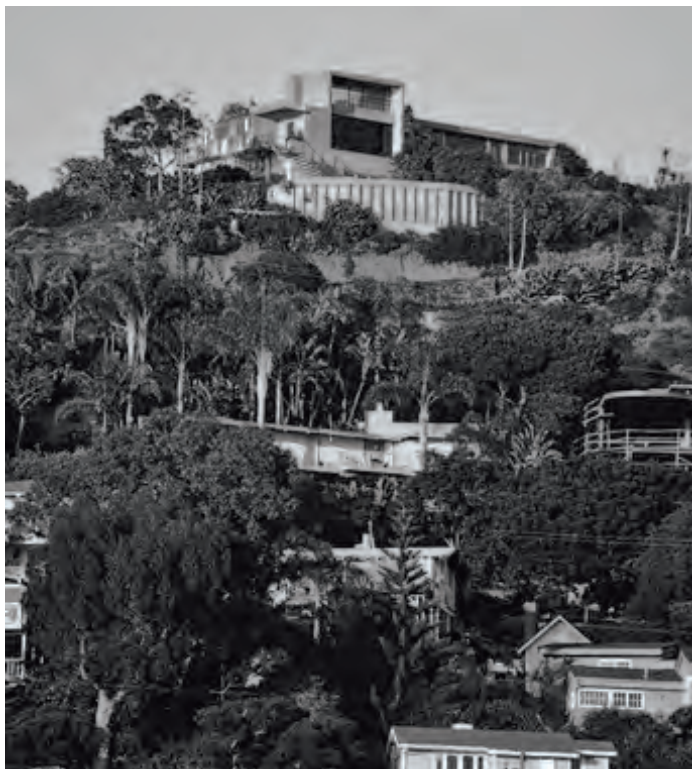
Laguna Playhouse, Laguna Canyon
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Fire Station, Forest Avenue (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



City Hall, Forest Avenue (Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Hillside housing, South Laguna (Ann Christoph) 2016



One of Charles A. Hunter's depression-era houses
(Ann Christoph) 2016

The influence of artists and movie people led to individualized architecture and replicas of styles popular on other continents. In the late 1920s and early 1930s most of the houses and commercial buildings were built in Period Revival styles, often based on pictures of European mansions but at a reduced scale to fit Laguna's smaller lots. Art Deco and Streamline Moderne styles were prevalent during the Depression (City of Laguna Beach 1981, 15). Aubrey St. Clair, the son of the painter Norman St. Clair, designed the Mediterranean-style City Hall, the fire house, the Spanish Revival Water District building, the Christian Science Church (now the Hare Krishna temple), several smaller downtown buildings, Tudor-style offices at 1183 and 31709–13 Coast Highway, and distinctive residences elsewhere in the city. Thomas Harper designed a number of Period Revival homes, among them 820 Catalina Street, 487 Shadow Lane, and 629 South Coast Highway, and the 1929 northern addition to Villa Rockledge. Charles A. Hunter, who before the depression had designed hotels and hospitals, was the architect for over 60 houses in Laguna Beach and South Laguna between 1934 and 1941. Many of these were in Cape Cod or beach cottage style, as well as Period Revival styles. Additional architects were Manfred de Ahna, Charles Frye, Fay Spangler, and Gates Burrows. Contractors included Harry B. Harper, Ropp and Mackey, J. Robert Lawrence, Arthur Littlejohns, Stan Smith, H. C. Hind, C. C. Sidwell, and Arthur C. Wilson. William Alexander designed the Halliburton House for the writer and adventurer Richard Halliburton on a hilltop overlooking Aliso Canyon in 1936. Built entirely of concrete, the house was included in a public tour of the region's modern architecture conducted by the University of Southern California School of Modern Architecture in 1938.

Infill development in the post–World War II years created a mix of old and new, but in 1981, when the Historic Resources Element was written, “the scale and character of

the housing styles and overall density of the neighborhoods” was considered to follow the “precedent set by those who came to Laguna Beach in the 1920s . . . a clear preference for human-scale homes constructed in natural materials with a custom design, houses built in harmony with the natural bends of the terrain, and the use of yard space which is both amply and generously landscaped” (City of Laguna Beach 1981, 16). Sixty-eight percent of the city’s housing stock is more than thirty years old (City of Laguna Beach 2008a). The city’s historic register contains some 300 homes built before 1945 whose owners have committed to their preservation, and there is an inventory of more than 500 others judged eligible for the register. Development since the 1970s has been monitored by design review of new construction to maintain the distinctive character of neighborhoods and preserve Laguna’s “village atmosphere,” defined in the Municipal Code (25.05.040[H]) as a combination of appropriately scaled development, diverse and unique architectural designs, pedestrian orientation, and sensitivity to the natural conditions of the site. Architects who worked within these constraints and took design in a more modern direction include John Lautner, Chris Abel, Fred Briggs, Herb Brownell, and Lamont Langworthy. In addition to custom homes, Langworthy designed a system that used individual modules as trusses so that they could be stacked on top of each other. (Fred Lang’s house on Coast Highway was one of these, and there are others still existing in Laguna.)

Laguna’s varied streetscapes include eucalyptus, California sycamore, large palms, California pepper, *Ficus nitida*, *Metrosideros*, *Melaleuca*, *Jacaranda*, pines, Brazilian pepper, Monterey cypress, and queen palm. Some of them contain remnants of plantings initiated early in the development of the particular tract—Italian stone pines and evergreen pears in Mystic Hills, Chinese elms in Rancho Laguna, carrotwoods in Top of the World. Overall, the original

eucalyptus groves and more recent plantings are dominant features of the Laguna Beach landscape.



Palmer Place
(Thomas A Lamb) 2016



Festival in Laguna
(Joane Cromwell) Ca. 1933 - FOAPAC



Untitled landscape (William Wendt) 1933 – LAM



Sycamore Grove (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Coast View (Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010

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Laguna Vista Looking North (George Gardner Symons) 1930 - CLB



Sycamore Hills
(Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Laurel Canyon
(Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Mathis Canyon Sycamore
(Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Autumn Lake
(Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010



Egret, Laguna Canyon
(Ronald H. Chilcote) 2010

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Lorna Shaw <lornabshaw@netscape.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 5:06 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Cc: Lorna Shaw <lornabshaw@netscape.net>

Attention: Coastal Commission

I am a resident of Laguna Beach, and I am against this proposed agenda item. Downtown Laguna Beach needs these historic resources to retain its value to both visitors and residents.

I love Laguna Beach and relish its distinctively different appearance from much of the other coastal cities, north and south, in Southern California. I love the many old buildings, the fact that there is non-uniformity of the buildings, the fact that the building heights vary and definitely that the building heights are limited by law. Laguna Beach retains public views of its precious coast and public access. There need to continue to be preserved.

My husband and I moved to Laguna Beach in 1965. Changes have occurred over the years, but the charm and character of the City has remained to a large extent. As a City, we value our history and historical buildings. Please help retain these for the pleasure and enjoyment of those of us lucky enough to live in Laguna and for those who come and visit our special place.

I oppose Laguna's staff's proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) and request that you reject Laguna's proposed changes to its Downtown Specific Plan (DSP).

Thank you for your help in retaining our very special Coastal community.

Lorna Shaw
1918 Temple Hills Drive
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

Scott Fraser <scofraser@gmail.com>

Fri 12/10/2021 5:13 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission:

A majority of the Laguna Beach City Council has lost its mind, or rather, its soul, to the developers who are ploughing hundreds of thousands of dollars into elections to change the standards for development in Laguna. It seems they have decided that Laguna's preservation of its quaint and historic storefronts, like those in the downtown area, aren't making them enough money. And so, voila, you have the Downtown Specific Plan before you.

Developers who have had their way with Newport Beach complain that Laguna is "blighted," that business have left the downtown area in droves, and that Build Build Build is necessary to bring them back. This is preposterous. These changes are not going to make it more friendly to the average visitor; rather, they want to attract people who will spend lots of money. Such concerns should not sway the Coastal Commission.

I ask you to resoundingly reject the City of Laguna Beach's attempts to reduce the number of historic buildings in its downtown and change development standards in a way that will obviously diminish the charming, eclectic character that residents and visitors alike treasure. The Staff Report mentions none of the impacts that the proposed changes would have on 1) historic resources and 2) aesthetics and visual character, even though these are harms that must be disclosed and mitigated or avoided as part of the CEQA review process.

Laguna is unique. The DSP even says so, even as its proposed policies threaten that uniqueness. Please reject the DSP. We need you to protect our downtown from a Council run amuck.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Scott Fraser
Laguna Beach

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

betsyjenkins@cox.net <betsyjenkins@cox.net>

Fri 12/10/2021 5:48 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

Dear Coastal Commissioners,

Laguna Beach is a very special place, founded over 100 years ago and still very historic and picturesque. But there are serious pressures on it to now change, develop, and dismantle the very scenic quality that makes it so special for visitors from all over America and the world.

Your consideration of the new Downtown Specific Plan is at the heart of this problem, and your actions could help to save the Laguna we all know and love. If the proposal goes forward as planned, many of our most historic and picturesque structures would be torn down and rebuilt much taller and more modern. Our downtown streets would be darkened by the multiple stories, trees would be removed, and the quaint atmosphere destroyed. Please place limits on the plan and do not allow development to destroy such a special treasure.

Thank you so much,

Betsy and Gary Jenkins, 41 year residents of Laguna Beach.

Public Comment December 15, 2021 Agenda item W18c**David Rubel <david@rubeljewelers.com>**

Fri 12/10/2021 10:58 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>**David Rubel**

21511 Ann's Lane
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
949-510-4707

December 10, 2021

California Coastal Commission
SouthCoast@Coastal.CA.GOV

Dear Members of the California Coastal Commission

I want to express my support for the certification of the Local Coastal Program Amendment LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2

As a 31 year resident and a local business owner in the downtown since 2004, I have seen first hand what the current DSP has done to discourage, rather than encourage a potential business from coming to Laguna Beach. I believe that the parking and use restrictions that have been in place for years have had a slow detrimental affect on the shopping and dining experience and the overall vitality of our commercial area. I believe that we need a new positive approach that encourages, rather than discourages businesses to locate to Laguna Beach. For too long the city of Laguna Beach has discouraged businesses from coming to our downtown by creating a very long and restrictive process for a business applicant wanting to come to our downtown. I believe that these well intended restrictions were put in place to keep out bad uses that would harm the small town character or not be compatible with existing businesses in our downtown. Unfortunately, this method of keeping out potentially bad businesses has also kept out potentially good businesses from considering downtown Laguna Beach as a viable option.

I support the LCP certification because it will set us on a positive path that encourages a potentially great business rather than discouraging them with a very restrictive and costly process.

Our downtown needs a refresh. We have many vacant and poorly maintained structures and some very tired and poorly run businesses that stay because there is no worry of competition or a viable option for a landlord. A new and vibrant business will invest in a new location, make changes and upgrades to their space and add to the experience and character of our downtown.

I worry that if we continue on our current path, in this very competitive retail environment, downtown Laguna Beach will become irrelevant with more closed downtown shops and buildings in continued decay. One can already see some of this visual decay of our downtown structures and poorly maintained buildings. The DSP is a planning document that needed a refresh to meet the new realities of a commercially viable downtown. By allowing for more flexible uses and modifying the parking code we can begin to rebuild a vibrant and attractive downtown. A downtown that visitors and residents can enjoy and experience.

Respectfully,

David Rubel

Re: Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c - City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP-5-LGB-20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update).

caren liuzzi <carenmary@gmail.com>

Sat 12/11/2021 7:39 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

On Fri, Dec 10, 2021 at 3:58 PM caren liuzzi <carenmary@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Commissioners,

My Name is Caren Liuzzi. I live in Laguna Beach and served on Lagunas Design and Review Board from 2004-2019. I am asking for you to continue this item as the Coastal Commission has yet to approve the changes to the Historic Preservation Ordinance, so consideration of the proposed revisions to the DSP is premature and will result in a contradictory Local Coastal Program and General Plan.

Laguna's existing Downtown Specific Plan celebrates the historic fabric of downtown as part of its fundamental "village" and community character and codifies protections for it. The proposed revisions:

- arbitrarily reduce the number of identified historic resources in the downtown from 65 to 27;
- remove all references to the Historic Resources Inventory, even though properties identified as historic in the Inventory are historic resources under CEQA and are vital to the character of downtown;
- allows replacement of nonconforming older buildings up to the nonconforming height, which creates an incentive for demolition;
- allows and promotes second story additions to historic buildings;
- reduces parking requirements for many businesses, which eliminates an important incentive for property owners to preserve their buildings and place them on the Historic Register;
- eliminates Heritage Committee review for projects involving properties that are listed on the Inventory.

To allow business to expand and grant exemptions from parking will severely restrict the public's access to the beach.

The City of Laguna Beach has taken advantage of the Covid Pandemic by pushing through many changes to policies and procedures including changes to the General Plan without the benefit of the checks and balances and public Input which has made Laguna the unique coastal city it is famous for. I ask you to help Laguna Beach embrace new development by adopting their proposed changes to the LCP and General Plan prior to considering a proposal such as this that will forever change Lagunas welcoming eclectic character and charm. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to ask .

Sincerely,

Caren Liuzzi
949-233-6011

Public Comment on December 2021 Agenda Item Wednesday 18c- City of Laguna Beach LCP Amendment No. LCP--5--LGB- 20-0052-2 (Downtown Specific Plan Update)

Susan M <suzisidewinder@gmail.com>

Sat 12/11/2021 12:11 PM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

As a longtime homeowner and citizen of Laguna Beach, I strongly urge you to reject the city of Laguna Beach's changes to our Downtown Specific Plan (DSP),. These changes will drastically reduce protections to our identified historic resources, encourage demolition of some of our most precious buildings, add second story additions, and destroy the character of the village we have worked so hard to preserve! These changes also will reduce parking requirements and our parking situation is already a nightmare!!! This will also eliminate Heritage Committee review and advice for historically important properties. Pro-development members are working hard to eliminate all the protections we have in place to help keep development tasteful and preserve the beautiful city we are proud to have created. The Coastal Commission is truly our last, best hope and we are so thankful you are there for us! Thank you for your attention to this very urgent matter!!!!

In appreciation,
Susan McDuffie
31972 8th Ave
Laguna Beach, CA. 92651

Laguna downtown specific plan

Gregg Denicola <greggdenicolamd@aol.com>

Sun 12/12/2021 11:24 AM

To: SouthCoast@Coastal <SouthCoast@coastal.ca.gov>

To coastal commission

I am Dr. Gregg Denicola, past president of the Laguna Beach historical society and he leading physician in the city of Laguna beach

I have grave concerns regarding the proposed changes to the Laguna Beach downtown specific plan.

Most of my patients as well as myself have chosen Laguna Beach based on its unique aesthetics and historical resources. It is a true community and much different from neighboring cities such as Dina point and Newport Beach.

I believe there are protected environmental qualities that the coastal commission must disclose impacts to and adopt alternatives to.

Changes could severely disrupt the community character of the downtown area and the city as a whole.

Many of the stretches that would be in jeopardy are true gems of the city including the historical Society's headquarters at the Murphy Smith Bungalow on Ocean.

Several historical bungalows on ocean that were the residence of the first black families should definitely be considered

Please consider these factors when looking to change the downtown specific plan of laguna beach

Gregg Denicola MD

Sent from my iPhone