

# LAGUNA BEACH

## DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN



# CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

AMENDED FEBRUARY 15, 2022

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# CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN

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## Reference Documents .....

Items available at City of Laguna Beach Community Development Department include:

- *Downtown Specific Plan Area Parking Actual Demand Study, prepared by IBI Group*
- *Downtown Specific Plan Area Retail Market Evaluation, prepared by Stanley R. Hoffman Associates and Stoffel & Associates*

*Background and Research Memos, prepared by MIG*

- *Task 1.1 Deliverable (Kick-Off Meeting Summary)*
- *Task 1.2 Deliverable (Review of Downtown Specific Plan and Related Documents)*
- *Task 1.3 Deliverable (Summary of Art Festival Needs and Key Issues for Coordination)*
- *Task 1.4 Deliverable (Downtown Specific Plan Boundary Analysis and Recommendations)*
- *Task 1.5, Task 2.2 and Task 2.10 Deliverables (Retail Use Memos)*
- *Task 2.1 Deliverable (DSP Community Workshop Summary - July 20, 2015)*
- *Task 2.3 Deliverable (Potential Sub-Areas and General Recommendations for Branding and Overall Wayfinding)*
- *Task 2.4 and Task 2.8 Deliverables (Parking-Related Memos)*
- *Task 2.5 Deliverable (Land Use Recommendations)*
- *Task 2.6 Deliverable (Infill Housing Recommendations)*
- *Task 2.7 and Task 2.11 Deliverables (Pedestrian, Bicycle and Vehicle Circulation Recommendations Related to Downtown Parking Management Plan and Village Entrance; and Recommendations for Future Disposition of the Village Entrance)*
- *Task 2.12 Deliverable (Design Recommendations/Graphics for Streetscape Improvements to Laguna Canyon Road Corridor)*
- *Task 2.13 Deliverable (Urban Design-Related Memo)*

## Other Related Documents .....

Items available at City of Laguna Beach Community Development Department include:

- *Laguna Beach General Plan*
- *Laguna Beach Local Coastal Program*
- *Laguna Beach Municipal Code*
- *Laguna Beach Title 25 Zoning*
- *Downtown Specific Plan Area and Laguna Canyon Road Parking Management Plan*
- *Landscape and Scenic Highways Resource Document*
- *Enhanced Mobility and Complete Streets Transition Plan*
- *Cultural Arts Plan*
- *Creative Placemaking Assessment*
- *Artists' Work/Live Assessment*

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION





## Executive Summary

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### Why a Specific Plan?

Specific plans are among the most powerful planning tools authorized by the California Government Code. The real value of a specific plan is its adaptability to unique problems and issues. Specific plans allow a local agency to tailor the plan to the particular needs of the study area. The Downtown Specific Plan serves to guide 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 formally recognized the need for a specific plan for the downtown in 1983 with adoption of the Land Use Element of the General Plan. In 1989, the Downtown Specific Plan was first approved, and has been subsequently amended, including a comprehensive amendment in 2000, which included the expansion of the Plan boundary to the Boys and Girls Club on Laguna Canyon Road and the creation of the Civic Art District. The Downtown Specific Plan has been successful in preserving the look and feel of a traditional downtown.



## Description of the Planning Area

The physical boundaries of the Downtown Specific Plan are delineated in figure 1.1. The Plan covers the downtown basin of Laguna Beach and is generally framed by the Laguna Canyon Frontage Road, the Pacific Ocean, Legion Street and Cliff Drive. The Plan also encompasses the area called the “Central Bluffs” situated on the south side of South Coast Highway between Laguna Avenue and Sleepy Hollow Lane. Additionally, the Plan includes the entrance to the village from Laguna Canyon Road, an area that includes many of the civic and art institutions in town.

## Relationship to the General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan

The General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan recognizes that the downtown represents the commercial, economic and social center of the community. The physical separation of the downtown (Central Business District) from other regions of the City enhances the importance of the identity of this area and its function as a community focal point. Consistent design standards and overall development plan for the downtown are necessary to preserve its unique identity.



# Downtown Specific Plan Area



figure 1.1

## Public Participation and Planning Process

The ocean and foothills, which provide Laguna Beach with so much of its natural beauty, have contributed to keeping the city relatively isolated from the explosive development that has occurred during the last fifty years in southern Orange County. The efforts of citizens to restrict high-rise development along the coastline and to create a greenbelt that surrounds the city have provided further buffering. Consequently, the downtown area and many of the neighborhoods of Laguna Beach have retained their historic identity, thus enhancing the community's sense of character and providing residents with a firm grounding in that identity. Preservation of local landmarks, historic development patterns, diversity of design and pedestrian scale has engendered a shared, civic ideal described locally as preserving the "village atmosphere."

Since the 1970's, there has been considerable concern about the changing character of the downtown and the need to protect its eclectic mix of architectural styles, small-scale buildings, pedestrian orientation, rich variety of shops and services and sense of community that have traditionally characterized the downtown.

Although residents take different approaches as to the best way of retaining the qualities that are unique to Laguna Beach, they agree that these qualities should be preserved. As a result, the downtown village area of Laguna Beach remains, against almost overwhelming odds, unique, and the focus of the City's social, cultural, civic, artistic and recreational activities. It is an area where residents and visitors can stroll, shop, worship, do business, and experience community. In short, it is a place that fosters a community conversation. Both this document and the process that created it are intended to ensure that the conversation continues.

Citizen involvement played an instrumental role in the early development of the Downtown Specific Plan, and in later reviews of the Plan. In the late 1980's, the City Council formed a Citizen's Advisory Committee composed of representatives from the Design Review Board and Planning Commission and from various community organizations – Architect's Association, Arts Commission, Board of Realtors, Chamber of Commerce, Coalition of Neighborhood Associations, Downtown Merchants Association, Laguna Art Festival Board, Laguna Beach Taxpayers Association, League of Women Voters, and Village Laguna. The Committee was responsible for identification of significant planning issues and developing the policy base for the Plan.



Subsequent review of the Plan throughout the years also involved extensive workshops with interested citizens and representatives from the business community. The most recent update process between 2012 and 2019 included multiple community workshops, including a workshop in which a portion of Ocean Avenue was temporarily closed for community members and pedestrians to engage in interactive demonstration projects and participate in visual preference surveys. Several public meetings were held to obtain input and to consider the recommendations of the consultants, including three joint City Council and Planning Commission study sessions, and over 20 Planning Commission meetings.



## What are the Key Updates to this Specific Plan?

The changing nature of commerce, transportation and circulation necessitates revisions that support flexibility to meet rapidly changing resident and visitor needs and to enhance vitality, while maintaining the special qualities of the downtown. As a result of community input gleaned throughout the planning process, several enhancements built-in to this updated Specific Plan include:

- » Allowing for changes in permitting requirements to occur on an as needed basis in order to incentivize or limit certain land uses in the downtown.
- » Providing for greater flexibility in development standards such as simplified parking requirements to meet future needs and growth.
- » Establishing an urban design framework that identifies key opportunity sites and provides recommendations on pedestrian and streetscape improvements, such as pedestrian crossings, improved alleyways, and public parklets to make the area more vibrant, walkable and welcoming for residents and visitors.
- » Revising urban design guidelines to provide further direction on elements such as site design, architecture and open space to property owners, developers, designers, City staff and appointed and elected officials involved in review of proposed development projects.
- » Rebranding of the former Civic Art District as the Arts District to encourage a greater focus on art and cultural uses and to nurture a culture of creativity.
- » Updating flexible criteria and development standards for proposed planned integrated developments that incorporate public amenities and/or benefits in special planning areas such as the Central Bluffs District.

This Specific Plan reflects the most current update of the Downtown Specific Plan; culminating from a multi-year process, which included a large number of public outreach workshops, stakeholder meetings and interviews, and both City Council and Planning Commission meetings. It identifies the goals and establishes specific policies, guidelines and standards to support an overall vision for the future of the downtown.

# CHAPTER 2

## PROFILE OF DOWNTOWN CHARACTERISTICS



## Historical Perspective of Development

During the 1840's, Laguna Beach was excluded from the two principal land grants in the area (Irvine and Moulton Ranches) and was; therefore, open to homesteading privileges under the homesteading laws of the 1800's. By 1890, Laguna Beach was gaining a reputation as a popular seaside resort. Although most vacationers would go to what is now Main Beach Park to camp, the downtown's first hotel had already been built on the site of the Hotel Laguna.

By the turn of the century, a small town had formed with a drugstore, café, market and lumberyard. These were all located in the vicinity of what is now Forest Avenue. Forest Avenue, so named because Eucalyptus trees ran along it from the canyon to the ocean, was the first street to become paved. A building boom occurred in the 1920's. Beach houses were built, first in the bluff area around Main Beach, and then up and down Laguna's coastline and canyons. Former vacationers were now becoming permanent residents. The rise in population increased demand for goods and services that in turn encouraged greater commercial development in the downtown area. Laguna Beach was incorporated in 1927 with a population approaching 1,500. Even during those early years, Laguna Beach was developing a reputation as an art community. Since then, Laguna has grown as an art center. Today, the well-known art festivals – the Pageant of the Masters, the Festival of Arts, the Sawdust Art Festival and Art-A-Fair – draw hundreds of thousands of visitors to the downtown area each summer.

Over time, the central business district grew to include many small-scale buildings that reflect a diverse mix of age, size and architectural style. Local businesses, which are generally independently owned, provide a wide range of goods and services.

The unique charm of the downtown is, in no small measure, created by its physical setting as well as by the small-scale and diversity of building styles. That the downtown 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, establishes a physical separation from other regions of the city and contributes to the area's special identity.





## The Changing Nature of the Downtown

Technological advances and demographic trends have resulted in dramatic changes in both the retail industry and in transportation philosophy at national, state and local levels. These changes have affected the nature of Laguna's downtown and must be addressed to ensure this area is economically vital while retaining its special character.

Demands from consumers, both residents and visitors, have significantly shifted from buying things to doing things. The rise of online shopping has made it much harder for physical stores to attract customers. On the other hand, there has been a rise in spending on experiences, particularly related to food service and entertainment. The trend is to create retail environments that combine multiple elements so that the brick and mortar stores become more of an experience. This can include such things as additional food service and small pop-ups with innovative products.

Transportation changes are notable with respect to new perspectives on parking. The complete streets paradigm emphasizes designing for all modes of travel, particularly transit and pedestrians, and has resulted in a de-emphasis on requiring parking based on the assumption that every person will be driving their own car and only visiting a single establishment. In the downtown, the increase in available trolleys and the success of demand-based pricing has changed both the behavior of and the parking availability for customers. This process is predicted to continue with the expansion of ride-sharing services and the advent of autonomous vehicles.



## Land Use and Zoning

**Overview:** Within the downtown area, the General Plan land use designation is “Central Business District” (CBD). Other land use designations which apply to the downtown include “Commercial and Tourist Corridor,” “Local Business/Professional,” “Public Recreation and Parks,” “Public/Institutional” and “Village High Density.” Two small parcels on Broadway are designated “Village Low Density.”

Existing land use is characterized by a broad range of businesses, including retail shops, resident services, offices, restaurants, and specialty food stores. Within the Specific Plan area, art studios and commercial businesses have replaced industrial uses on Laguna Canyon Road. Residential uses are located primarily on Lower Cliff Drive, although there are other properties throughout the downtown that support residential uses, including two senior housing developments and a low-income housing project.

The land use districts established by the Downtown Specific Plan divide the downtown into areas that support the existing development pattern. These districts are designated for resident-serving uses, downtown commercial, visitor-serving commercial, arts-related uses, civic and office uses, multiple-family residential uses and public parks.

**Diversity of Uses:** Downtown Laguna Beach has historically served as the center of the City’s business, civic, cultural, and other public activities and has come to represent much of the identity and heritage of the City. The diversity of uses within the downtown, which varies from street to street, adds interesting dimensions and character to the area. The different characteristics of the downtown streets and some of the more significant downtown areas are described below with respect to the uses that they have traditionally supported.

### 1. Forest Avenue

Forest Avenue acts as the “Main Street” of downtown Laguna Beach. The street features an almost continuous string of retail businesses and restaurants, most of which have their entrances immediately adjacent to the sidewalk. The street itself is somewhat narrow and the speed of traffic is relatively slow. Forest Avenue provides some landscaping and street furniture in the public right-of-way, and several restaurants have outdoor seating. All these features help to make Forest Avenue a popular environment for pedestrian use and public activity.

The retail businesses and restaurants on Forest Avenue cater to both residents and visitors. The street also supports a number of small business offices located on the second floor. The intensity of uses is somewhat greater towards the southerly end of the street near Coast Highway.



## 2. Ocean Avenue

Ocean Avenue is located one block west of Forest Avenue, but the street has a very different orientation and atmosphere. The uses are generally less intense and more resident serving. The most dominant uses are resident-serving retail businesses and commercial offices. The area north of Beach Street includes resident-serving commercial uses, offices, cafes and take-out restaurants, several older residences, and a transit center. The area south of Beach Street includes financial institutions, commercial uses, restaurants and bars. Ocean Avenue is different from Forest Avenue because there are several surface parking lots that create an auto-oriented environment. There are fewer places to sit along the street than on Forest Avenue and this may discourage pedestrians from gathering and interacting. True to its name, Ocean Avenue also differs from Forest Avenue in providing a view of the ocean.



## 3. Broadway

Broadway, the third of the three north-south streets through the downtown core, serves as the initial segment of State Highway 133 and is consequently one of the widest and most heavily traveled streets in the downtown. This situation discourages casual pedestrian traffic, isolates uses on either side of the street, and interferes with easy access from one side of the street to the other. Because customers often use separate parking lots provided by individual businesses, easy access from one business to another is discouraged.

The uses along Broadway are a combination of resident- and visitor-serving, featuring general retail uses, offices, and restaurants. The higher intensity uses occur south of the intersection with Beach Street. Broadway is particularly important in that it serves as the western anchor of commercial activity in the downtown. It is the main entry point to the downtown from inland areas and provides a wide view of the ocean, framed by tall eucalyptus trees near the intersection with Forest Avenue, through the “window to the sea” created by Main Beach Park.



#### 4. Lower Cliff Drive

Lower Cliff Drive supports a single row of multiple-family residential buildings overlooking the activity centers of the downtown. Because the area is strictly residential and is located on a sloping bluff, it is not a functional or physical part of the main downtown activity center. The area does, however, possess a strong visual relationship with the downtown and maintains a public stairway located midway along the bluff that connects it to the commercial area below.



#### 5. Coast Highway

The Specific Plan Area includes the segment of Coast Highway between Cliff Drive and Legion Street. Coast Highway supports one of the heaviest concentrations of pedestrian traffic within the downtown. The proximity of Main Beach brings heavy pedestrian traffic and tends to attract beach-related and visitor-serving businesses. The uses along Coast Highway reflect a visitor-serving orientation as required by the California Coastal Commission. The most dominant uses include restaurants, gas stations, specialty food shops, art galleries, gift stores, clothing stores and other small retail businesses.



## 6. Main Beach Park

Main Beach is the largest and most popular stretch of beach within the City. It is located in the downtown where Broadway, Ocean and Forest Avenues intersect with Coast Highway. The well-known landmark is the white lifeguard tower located in the middle of the beach. This beach is mostly sand bottom with shore break type surf, which makes it very popular with swimmers, body boarders and body surfers. Popular activities at this beach are basketball (there are two courts at the north end), volleyball (there are several courts on the beach), and other sand activities. There is a boardwalk that runs the length of the beach that provides a nice place to take a walk or people watch. Shower and restroom facilities are provided on both ends of the beach. Being centrally located, it is a short walk from the beach to the numerous restaurants and shopping areas in the downtown.



## 7. Central Bluffs

Located on the south side of South Coast Highway between Laguna Avenue and Sleepy Hollow Lane, the Central Bluffs occupy 2.5 acres of oceanfront property. The area is made up of more than ten properties primarily held under single ownership; one parcel was donated to the City in 1999 and developed into a small ocean-view park known as Brown’s Park that connects to the Coast Highway sidewalk. The area currently supports a mixture of development, including art galleries, a time-share facility, several residential uses including two single-family homes, a small oceanfront restaurant, retail shops and a hotel. The Central Bluffs, in comparison with adjacent blufftop properties to the south, is generally underutilized and the majority of existing development is nonconforming.

The area plays an important role in giving the downtown area its identity. The Hotel Laguna, built in 1930, has been a landmark for visitors and residents alike. Other structures, including an artists’ studio village, provide the ambiance of a friendly seaside artists’ colony. The natural terrain of the bluffs invites the passer-by to explore, reflect and stroll.

The Central Bluffs’ proximity to Main Beach Park and the Central Business District, and its natural, physical beauty and special pedestrian amenities mandate sensitive planning efforts. The characteristic landforms, ocean views, historic structures and low-scale development give the area its identity as a unique stretch of Southern California coastline.



## 8. Glenneyre Street

The short block of Glenneyre Street between Forest Avenue and Park Avenue/Laguna Avenue carries substantial pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The location of the Orange County Public Library at the corner of Glenneyre Street and Laguna Avenue serves as a focus for resident activity. Beyond Park and Laguna Avenues, the uses consist of a public parking garage, a low-income housing project, a dry cleaner, residences and offices.



## 9. Second, Third and Mermaid Streets

Although part of the downtown area, the character of this area, located just east of Forest Avenue, is substantially different from the rest of the downtown. With few exceptions, all of the uses in the area are low-intensity, consisting of business offices and residences. Pedestrian and public activity in the area is therefore of a lesser intensity. Third Street carries a substantial volume of through traffic, but Mermaid and Second Streets handle only light amounts of local traffic, resulting in a relatively quiet environment.

This area is suitable for office, residential, and supporting retail uses without the interference and competition of more intensive commercial uses. In addition, this area provides a desirable transition between the main portion of the downtown and the residential areas to the east.

Development and remodeling efforts have had an impact on the overall character of this area. The building at the corner of Third and Mermaid, previously a utility building owned by GTE, was remodeled to function as affordable housing for people with disabilities. Across the street is the Laguna Beach Community and Susi Q Center, a facility that replaced the original neighborhood of small residences from the City's early days, and developed to support a wide range of programs and classes for people of all ages. In addition, the Susi Q Senior Center provides programs and services of interest to the senior community. Also, at the corner of this intersection and situated along the Third Street hill is a rent-controlled apartment building for

seniors. The Water District facilities on Third Street underwent expansion, and the building at the corner of Second and Forest Avenue was remodeled and expanded to accommodate an underground parking structure and new retail uses. The Laguna Presbyterian Church, one of the tallest buildings in the downtown is located at the corner of Forest Avenue and Second Street.



## 10. City Hall/Village Entrance

Anchoring the northern end of the downtown area is the Laguna Beach City Hall and adjacent property referred to as the Village Entrance. The City Hall complex has become very prominent and distinctive within the downtown, and functions as an important node of public activity. The Village Entrance site immediately to the north of City Hall consists of parking areas. It also serves as an important link between the summer art festivals and the downtown, and visually identifies the entrance to the downtown. A project is currently underway to create a new first impression for everyone entering the City, and focuses on enhanced pedestrian safety, improved traffic flow and new public open space. Key elements of the project are protected pathways, California landscape design, outdoor gathering spaces, public art and new parking areas. Development of the Village Entrance site remains an important planning task.





## 11. Laguna Canyon Road

Included in the Specific Plan Area is the final portion of Laguna Canyon Road as it enters the Central Business District. At the intersection of Forest Avenue, Laguna Canyon Road becomes Broadway. This area is notable for containing several significant arts-related venues such as the City's three summer art festivals, which draw large numbers of people into the area on a seasonal basis, including many who circulate to and from the downtown area. The Laguna Playhouse is located adjacent to the Festival of Arts/Pageant of the Masters site. Due to the concentration of arts-related uses and its visibility as a gateway to the City, this area has been included in the Arts District.

Aside from the art festival grounds, the area supports a small number of retail businesses, a growing number of which are arts-related, restaurants, and art studios and housing for students at the Laguna College of Art and Design.



photo credit: Tom Lamb



## Land Use Summary:

The following tables summarizes land uses in the Downtown Specific Plan area based on a 2016 land use inventory conducted by City staff through records and field research. The type of land use was determined for each unit (or suite) as shown in the tables below:

Residential Uses	Total (Units)	Percentage
Single Family	18	5%
Two Family	25	6%
Multi Family	349	86%
Artist Work/Live	12	3%
Total	404	100%

Non-Residential Uses	Total (Units)	Percentage
Office/Professional	197	38%
Retail	232	45%
Food Service	59	12%
Financial	6	1%
Institutional/Cultural/Educational	20	4%
Total	514	100%

Further analysis of uses by parcel show that approximately 21% of the 210 parcels in the downtown are mixed use, meaning that two or more different uses exist within the parcel.

Uses	Total (Parcels)	Percentage
Residential	41	20%
Office/Professional	22	10%
Commercial (Retail/Food Service)	77	36%
Financial	3	1%
Institutional/Cultural/Educational	18	9%
Mixed Use	44	21%
Vacant/Undeveloped	5	3%
Total	210	100%

The following table provides a breakdown of the number of units per type of land use that are part of a mixed-use development.

Uses	Total (Units)	# Units part of a Mixed-Use Development
Residential	404	103
Office/Professional	197	121
Retail	232	108
Food Service	59	19
Financial	6	4
Institutional/Cultural/Educational	20	1

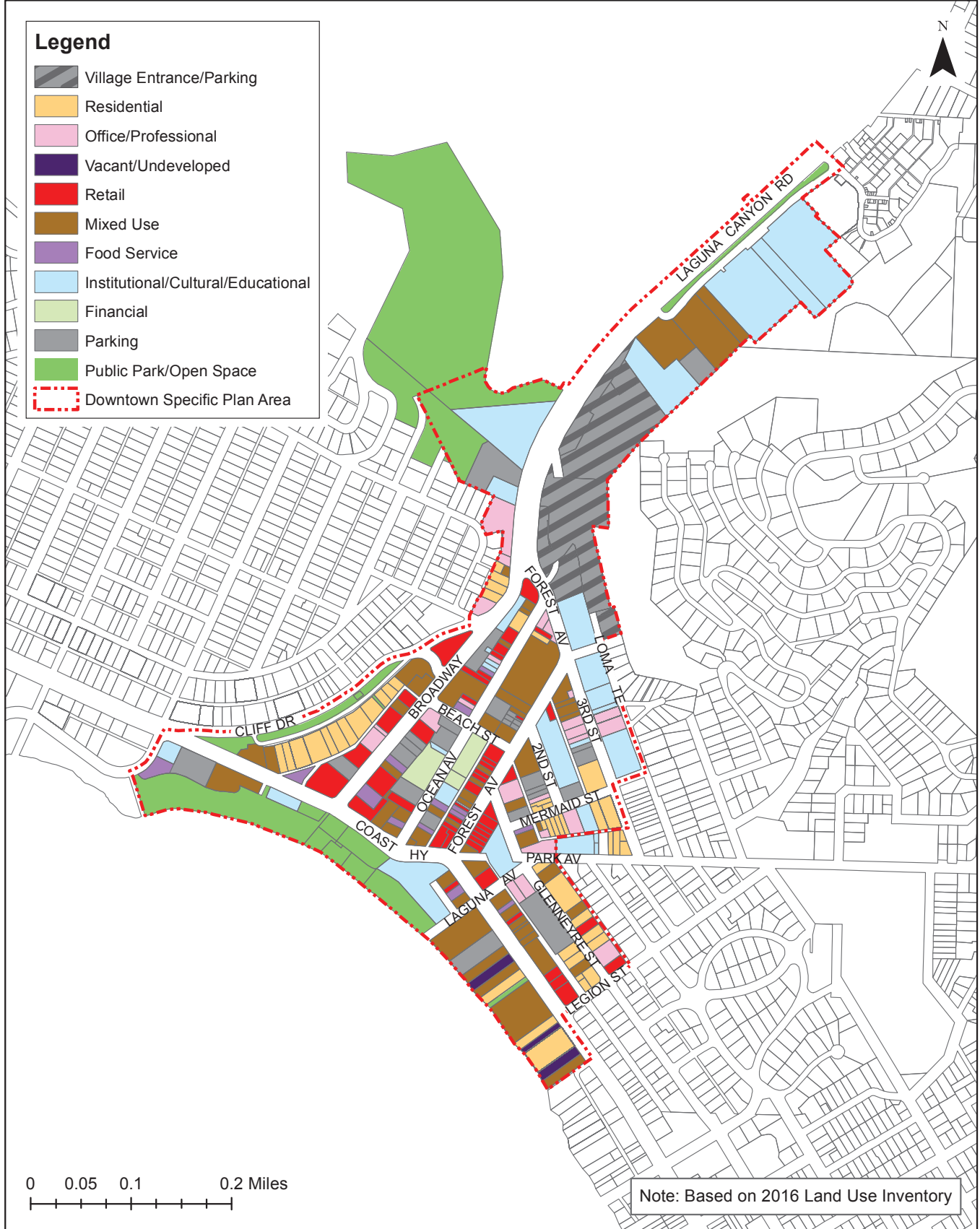
The table below demonstrates the distribution of non-residential uses in the downtown, based on total building area (square feet). Commercial uses have been identified as either retail or food service<sup>1</sup> in this instance.

Non-Residential Uses	Area (Square Feet)	Percentage
Office/Professional	186,111	20%
Retail	390,536	41%
Food Service	142,921	15%
Financial	56,795	6%
Institutional/Cultural/Educational	174,427	18%
Total	950,790	100%

Another land use count in five years should be conducted through records and field research to identify how land uses change over time and to determine whether such changes have policy implications that need to be addressed in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Food services include, but are not limited to restaurants, such as take-out, fast-food, and full-service; bakery, ice cream; juice bar; and delicatessen.

# Downtown Land Use Inventory Map



## Demographic and Housing Profile

A profile of the downtown population and housing characteristics can be drawn from the 2010 Census and the 2015 American Community Survey 5-year estimates.

**Population:** Approximately 2 percent of the total city population, or 540 people, lives in the downtown area. The percentage of seniors (over the age of 65) living in the downtown (16%) is lower than the citywide distribution of seniors (22.5%). As might be expected, the percentage of children (under 19 years) living in the downtown is substantially less than the percentage of children in the citywide population (13%). Furthermore, the downtown population has a higher percentage of persons living below the poverty level than other areas of the city. Based on Census block group figures, approximately 12 percent of the downtown population is below the poverty level whereas the citywide figure is 6 percent.

**Household Composition:** The majority of households in the downtown are one-person households. Approximately 69 percent of downtown households are one-person whereas the citywide figure for one-person households is 38 percent.

**Housing Characteristics:** Of the 404 dwelling units in the downtown, approximately 5 percent are single-family residences. The majority (92%) of housing in the downtown is either duplex units or multi-family, with most of the multi-family housing comprised of five or more units. This compares to the citywide figure of 33 percent as duplex or multi-family units. Not surprisingly, considering the multi-family figures, the percentage of renter-occupied units in the Downtown (89%) is substantially higher than the citywide figure (38%).

## Lot Configuration and Ownership Patterns

Early subdivision activity in Laguna Beach took place primarily between 1887 and 1925. The lot configuration found today in the downtown is largely the result of those early subdivisions.

Within the Downtown Specific Plan area, there are almost 500 lots held by about half as many property owners. Many of these lots are quite small, some measuring approximately 25-ft. x 90-ft. or less. Small lots and fragmented ownership characterize much of the privately held property in the downtown. In contrast, publicly held property includes some very large parcels such as the Festival of Arts grounds/Irvine Bowl and Main Beach Park. Other properties held under public ownership are dispersed throughout the downtown and include the Glenneyre Street Parking Structure, several surface parking lots, Jahraus Park, Brown's Park, the Laguna Playhouse, the library, transit center, the Village Entrance site, including City Hall (Main, Northhand West Buildings), the Lumberyard parking lot, the Laguna Beach Community and Susi Q Center, Alice Court (low-income housing), and the Laguna Beach County Water District facilities.

## Parking and Circulation

**Parking:** Total parking in the Downtown Specific Plan area, including the Laguna Canyon section and including private parking, is in excess of 3,300. According to a 2016 Parking Actual Demand Study for the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) Area, total public on- and off- street parking spaces within DSP area is 1,674 parking spaces. Approximately half of the downtown parking spaces are private off-street parking stalls which are only available to certain users (such as bank customers) and are not always fully utilized during peak parking periods.

Despite the large number of parking spaces in the downtown, there is a perception that parking is deficient. This is likely caused by the tremendous influx of visitors that may occur during peak times, such as summer weekdays and weekends, holidays and weekends during other times of the year.

**Circulation:** The two principal arterials providing access to Laguna Beach are Coast Highway and Laguna Canyon Road. Traffic from these arterials, which are under the jurisdiction of the California Transportation Authority (Caltrans), impacts circulation in the Downtown Specific Plan area.

During peak periods, traffic bottlenecks occur at every intersection in the Downtown Specific Plan area involving a local street and one of the two major arterials. In addition to the arterials, many of the local streets and local intersections are also congested. Motorists searching for parking opportunities add to the general level of congestion in the downtown.

Broadway, as an extension to Laguna Canyon Road, is a major access road to Laguna Beach and to Coast Highway. Broadway is congested during the summer months and, consequently, a street signal light was added in 1996 to the Beach/Broadway intersection to improve vehicle traffic flow and pedestrian crossing activity. In addition, a bus turnout was added in 2005 along Broadway adjacent to the transit center. In 2009, a portion of Cliff Drive between Broadway and Beach Street was changed to a one-way street running west, and a portion of Beach Street and Cliff Drive and Broadway was changed to a one-way street running south to improve circulation.

The intersection of Forest Avenue/Park Avenue/Coast Highway creates congestion and conflicts between people and cars due to the large number of pedestrians, high traffic volumes, and odd configuration of the intersection.



Pedestrian circulation is heaviest on Forest Avenue and Coast Highway. To a lesser extent, there is pedestrian activity at the southern end of Ocean Avenue, Broadway, Laguna Avenue and Legion Street, and along Glenneyre and Beach Streets. A dedicated left turn lane was added in 2009 to the Legion/South Coast Highway intersection to improve intersection level-of-service, and the pedestrian crosswalk was relocated from the southeast corner of the Legion/South Coast Highway intersection to the northeast corner to reduce the amount of pedestrian/right-of-way interaction. During the summer, the area along the northern ends of Forest Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Broadway carries heavy pedestrian traffic generated by the art festivals.

## Landscape Features and Open Space Lands

Significant landscape and open space features mark the downtown. Steep, naturally vegetated hillsides define the northern end of the downtown while the southern end is bounded by the beach. Adjacent to the beach, the Central Bluffs rise nearly vertically some 50 feet above sea level.

Main Beach Park provides a unique and spectacular focus to the downtown. The wide expanse of beach, with the boardwalk and volleyball and basketball courts, connects to Heisler Park to the west via a winding walkway landscaped with specimen trees and roses. The El Paseo area at the eastern end of Main Beach Park provides a small playground, public restrooms, and a landscaped entry to the Park.

Other public parks in the Specific Plan area are Jahraus Park adjacent to Cliff Drive and a “pocket park” located next to the Peppertree parking lot (lot 2). There is a small seating area with benches and plantings provided on the church site at the northeast corner of Second Street and Forest Avenue. Brown’s Park provides ocean views from the Central Bluffs. A number of very small landscaped areas can be found throughout the downtown; most of these are maintained by the City.

Trees and an abundance of shrubs and vegetation within the coastal plain provide a natural, park-like setting. Historically, Eucalyptus trees lined Forest Avenue from the canyon to the ocean. There are two California Pepper Trees of notable size in the downtown. One is in the mini-park adjacent to the Peppertree parking lot. The other pepper tree in front of City Hall, is designated as a Heritage Tree. It is the only such designation within the Downtown Specific Plan area. In 2017, the 132-year old pepper tree was in poor health. In an effort to save the tree, it was trimmed to 12 feet and undergoes continual maintenance.



## Urban Design Features

The attractiveness of the Central Business District is based on the variety of architectural styles, small-scale buildings, and pedestrian amenities. Peppertree Lane is an example of development that typifies the Laguna Beach village character. This development incorporates a connecting passageway between sidewalk and alley that creates an intimate space for the pedestrian. The use of brick for the building façades and passageway, small-scale architectural features, landscaping and lighting, as well as a variety of small shops, all contribute toward the overall effect.

There are many buildings in the downtown area which may be eligible for listing on the State and/or National Historic Registers that make a notable architectural contribution to the village character. These include the Eschbach building (305 Forest Avenue), the Lumberyard (384 Forest Avenue), and the Hotel Laguna.

A fine example of a building with its original façade restored is the commercial building on the southwest corner of Forest Avenue and Beach Street (292-294 Forest Avenue). Although the storefront is often the most important architectural feature of historic buildings, many older buildings in Laguna have had their historic value and character compromised through modernization of the storefront. The City Hall and Fire Station complex, the Water District offices and the Laguna Presbyterian Church are all examples of institutional buildings that blend with the village architectural fabric.

Street furniture and landscaping tucked into small areas enhance the pedestrian orientation of the downtown. Two seating areas that receive heavy use are located on Forest Avenue (one at the Forest/ Glenneyre intersection and the other at the Forest/ Coast Highway intersection). Also, a small area adjacent to the Glenneyre Street Parking Structure with benches and landscaping is often used.





## Public Infrastructure and Utilities

Publicly owned facilities such as streets, water and sewer facilities, public buildings, and parks play a major role in shaping communities. In a developed area like Laguna Beach, particularly the Central Business District, where infrastructure systems are largely in place, public facilities assume a less important role in shaping the environment than would be the case in a rural or undeveloped area. Nevertheless, it is important to maintain and update the infrastructure in order to support an attractive and vital downtown environment.

The majority of new development opportunities in the downtown area will occur on vacant or under-utilized parcels. Since this development is occurring in an established area, the City's capital improvement program focuses on maintaining the operating efficiency of existing infrastructure. This includes normal maintenance and repair and replacement of older facilities when necessary. In 2016-2017, rehabilitation of the structurally compromised Laguna SOCWA lift station wet well was completed, and included construction of a new underground gravity sewer infrastructure, a temporary sewage bypass pumping system of the lift station, installing new underground sewer pipelines, emergency backup systems, and implementation of a new biological odor control system.

In contrast to other types of infrastructure which are generally adequate to handle existing levels of development, the storm drainage system is inadequate. To alleviate capacity problems, drainage improvements are planned as part of the Master Plan of Drainage, but most of these improvements are not in the downtown area. The Laguna Canyon channel upstream of Beach Street is operated and maintained by the Orange County Flood Control District. The City maintains the channel downstream from Beach Street except for the portion passing under Coast Highway.

The City is investigating improvements for the channel near Beach Street and a restoration project near the ocean outfall. Residents upstream of the downtown are notified annually of the need to clear debris that has potential to inhibit storm drainage from the channel, and property owners in the downtown are being required to have flood gates and be prepared to use them in a potential flood situation.

Intergovernmental coordination is required for multi-jurisdictional projects such as the Laguna Canyon Flood Control Channel. Certain transportation infrastructure, including Coast Highway and Laguna Canyon Road, also fall under multi-jurisdictional authority.

Although the existing infrastructure may be considered generally adequate, some modification may be necessary to support the goals of the Downtown Specific Plan.



## Environmental Hazards

The downtown area is subject to certain environmental hazards, such as flooding, liquefaction and wave run-up.

Laguna Canyon Channel, which drains a 5,900-acre watershed, is the major watercourse through the city. The total drainage area is about six miles in length and averages about 1.4 miles in width. Nearly 80 percent of the watershed is characterized by a wide, hilly basin. This basin, in turn, funnels into a well-defined, narrow canyon that eventually opens onto the coastal floodplain. Most of the Downtown Specific Plan area is within that coastal floodplain (see figure 2.2).

Despite the Laguna Canyon flood control channel, flood damage to the downtown area can be substantial during years of unusually high rainfall. The flood control improvements can handle, at most, a 25-year storm; however, some sections of the channel have even less capacity. Since the downtown area is within the 100-year floodplain, it is evident that the present storm drainage system provides very inadequate flood protection.

The 100-year storm represents the amount of run-off produced by a storm that has a one percent chance of occurring in any given year, or that would occur on an average once every 100 years. The flooding produced from a 100-year storm, termed the “base” flood, is the flood level used in flood hazard planning. In the event of a 100-year flood in the Laguna Canyon watershed, floodwaters overflow the flood control channel and inundate portions of the downtown. This area, referred to as the 100-year or base floodplain, generally extends across the width of the downtown between Broadway and Mermaid Streets. All new construction and substantial improvements of structures within this area is subject to the standards outlined in the City’s Floodplain Management Ordinance (Laguna Beach Municipal Code Chapter 25.38). Generally, new construction would be required to have the lowest floor, including basement elevated above the base flood elevation. Special consideration will need to be taken when reviewing new development projects to mitigate potential impacts to the streetscape of the downtown.

The downtown area is also subject to wave run-up. This type of flooding is typically caused by large swells produced by storms at sea occurring at high tide. Approximately every 10-15 years, waves wash up on Coast Highway between Broadway and Ocean Avenue. In the past, water and debris left by the waves have typically caused no damage to the commercial area, but Coast Highway has been blocked off to traffic. Main Beach Park has suffered damage from wave run-up and heavy sand deposition. This impact will increase with the threatened rise in sea level.



Flood Hazards

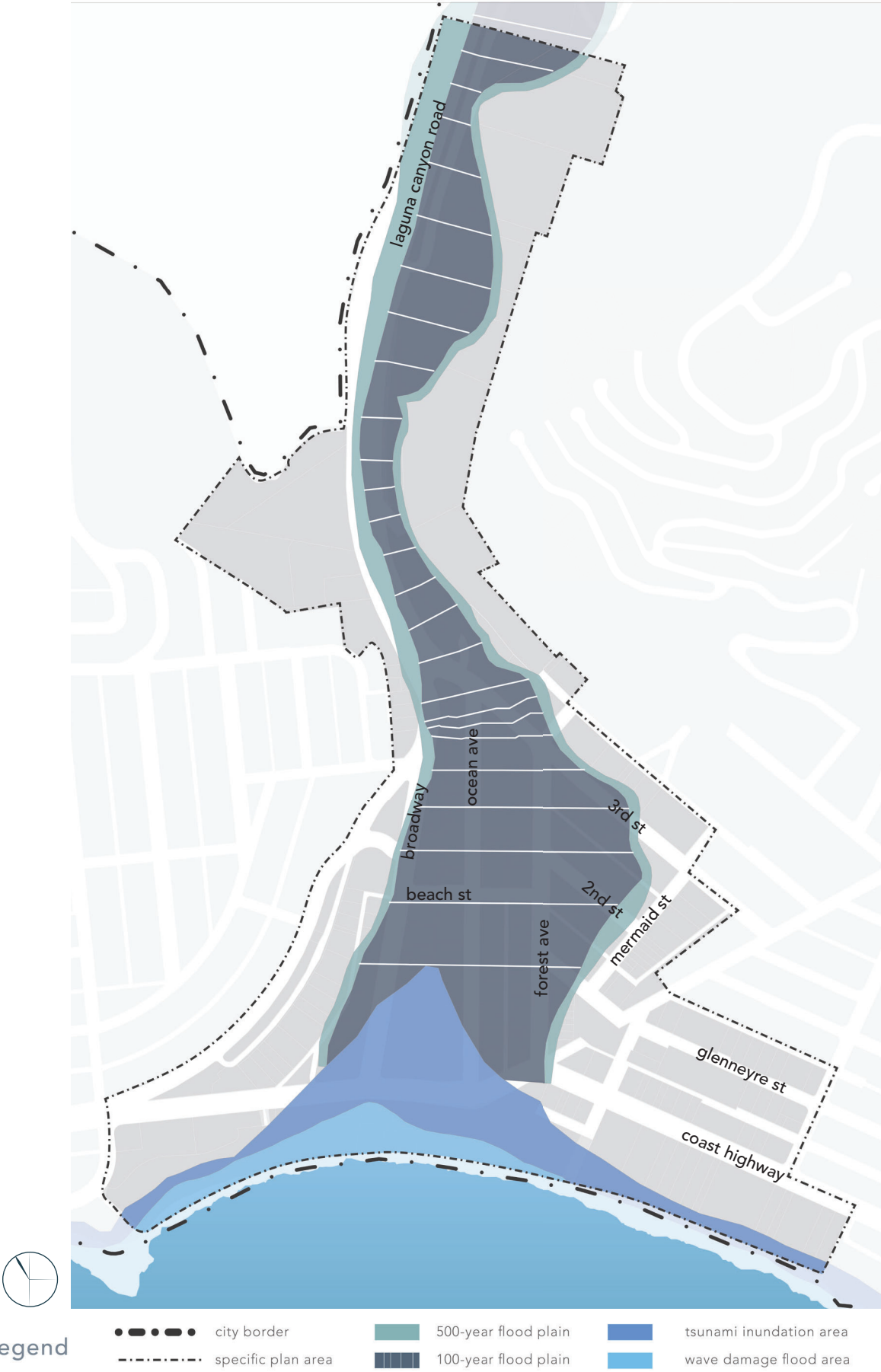


figure 2.2

Most of the Downtown Specific Plan area is subject to an additional hazard related to earthquake liquefaction, in which some soils can temporarily behave as a fluid during an earthquake. Buildings, utilities, and transportation facilities may suffer great damage in areas that are subject to liquefaction.

Another hazard affecting smaller portions of the Specific Plan area is slope and bluff instability. Slope instability is of concern in areas where the underlying fill or surficial materials are loose and can become saturated or where foundation conditions vary greatly within one lot or between adjoining sites. For example, one portion of a site may be on sound bedrock and another portion on bedrock with unfavorably dipping strata, thick residual soils, or loose fill. The area between Cliff Drive and Broadway and portions of the Irvine Bowl Park are subject to slope instability.

The western end of Main Beach and the Central Bluffs are subject to moderate bluff instability. Both natural forces and human activity precipitate the erosion processes, which cause bluff instability. Erosion by wave action, wind, rain and geomorphic processes is natural and constant. Runoff over the bluff edge from irrigation and the introduction of man-made structures such as drainage outlets, fences and stairways cause bluff erosion. Other factors contributing to bluff erosion include introduction of non-native vegetation, pedestrian movement on the bluff face, grading of the bluff top, poor site planning and the lack of understanding of bluff dynamics.



# CHAPTER 3

GOALS, ISSUE STATEMENTS AND POLICIES



## Introduction

As described in this section and elsewhere in this document, the downtown provides an important focus to the City's social, cultural, commercial, civic, artistic and recreational activities. The presence and character of the downtown in Laguna Beach distinguishes the community from most of the surrounding cities. The policies established for the Downtown Specific Plan are for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing that character. The policies serve as guidelines for decision-making and indicate direction, priorities, and a vision of the future.

Importantly, these policies set forth the framework for the evaluation of development plans, public and private improvements and the implementing actions of the Plan. In accordance with existing City requirements, projects that are reviewed and approved by the City must be found to conform to the policies of the Specific Plan.

This section provides a discussion of the specific issues that the Downtown Specific Plan addresses. Each topic begins with a goal, followed by issue statements (*italicized*), and a series of policies designed to achieve the goal.



## Topic 1: Village Character

**Goal: Preserve and enhance the village character of the downtown.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion:

#### 1. Identity and Personality

*The identity and personality of Laguna Beach is that of a small, traditional village.*

Downtown Laguna Beach is a functioning downtown with shops, restaurants, municipal buildings, markets, offices, churches, theaters and a public library. It is typified by businesses that offer individualized products and presentations, and by limited-scale, low-rise development that includes a diversity of building heights and diverse styles of architecture ranging from traditional to contemporary or eclectic. These qualities, in combination with the City's scenic natural setting and pedestrian orientation have produced a unique and specialized environment that distinguishes Laguna Beach from surrounding cities. It fosters a walkable and livable environment that attracts residents and visitors alike.



## 2. Urban Design and Pedestrian Orientation

*In Downtown Laguna Beach, the scale of development (typically on small lots), distinctive architecture, mix of resident and visitor serving uses and pedestrian orientation establish a solid formation for effective urban design.*

Urban design is the design of towns and cities, including streets, transportation and the outdoor spaces within them. It has application to the entire outdoor environment. It involves the design, appearance and inter-relationship of both public and private improvements. It includes buildings, open space areas, streets, walkways and landscaping.

Maintaining and enhancing the look and feel of the downtown will ensure that the area continues its role as the vital core of the community. The desired image of the downtown includes such amenities as clean streets and sidewalks, an abundance of well cared for flowers, trees and shrubs, well-designed street paving and furniture (benches, lighting, walls and trash containers), art features and tasteful signage. Physical changes, whether in the form of new development, redevelopment or other improvements must enhance the existing village character and scale. Such development may bring in opportunities for architectural diversity, but it must also respect the established building scale and design harmony. Any development in the downtown must be evaluated in the context of the surrounding environment, not just as a stand-alone structure. Design must emphasize diverse, small-scale, and visually interesting development that enhances the village character. Specific design guidelines are compiled in Chapter 4: Urban Design, but the following design issues are addressed as a key topic on the following pages:

### a). Building Design

The design of buildings should be both visually and functionally compatible with their surroundings, particularly in regard to adjacent buildings and nearby public activity areas (sidewalks, courtyards, etc.). In an intimate environment such as Downtown Laguna Beach, this also means that buildings should reflect a “human” scale and appearance. This is achieved by incorporating elements that create a welcoming environment and a comfortable pedestrian realm. Elements to consider in the design of buildings include height, mass and bulk, overall visual relationships within the surrounding environment, design details such as entryways, street orientation, and use of windows to stimulate public interest.





## b). Small Open Spaces and Landscaping

An important complement to the design of buildings is the presence of adjoining open spaces and landscaped areas. A sense of open space in the downtown is preserved by the varied heights of buildings that afford glimpses of the hillsides and by streets intersecting Coast Highway that provide views of the ocean.

Landscaping can be effective in softening the visual image of buildings, streets and sidewalks and in shaping the general attractiveness and interest of an area. In Laguna's downtown, large Eucalyptus, Canary Island Date Palms, Ficus, California Pepper, California Sycamore and other mature trees combine artistically with an eclectic mix of older, small-scale commercial structures to create a rich, visually interesting and pleasant pedestrian environment. It is important to maintain the health and quality of these street trees, and to evaluate the need for new and replacement plantings.

Existing surface parking lots offer a different sense of open space that provide excellent opportunities for enhancements using imaginative parking plans, art installations and additional landscaping, including overhead trellises, trees, hanging baskets and living plant walls. Some of the surface parking lots provide passageways between streets. These can be improved for pedestrians by creating attractive walkways as part of new parking plans.

Several downtown pocket parks offer a small, seating plaza with shade trees and small garden areas. A few of these pocket parks also display public art. Parklets, or small open spaces that take the place of an on-street parking space, provide additional opportunities for enhancing the public realm in the downtown. These spaces provide seating and landscaping in the commercial core, where open space opportunities may be limited.

Where little or no landscaping exists, the introduction of small, well-designed landscaped areas and/or art features can substantially enhance the pedestrian experience. Even where space is extremely limited, window boxes, small container plantings or vine pockets can often be integrated into existing, developed areas. Special attention should be paid to introducing these elements at several of the parking lots in the downtown and particularly at the intersection of Coast Highway and Broadway.



### c). Streetscape

The streets, alleys and sidewalks of the downtown comprise a substantial and prominent portion of its environment, and have a considerable impact on the quality of the outdoor experience. The integrated design and appearance of the street, sidewalks and other public ways are defined as the “streetscape.”

One of the major attractions of the downtown is the pedestrian orientation that is part of the village atmosphere. The variation in building heights, particularly the presence of single story structures, maintains a human scale of development that does not overwhelm a walker and allows views of other notable structures.

In some areas of the downtown, streetscape conditions exist which diminish the pedestrian experience. Heavy traffic and wide, congested intersections at several locations are intimidating and unattractive to pedestrians. For example, the high volume of traffic and limited pedestrian crossings on Coast Highway disrupt continuity of the pedestrian flow between the beach and the downtown sidewalks. Similarly, traffic on Broadway/Laguna Canyon Road inhibits the pedestrian flow between businesses on both sides of the street and between the downtown and the art festival areas. Pedestrian crossings on Coast Highway could be improved with specially paved intersections and by timing traffic signals to allow multi-directional (scramble) pedestrian crossings.

Existing alleyways, such as Forest Lane, tend to lack a pleasant pedestrian orientation even though they provide access from parking lots to the shopping and dining areas. In 1996, Forest Lane (previously named Forest Alley) was upgraded with drainage improvements and new pavers. Further alley improvements such as paving, art features, landscaping, attractive lighting and consolidation of trash enclosures would greatly enhance the alleys’ function as pedestrian pathways. In addition, the rear building elevations could be upgraded with architectural features that either stand-alone or integrate with the display windows, entry doors and signage to further improve the pedestrian orientation of the alleys. With the desired improvements and vigilant maintenance, alleys can reach their potential as an off-street pedestrian network.

Signage is an inescapable part of the streetscape. Well-designed, small, projecting signs are pedestrian-oriented and are encouraged. Miscellaneous window signage and franchise logos contribute to general sign clutter and are to be controlled through sign regulation. Unattractive signs in the public right-of-way should be upgraded and replaced through a wayfinding signage program.

Overall, the existing streetscape in the downtown has positive attributes. Most of the downtown streets are in proportion to adjacent buildings and improvements, and there are street trees and landscaping within the right-of-way. However, further improvements to the streetscape, including the use of trees, landscaping and art features would add focus and interest.

#### d). Historic Preservation

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 concern 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. In addition, much of the village character and many of the urban design recommendations for the downtown are interrelated with the preservation of historic structures and the types of architectural styles that are represented by them.

Adaptive reuse of historic buildings or utilizing buildings for a purpose other than what was originally intended, allows the property owner to preserve an older building yet still respond to changing economic circumstances. A number of historically significant residential structures still existing in the downtown provide opportunities for adaptive reuse. Historic commercial buildings can also be preserved and reused. Particularly for commercial buildings, preservation of the interior may be as important as preserving the exterior.



### Topic 1 Policies:

1. Perpetuate the village character by implementing urban design guidelines that articulate the design goals of the City as described in Chapter 4.
2. Promote and maintain the historic character and scale of the downtown by limiting enlargement of existing buildings to be consistent with village character and subject to provisions for such expansion as specified in the development standards for the area.
3. Monitor the look and feel of the downtown to ensure continuation and enhancement of the village character. An evaluation of “look and feel” is subjective, but will include consideration of some or all of the following qualities: artistic, historic, pedestrian-friendly, compatible in exterior architectural design and color with neighboring properties.
4. Promote public and private cooperative efforts to provide for ongoing aesthetic improvements in the downtown.
5. Designate funding for streetscape improvements in the downtown.
6. Incorporate art features, including any required public art as an important element of development and enhancements.
7. Implement design guidelines that strengthen the pedestrian orientation of the downtown by promoting amenities such as alley façade and entrance improvements, art features, the addition of window boxes and small planters, and the use of natural materials, appropriate lighting, harmonious color, small, high-quality signs.
8. Encourage the use of small spaces for landscaping and mini-parks.
9. Improve pedestrian circulation in the downtown, including the pedestrian linkages with: 1) Main Beach by evaluating the implementation of a scramble intersection at Forest Avenue and South Coast Highway and Laguna Avenue and South Coast Highway; and 2) the art festival area by promoting an inviting landscaped linkage at the Village Entrance.
10. Encourage use of alleys as pedestrian pathways through alleyway beautification and through requiring upgrades to the rear façades of buildings with alley frontage and consolidation of trash storage areas, when appropriate.
11. Improve signage aesthetics throughout the downtown by encouraging small, projecting signs on Forest Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Broadway.

12. Consider modifying the size of wall signs, window signs and restricting the size, number of franchise logos, and the use of window banners.
13. Develop a beautification program for public signage to encourage wayfinding.
14. Continue to provide incentives for preservation, restoration and adaptive re-use of historically significant buildings.
15. Establish and implement guidelines for remodeling or renovating historically significant buildings.
16. Encourage the preservation of all historic structures, with special emphasis on those buildings identified on the City's Historic Register.
17. Monitor historically significant buildings and review requests for demolition, including partial demolition, in conjunction with making efforts to achieve alternatives other than demolition. Require replacement of demolished or altered structures to reflect historic character and style.
18. Consider interior preservation, as well as exterior preservation, when granting historic preservation incentives.
19. Discourage lot and building consolidation that conflict with the small-lot development pattern characteristic of the Downtown Specific Plan Area.
20. Preserve the historic downtown development pattern of small buildings on small lots.
21. Address the physical upkeep of buildings with the adoption of a building maintenance ordinance.
22. Consider the formation of a business improvement district or another funding mechanism for the Downtown, where downtown merchants and property owners provide a financial contribution, in addition to a City contribution from a portion of the revenue from the parking meters earmarked for Downtown improvements and maintenance.
23. Enhance existing surface parking lots with additional landscaping (including trellises), art features and pedestrian amenities, such as dedicated paths and seating.
24. Implement planting and landscape improvements as outlined below in #25-32.
25. Ensure that the Laguna Beach landscape will continue to include large mature trees, including eucalyptus, cypress, pines, cedars, palms and others. Foster preservation of existing large trees. (Landscape and Scenic Highways Element (LSHE) Policy 1.4)

26. Encourage the creation of public spaces and require sidewalk improvements and dedications where appropriate in new development and major remodels. (LSHE Policy 1.5)
27. Encourage the creation of pocket parks and community gardens, where feasible. Community gardens should be privately operated and maintained. (LSHE Policy 1.6)
28. Develop a comprehensive street tree, streetscape, and urban design program for each street in the downtown. (LSHE Policy 4.1)
29. Continue to address mitigation of driver and pedestrian line-of-sight obstructions posed by right-of-way landscape encroachments. (LSHE Policy 4.2)
30. Encourage aesthetic and environmental design improvements (e.g., drainage and pervious surfaces) to existing City parking lots and parking lot landscape design criteria. (LSHE Policy 4.7)
31. Preserve heritage trees and when feasible preserve candidate heritage trees, and other significant trees. (LSHE Policy 5.6)
32. Encourage drought-resistant and native landscape plant use that considers plant groupings, fire safety, slope stability, salt tolerance, location for view preservation, and the long term health of the ecosystem. (LSHE Policy 8.6)

<b>City's Historic Register<sup>1</sup></b>	
Address	Year Built
359 3rd Street	1914
361 Cliff Drive	1939
230 Forest Avenue	1923
234 Forest Avenue	1927
307 Forest Avenue	1927
326 Forest Avenue	1939
415 Forest Avenue	1927
465 Forest Avenue	1923
505 Forest Avenue	1950
326 Glenneyre Street	1937
412 Glenneyre Street	1897
422 Glenneyre Street	1908
264 Legion Street	1902
393 Mermaid Street	1929
212 North Coast Highway	1928
392 Ocean Avenue	1926
479 Ocean Avenue	1983
323 South Coast Highway	1927
400 South Coast Highway	1931
448 South Coast Highway	1934

<b>Eligible for National Register</b>	
384 Forest Avenue	1974
505 Forest Avenue*	1950
412 Glenneyre Street	1897
212 North Coast Highway*	1928
160 South Coast Highway	1935
425 South Coast Highway	1930
323 South Coast Highway*	1927

<sup>1</sup> Status as of January 2019.

\* Listed on the City's Historic Register

## Topic 2: Identity as an Art Colony

**Goal: Retain a strong and visible identity as an art community.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion:

#### 1. Development of the Early Art Community

The dramatic cliffs, rocky coves and the nationally recognized landscapes that anchor Laguna Beach have attracted artists to the area from the turn of the twentieth century. All the arts are woven into the fabric of Laguna Beach – Laguna residents are proud of this heritage and actively participate as performers, organizers, and patrons. Music, dance, theater, and the visual arts all thrive in this supportive atmosphere, but it is the visual arts – in particular, the works of the early plein-air painters that are most important historically in shaping the identity of Laguna Beach as an art colony.

##### a) The Plein Air Heritage

At the turn of the twentieth century, artists such as Norman St. Clair came to Laguna to live and paint; other artists, such as William Lees Judson, brought their students to capture the light and landscape of the hills, town, canyons, and coast vistas in their artwork in the plein-air style. Edgar Payne, Anna Hills, William Wendt, Joseph Kleitsch, George Bandriff, Frank Cuprien, and William Griffith were among these early residents and commercially successful artists.

By 1920, thirty to forty artists had established themselves in Laguna and the little village had become a full-fledged art center. During this same period, early filmmakers began using Laguna's cliffs and beaches as American equivalents of landscapes in Europe in their films. At this time, what is now the downtown was the entire village of Laguna Beach. Thus, the early history of Laguna Beach is also the history of the downtown.

Laguna Beach also became a center for art pottery from the 1920's through the 1960's. Brayton Laguna was the largest and best known of these, but there were many other smaller potteries that made hand decorated vases, figurines, and tableware. At their height, there were over 30 operating potteries located in many parts of Laguna Beach, including the downtown. Tourists came not only for the beach and paintings, but for the pottery.





## b) Development of the Art Festivals

The art festivals tradition began in 1932 when artists joined together on El Paseo and on the northeast corner of Forest Avenue and South Coast Boulevard to display and sell their works, an event that became a yearly tradition. During the second such gathering, the artist Lolita Perine convinced friends and other volunteers to dress in costume and to pose behind an enlarged picture frame to create a tableaux vivants or “living pictures.” In 1934, the Festival of Arts incorporated and the next year brought the leadership of Roy Ropp as the director of the living pictures. Ropp, known as the father of the Pageant of the Masters, with the help of his wife Marie, increased the professionalism of the production adding a larger stage, narration, and naming the production Pageant of the Masters. In 1936, the Pageant performance concluded with a living picture of Leonardo Da Vinci’s the “Last Supper,” a popular tradition that continues today.

The Festival of Arts moved between several locations in the downtown during this time. In 1937, the Festival moved to a grove of trees adjacent to what is now the site of Laguna’s City Hall. Finally, in 1941, the Festival moved to its present, permanent site on land donated by the family of James Irvine.

In the 1960’s and ‘70’s, there was a significant change in the style of art in and around Laguna Beach. The psychedelic period of the 1960’s and the Mystic Arts World gave rise to vivid art emblazoned on commercial products, including but not limited to clothing, murals, surfboards, and posters. Practical arts such as pottery flourished, and the period also gave rise to local and heralded poets, novelists, and playwrights.

In 1965, “The Experimental Artists of Laguna Beach” first displayed their wares in a vacant downtown lot. Feeling that the Festival of Arts jury selection process was designed to exclude what the judges regarded as “crafts” as opposed to “fine art,” they formed the self-entitled “Rejects Festival” that ultimately became known as the Sawdust Art Festival.

Today, the summer art festival season highlights the Festival of Arts and the Pageant of the Masters, the Sawdust Art Festival with its rustic atmosphere, and the Art-A-Fair, all located in permanent grounds along Laguna Canyon Road in the Arts District. Also, many of the private galleries throughout the City take advantage of the festival season to promote the work of other artists.

Although an important part of the history and identity of the City, reinforced by the signs at the City limits announcing “Laguna Beach, Home of the Pageant of the Masters and Festival of Arts,” the festivals are visually and somewhat physically separated from the downtown retail areas. Efforts to develop a better linkage between these two areas continue.

c) Performing Arts

Theater and the performing arts have a long, active history in Laguna Beach. The Laguna Beach Players began as a club in the 1920's and produced its first play in 1925. The original playhouse was located on what is now the Peppertree parking lot located between Forest Avenue and Ocean Avenue. In 1968, the theater was moved to its current location adjacent to the Festival of Arts grounds. In the 1980's the Laguna Playhouse became an Equity professional theater. The Playhouse's main stage and its youth theater offer a range of theatrical productions throughout the year. The theater also supports classes for young thespians.



d) The Laguna Art Museum

In 1918, Edgar Payne secured permission to remodel a one-room building, located on the grounds of the Hotel Laguna. The local artists called this building the "Art Gallery" and began to hang their pictures there. Payne also served as the first president of the Laguna Beach Art Association.

In 1929, the Laguna Art Association built a permanent art gallery on the corner of Cliff Drive and Coast Boulevard. Now a community landmark, the Laguna Art Museum holds a shared collection that highlights historical and contemporary California art. Included in this collection are works by many of the early plein air artists who were residents of Laguna Beach and founders of the art association.



## 2. Artistic Environment

*The City's image as an art colony, developed over the last 100 years, is integral to the community's identity. Today, the City continues to foster a visible artist population. Art galleries and art studios are located in the downtown as well as other areas of town. There are numerous programs to promote art in Laguna Beach, including First Thursday's Art Walk, Craft Guild shows, Community Art Project exhibits, Sawdust and Laguna Outreach Community Arts classes for the community, and Arts Commission competitions throughout the year. The Arts Commission competitions generate banners and holiday street decorations in the shape of artists' palettes. Another community group, the Laguna Bluebelt Coalition, promotes photography of the local marine protected coastal areas.*

The City of Laguna Beach offers an outstanding collection of public art, a legacy of the City's history and culture. The collection of outdoor sculptures, fountains, murals, holiday palettes and banners is a museum without walls accessible to everyone every day. It enriches the City's quality of life, providing a sense of place and adding interest and vitality to the landscape. An art collection owned by the City, on exhibit at City Hall, is a collection of historical and contemporary artwork created by artists associated with Laguna Beach.

In addition to the works held by the Museum and City, the Festival of Arts possesses a large collection of notable plein and newer art. There are other art collections in private hands in Laguna Beach; many of these owners have been extraordinarily generous in allowing significant works to be displayed in curated shows and international public exhibitions, thus continuing to promote Laguna Beach as a cultural center beyond the City limits.



In the face of rising land and housing costs and redevelopment, artists' housing, studio space and exhibition space have become difficult to sustain. Encouragement of artist joint living and working quarters in commercial zones is a stated goal of the Housing Element of the City's General Plan. Utilizing second-story space in the downtown for artist work/live units can provide affordable living and working space for artists. The City encourages artists' work/live units by allowing them as a permitted use in certain areas of the downtown and incorporating incentives, such as increased building height and reduced parking into the development regulations for the downtown.

A similar problem exists for the small number of art students attending the Laguna College of Art and Design (LCAD) who are housed in the Arts District. Although the students' housing needs are generally for smaller units without studio space, there is still a large gap between the supply and demand.

Maintaining a strong identity as an art community with year-round cultural activities is an important part of supporting a strong tourist industry in the City. Maintaining this identity is important to the residents, who have long demonstrated their support of the arts through their financial donations, purchases, attendance, and voluntary service. Another example of the community's commitment to the arts is that a portion of the City bed tax is currently dedicated to the support of the City's art programs and major arts institutions.

Main Beach, downtown streets, and the Arts District annually host dance festivals, music performers, art shows, festivals and environmental art installations. Seeing painters at their easels, listening to music at the Laguna Art Museum, and being surrounded by art in local galleries and festivals are all part of the rhythm of living in Laguna Beach.

**Topic 2 Policies:**

1. Encourage art-oriented uses, such as artist work/live, art supply stores, art studios, computer graphics and design businesses, and art galleries as part of a balanced mix of uses in the downtown.
2. Continue the Art-In-Public-Places program.
3. Encourage the addition of murals, site sculpture, art objects and art features throughout the City.
4. Maintain and expand the Holiday Palette, seasonal banner, mural and artistic design bench programs.
5. Encourage art related shows and events in the Arts District during the non-festival season.
6. Encourage the development of housing for artists and students.
7. Establish flexible standards regulating commercial activities regarding sale of works by artists associated with artist work/live units.
8. Incorporate art features, including any required public art, as an important element of development and enhancements.
9. Support implementation of the adopted Cultural Arts Plan.

## Topic 3: Downtown Commercial Uses

**Goal: Promote an economically viable downtown through a diversity and individuality of uses that serves both residents and visitors and enhances the character of Laguna Beach.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion

#### 1. Resident Needs

*Downtown Laguna Beach should provide amenities and services for residents and should be a destination for local community members.*

The downtown is the commercial, political, economic and social center of Laguna Beach, and an important contributor to its identity. Within the downtown, residents find shopping, recreational, cultural, and civic opportunities. Whereas visitors are predominant during the summer, school vacations and warm weekends, it is primarily residents who use the downtown during the week and year-round.

The downtown offers a wide range of commerce: retail shops, resident services, offices, restaurants, and specialty food stores. Maintaining an appropriate mix of these uses is the reason this specific plan was originally developed. Resident-serving businesses add to the visitors' experience by contributing to the village atmosphere and the traditional hometown feel of the downtown.

#### 2. Visitor Needs

*Downtown Laguna Beach is a popular tourist destination and visitors help support the local economy. Commercial uses downtown should provide amenities and services for both day and overnight visitors.*

Laguna Beach draws over 6 million visitors each year. The art festivals, coastal recreation opportunities, shops, restaurants and the general ambiance of the community are the main attractions for these visitors. Tourism focuses on the downtown, where the shopping, recreational and cultural opportunities converge. The California Coastal Act requires planning efforts to accommodate the needs of these visitors.

Maintaining a strong tourist industry is important to the City as visitors contribute to the City's economy in the form of retail sales and sales and bed tax revenues. At the same time, visitors make special infrastructure and fiscal demands on the City, especially with regard to parking, circulation, public safety, and beach maintenance. The costs of meeting these demands are significant.

The downtown plays a significant part in the City's role as a tourist destination. It must offer shopping and dining experiences that are different from those found in the ubiquitous Southern California shopping malls and in other nearby cities. It must also retain and enhance the distinctive aesthetic qualities that are important in attracting visitors, including enhancing its pedestrian orientation and village character, supporting a diversity of uses, and maintaining a strong cultural identity.

### 3. Economic Vitality and Balancing Needs

*Downtown commercial uses need to retain a sense of variety in order to meet the needs of different demographics. Flexibility in land use is desirable to respond to changes in consumer trends and encourage and attract new businesses to downtown.*

Residents and visitors love the downtown because it is full of distinctive, attractive and interesting shops that are, in many cases, independently created and owned. These businesses play an important role in creating and maintaining an identity for Laguna Beach that is distinct and recognizable.

Historically, the balance between resident- and visitor-serving uses has been a pressing issue. The number of resident-serving businesses in the downtown has been in decline since the late 1970's. Some have been lost when their leases ended and rents were substantially increased. Many have chosen to locate outside the downtown, where rents are more affordable, usage and occupancy rules less restrictive, parking more available, and traffic less congested. Residents may not patronize the downtown businesses because there are too few resident-serving uses, business hours are limited, and commercial areas outside of the downtown (and outside the City) compete for the same shoppers. Traffic congestion and lack of available parking also discourage some residents from using the downtown. More important, a paradigm change in retail shopping has made it harder in general for stores to attract consumers.

Marketing research assembled by the Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce shows that in recent years there has been a nationwide change in the very nature of consumer demand. Consumers are changing how much they are spending, what they are spending it on, and how they are buying. The Great Recession, coupled with demographic changes, has ushered in a new era in which consumers are shifting their discretionary spending to eating out and experiences rather than shopping. Studies suggest that members of the outsized millennial generation, in particular, would rather spend on out-of-town vacations and meals with friends than on things. In addition, the prominence of internet shopping and large specialty retailers has changed the way people purchase their day-to-day items. Laguna Beach's businesses must adapt to these changes to survive. Stores must find new ways to attract customers and keep them in stores longer.

It is important that the downtown continue to provide a full range of services and merchandise for residents. For example, the post office, library, movie theater, dry cleaners, cafes and pharmacies, and other stores offering essential household items or services are necessary to serve residents' needs in the downtown. Although they are not the large businesses that are typically thought of as anchor stores, they serve a similar anchor function in the downtown.

Equally, the downtown must provide a diverse mix of experiential and retail uses that consumers are seeking today. The mix should avoid the standardized product offerings as much as possible. Interesting, high-quality, individualized shops and restaurants in an inviting downtown setting appeal to both residents and visitors.

The downtown should build on the ambiance of the established village character. The village atmosphere that characterizes Laguna's downtown greatly contributes to making the existing downtown an experience in and of

itself, and care must be taken to enhance those elements that create this feeling. While establishing a mix of appealing uses is important in creating a positive experiential environment, the atmosphere surrounding those uses is equally important to the experience. Successful and desired downtown businesses will integrate their store designs and products with the architectural character and scale of the downtown. The quality of presentation, both interior and exterior, is critical to the ambiance of the area.

Commercial vitality is generated, in part, by a downtown that is lively at night as well as in the daytime. Limited live entertainment is a welcome addition to the usual nightlife activities that include plays, movies, the art festivals, art walk, dining, and shopping. Entertainment can create excitement for residents and visitors, but excess noise and additional traffic impacts must be considered during the review of these proposed uses. The number and concentration of alcohol-serving businesses and the recommendation of the Police Department should be carefully considered when reviewing proposed alcohol uses.

Over the years, the downtown has experienced concentrations of certain kinds of uses that have not contributed to an enhancement of the village atmosphere. On the other hand, concentrations of some uses can create a business synergy that is healthy to the area's economy because consumers are more likely to shop in an area that offers a variety of choices. Moreover, retail operations that fall into the same retail category (such as women's clothes or jewelry) may be specialized in their presentation. Specific numeric limits on a use reduce flexibility and may become permanent by default. The Conditional Use Permit process is the appropriate means for evaluating such uses and limits for certain business types such as restaurants, bars, and souvenir stores.





By keeping up-to-date on fast-changing consumer trends, a business-mix professional can identify the types of businesses that should be recruited to the downtown and the sustainable levels of retail shops versus restaurants.

A mix of uses in a shared space can create a unique shopping environment for customers who are looking for distinctive products, foods, entertainment, and services. The combination of uses in a single building lends itself well to the village character of the downtown and allows for a variety of uses to be accommodated within a limited area. A particularly desirable combination is pedestrian-oriented uses on the street level and less intensive office or residential uses on the second floor. Affordable senior and student housing and artist work/live units are all needed and are compatible with this approach. Another possible combination is several retail businesses in the same space.

The City can select commercial uses that contribute to the vitality of the downtown through application of this Specific Plan, selective use of the Conditional Use Permit process, offers of regulatory incentives, and active recruitment of appropriate businesses. Continual monitoring of current land use in the downtown will provide an informed basis for land use decisions.

Lastly, the City must be proactive in addressing landscaping, building maintenance, infrastructure, parking, and traffic issues in the downtown. It must ensure that businesses are meeting the terms of their permits and following regulations with regard to signage, exterior displays, and other matters that may negatively impact the attractiveness of the downtown area. Addressing these issues will require an investment by the City that will be balanced with the long-term effort of maintaining a viable and competitive downtown that will continue to be a destination for both residents and visitors.



### Topic 3 Policies:

1. Encourage additional resident-serving businesses and the retention of existing resident-serving businesses by expediting application processing and by reducing fees for business licenses and for planning, zoning, and building permits for such uses.
2. Retain the upper end of Ocean Avenue from Beach Street to Forest Avenue designated as a resident-serving district.
3. Encourage businesses to try new programs, including extending the hours they remain open, in an effort to appeal to more shoppers and, particularly, to benefit residents.
4. Increase the number and availability of public restrooms throughout the downtown.
5. Review exterior storefront presentations for formula-based businesses through the Design Review process to avoid a mass-marketing approach.
6. Periodically review the uses requiring Conditional Use Permits and expand or reduce these uses on the basis of an analysis of the existing retail mix, issues of safety, and the balance of uses serving residents and visitors.
7. Continue to utilize an experienced retail specialist to give advice on strategies for actively recruiting and retaining businesses identified as beneficial to both residents and visitors, enhancing the village atmosphere and reflecting an appropriate mix and diversity.
8. Explore techniques for funding expert input, as well as required maintenance and desired beautification through such options as creation of a parking benefit district or a business improvement district.
9. Continually monitor the current land use inventory of downtown businesses and utilize this information in making land use decisions, paying particular attention to creating a mix that appeals both to residents and visitors.
10. Ensure that businesses comply with their conditions of approval and the municipal codes through regular enforcement.
11. Promote street level uses that are pedestrian-oriented.
12. Consider indoor entertainment on a case-by-case basis through the Conditional Use Permit process that meets the requirements of the City's Noise Ordinance.

13. Allow outdoor entertainment with a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) when conditioned to minimize impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.
14. Periodically review entertainment uses in the downtown and use this review in evaluation of Conditional Use Permits to ensure that cumulative impacts are not detrimental to the City.
15. Require an annual report from the Police Department regarding the status of alcohol uses in the downtown and any police concerns regarding alcohol or other related matters.
16. Allow professional businesses/office uses on the second floor.
17. Adopt flexible criteria that will encourage innovative business mixes and activities.
18. Encourage art-oriented uses, including artist work/live, art supply stores, art studios, computer graphics and design businesses, and art galleries as part of a balanced mix of uses in the downtown. (Same as Topic 2, Policy 1)
19. Develop and maintain a wayfinding system to direct visitors to key points in the downtown and in other areas of the City.

## Topic 4: Parking, Circulation and Public Transit

**Goal: Develop flexible parking requirements and programs to promote community-desired land use, events and activities. Continue to utilize parking management techniques, including public transit, to improve circulation and reduce congestion throughout the Downtown.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion

#### 1. Parking Supply, Occupancy Levels, User Groups and Standards

*Due to the high demand for parking within the downtown, there is often a misconception that the existing parking supply is deficient. Further, current parking standards for the downtown do not account for the different types of users, and need to be updated to address the current and future commercial needs and transportation modes for both residents and visitors.*

In fiscal year 2016-2017, the City conducted a Parking Actual Demand Study for the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) area. The purpose of the study was to obtain current data and analysis related to actual parking demand specific to Downtown Laguna Beach. The study looked at the demand for the public and private parking supply located within the DSP area during non-summer and summer months, to form a basis for providing

more flexibility in the minimum parking requirements for land use in the downtown. According to the study, the total parking supply throughout the DSP area is 3,365 spaces, whereby 1,674 are public parking spaces and 1,691 are private parking spaces.

The “right-sized parking” approach focuses on defining parking requirements that are based on actual parking characteristics of Downtown Laguna Beach, instead of basing the standards on national averages. The parking ratios shown in the following tables were calculated based on the total built supply (e.g., square footage and parking spaces), observed demand, and other applicable land use information. The purpose of generating these ratios was to determine the number of parking spaces needed for structures and uses specific to Downtown Laguna Beach, and evaluate how this information compares to the City’s existing supply and parking requirements.

Time Period	Actual Built Square Footage	Actual Parking Supply	Actual Built Ratio per Space	Actual Built Ratio per 1,000 SF
Summer and Non-Summer*	933,523**	3,365	277	3.60

\* The analysis included both public and private parking spaces, and the actual built parking supply remains the same for both the summer and non-summer periods. Although public and private parking supply numbers may change individually during special events, the analysis covers the entire availability of the study area, and therefore, the actual number does not change between seasons.

\*\* Please note: The actual built square footage utilized in the parking study shown above differs from the total area indicated in the table on page 27 of the Specific Plan. Based upon further research and calculations of the 2016 data, the total area equates to 950,790 square feet. Although, the area is higher than that was identified in the study, the actual built ratio per 1,000 SF would therefore equal 3.54, which is marginally closer to the actual demand ratio per 1,000 SF of 2.92 at its peak on a typical summer weekend.



Time Period	Actual Occupied Square Footage	Actual Parking Demand	Actual Demand Ratio per Space	Actual Demand Ratio per 1,000 SF
Summer Weekday	916,062	2,590	354	2.83
Summer Weekend		2,679	342	2.92
Non-Summer Weekday		1,986	461	2.17
Non-Summer Weekend		1,905	481	2.08

The actual built parking ratio was determined to be approximately 3.60 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. However, the parking ratio based on actual demand was observed to be well below, ranging from 2.08 to 2.92 parking spaces per 1,000 square feet of gross floor area.

The results of the study show that the existing parking supply of public and private parking spaces exceeds the actual parking demand throughout the downtown. This is despite the downtown being a popular parking area for beach users and a common perception that there is not enough parking. Additionally, it is important to recognize that transportation and the changing use of the automobile is affecting the nature of downtown areas. Increased popularity in transportation network companies (TNC) (i.e., Uber, Lyft, etc.), public transit, and other forms of mobility have decreased the need to drive and park a car in the downtown. The City has recently engaged in curbside management by installing four temporary loading zones in the downtown area for TNC's and rideshare vehicles.

While shared micromobility services (previously known as dockless mobility), which offer scooters, skateboards, bikes, or other compact devices designed for personal mobility has gained popularity by providing a form of affordable transportation, the City does not have any near plans to allow for dockless mobility. Rather, the City can optimize usage of the existing parking supply through continued implementation of parking management best practices to accommodate future needs and flexibility in land use and to improve circulation.

The City's existing parking requirements are conservative, and do not take into account the relationship between the various uses in the downtown. Specifically, because many residents and visitors to the downtown visit several establishments during the same trip, parking for the various independent uses is essentially "shared" throughout the downtown. As a result, the overall parking demand generated by downtown patrons is less than the sum of the City's parking requirements for each business. Parking spaces in the downtown are highly desirable and sought after by several different user groups. User groups include but are not limited to, residents, local and out-of-town shoppers, employees, recreationalists and festival-goers. Not all of these groups demand parking at the same time; however, on occasion the downtown experiences increased demand due to recreationalists and others during certain peak periods, especially during the summer, weekends and on certain holidays.

The parking study assessed parking utilization in the downtown, and based on the data collected and analysis, it concluded that the overall actual built supply of parking spaces exceeds the overall actual demand. Thus, one of the recommendations from the parking study and this Specific Plan is to reduce the current minimum parking requirements to a new parking requirement of three (3) spaces per 1,000 square feet for certain non-residential uses in the downtown. This will simplify the parking requirement for uses

such as office, retail, food service, and other innovative businesses, under one category – “non-residential uses.” However, non-residential uses that generate a high demand for parking, such as places of assembly and recreational uses, cultural and educational uses, and visitor accommodations, are required to provide off-street parking pursuant to the City’s Municipal Code Chapter 25.52 (Parking Requirements).

The simplified parking standard will provide for flexibility in land use and facilitate the opportunity for downtown Specific Plan area-wide shared parking among land uses of different types, sizes and peak and non-peak operating hours. Land use issues that may result from the new parking requirement, such as too many restaurants, will be addressed through a saturation analysis during the associated land use change and Conditional Use Permit process. Further, on-going data collection and evaluation of parking in the downtown would allow the City to monitor and ensure that future parking issues do not occur because of the new parking requirement.

## 2. Parking Management Techniques

*It is important that the City continue to implement parking management techniques to maximize efficient use of existing parking in the downtown in an effort to improve circulation and congestion issues.*

Traffic on downtown streets reaches very heavy levels during certain periods such as commuting hours and weekends. This is particularly true during the summer months and holidays, when the increase in the number of vehicles searching for parking and use of pedestrian crossings from visitors and recreationalists results in further congestion throughout the downtown. Widening of streets as a means to improve traffic flows would detract from the intimate scale for most of the streetscapes and the special character that this scale lends to the downtown. As a means to improve circulation and reduce congestion, innovative techniques are implemented by the City that provide parking facilities at the periphery of the downtown combined with the City’s unique free trolley program.





The results of the Parking Actual Demand Study for the DSP area confirmed that circulation and congestion continue to be an issue during certain periods. Industry standards indicate that practical capacity should be in the range of 85 percent occupancy. For purposes of the parking study, an 85 percent occupancy was identified as the practical parking capacity to maintain adequate traffic circulation conditions. Parking located within the downtown core is limited primarily to meet short-term parking needs. During certain times of the day, public parking spaces often reached and exceeded 85 percent occupancy, with some individual public parking lots reaching 100 percent occupancy. In order to improve circulation throughout the downtown, one of the recommendations from the parking study is to pursue an 85 percent (or less) occupancy threshold for public parking spaces.

The following table shows the parking occupancy trends observed from the study. Specifically, it shows the occupancy at each hour from 10:00 AM to 9:00 PM in the public on- and off-street spaces and the private spaces for the counts done on a summer weekday and weekend and a non-summer weekday and weekend, including the daily average occupancy. The cells that are highlighted in red indicate where occupancy met or exceeded the 85 percent practical capacity.

Time Period	Parking Space Type	AM		PM									AVERAGE	
		10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		9
Summer Weekday	Public On-Street	52%	67%	80%	79%	76%	76%	71%	76%	81%	90%	85%	73%	76%
	Public Off-Street	38%	53%	67%	71%	70%	71%	73%	84%	87%	90%	81%	71%	71%
	Private	49%	59%	68%	70%	69%	67%	65%	66%	64%	66%	63%	53%	63%
Summer Weekend	Public On-Street	69%	88%	91%	94%	93%	90%	90%	92%	93%	95%	93%	79%	89%
	Public Off-Street	53%	62%	75%	86%	91%	91%	93%	98%	98%	99%	98%	82%	86%
	Private	53%	61%	68%	72%	74%	73%	74%	76%	78%	81%	80%	70%	72%
Non-Summer Weekday	Public On-Street	51%	58%	61%	62%	59%	59%	53%	53%	54%	46%	36%	31%	52%
	Public Off-Street	43%	51%	64%	60%	56%	52%	48%	46%	46%	49%	39%	26%	48%
	Private Spaces	50%	54%	59%	58%	56%	54%	52%	47%	42%	41%	35%	26%	48%
Non-Summer Weekend	Public On-Street	61%	58%	61%	62%	59%	59%	53%	53%	53%	54%	46%	36%	55%
	Public Off-Street	51%	67%	72%	73%	77%	72%	65%	64%	63%	62%	64%	53%	65%
	Private	46%	52%	56%	56%	56%	54%	51%	50%	49%	48%	45%	39%	50%

Parking and traffic management techniques, including the development of public transit incentives, reduce auto dependency and parking demands. The City’s transit program combined with peripheral parking has proven to be an effective way in handling circulation and congestion problems created by seasonal and weekend tourists searching for parking. Laguna Beach was one of the first cities in Orange County to operate a local transit program, including the operation of a very successful free trolley program, including the operation of a very successful free trolley program. The City’s free trolley system, which primarily runs along the entire Coast Highway corridor as well as portions of Laguna Canyon Road, serves approximately one million passengers per year with up to twenty-four trolleys during the summer months, and provides direct and free access to all beach areas of the City. In the



summer of 2018 the trolley service saw an increase from 560,000 riders in 2017 to 602,000 riders in 2018. This contributes to less traffic and less congestion downtown, since many of these individuals are parking on the periphery and taking the trolley to downtown. As a result of the popularity and success of the trolley, the program has been expanded to offer services on the weekends during the off-season.

The City has also created peripheral parking areas that serve the trolleys. These include, but are not limited to, Mission Hospital, the City’s Act V (Lot 16) parking lot, Laguna College of Art + Design (LCAD), and the Summer Breeze parking lot. In 2018, parking occupancy at peripheral parking lots increased by 100 percent at Mission Hospital and by 88 percent at LCAD. It may be possible to find some improvement to the parking problem if parking management techniques are also directed at downtown employee parking demand, such as creation of a downtown shuttle with peripheral parking.



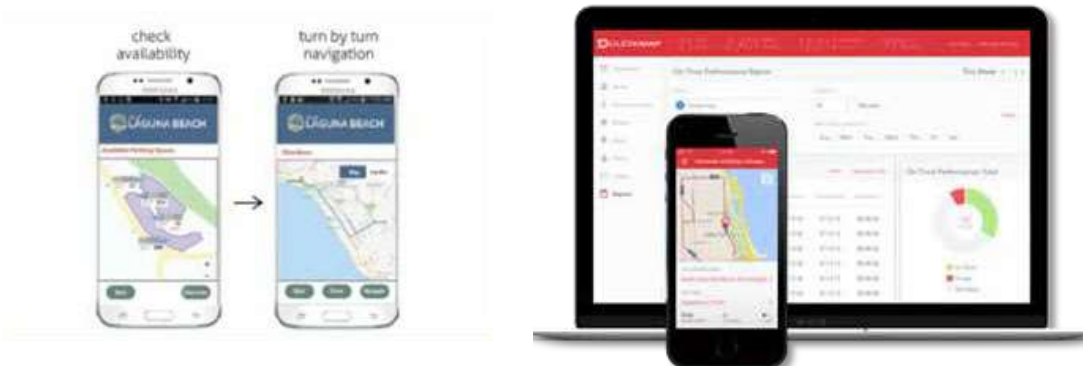
In 2013, the City completed a comprehensive Parking Management Plan (PMP) for the Downtown Specific Plan Area and along Laguna Canyon Road that included a toolbox of strategies to efficiently manage existing public parking, and outlined a multi-year strategy for improving the City’s parking management and circulation. Among these efforts have been the advancements to the Laguna Beach Trolley services and increased access to peripheral parking areas.



One example is the City's partnership with Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) to implement a "Summer Breeze Bus Service" from a peripheral parking lot that provides festival patrons and Laguna Beach visitors' free parking and free bus rides from a parking lot in the City of Irvine on weekends during the summer. The service has grown from 5,400 riders in 2016 to over 10,000 riders in 2018. Another important tool has been the use of police traffic aides to direct pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists during summer weekends and holidays. Additionally, the integration of the latest parking technology, the smart parking guidance system, into the City's parking infrastructure will assist with reducing traffic and congestion, provide data analytics and greater parking enforcement options. Furthermore, a five-year multi-phase parking rate structure for all public parking is permitted under Coastal Development Permit 20-7564.



The City continued the parking strategies in summer 2019, with the introduction of the Smart Parking Guidance project. Parking sensors have been installed throughout the downtown that will enable collection of real-time parking occupancy data, monitoring, and evaluation to inform and validate parking decisions, including dynamic parking rate modifications in the future that will assist the City to meet the 85 percent target occupancy level. The best part of the project is that the ability to search for parking in real time is provided to residents and visitors through a mobile app. This will help to alleviate the circling in the downtown looking for parking, thus reducing the congestion in downtown. Through implementation of the smart parking guidance system, the City will not only be better equipped with real-time parking occupancy data, but will also have the ability to adjust parking prices gradually and periodically. The City will continue to periodically review a PMP for the summer months that outlines specific strategies to manage the downtown parking supply efficiently.



Other parking management techniques will also be used to maximize efficient use of existing parking in the downtown to alleviate the parking problem. Shared parking encourages efficient land use and in the long-term the cost of shared parking is significantly less than the costs associated with constructing and operating new parking facilities. Based on the Parking Actual Demand Study, it was found that private parking spaces in the downtown Specific Plan area are underutilized during the summer and non-summer periods. Given the seasonal nature of parking needs in the downtown, rather than increasing the amount of parking in the downtown core, efforts are currently being made to maximize the existing parking supply through the promotion of shared parking programs.

One possible means to achieve a more efficient use of available parking is to continue to use the parking facilities of businesses after they have closed. This works particularly well for the parking lots of uses that are normally closed during the evenings and on weekends. Almost half of the available parking spaces in the downtown are located in private commercial parking lots and are not always fully utilized during peak demand periods. Many downtown property owners and businesses currently operate paid parking lots to allow the general public to park on private property outside business hours. The City has successfully continued its shared parking program with the first downtown shared parking lease initiated in 2019. The City will continue to identify opportunities for collaboration with privately held development to enter into shared parking lease agreements to allow for public use of private commercial parking spaces after business hours and during the peak summer months.

Enhancements to the downtown are important in fostering a sense of place, community and vibrancy to the area. Valuable information was gleaned during the City’s trial implementation of a temporary parklet in 2016 and a temporary pedestrian plaza in 2017. Overall, the community expressed a desire to promote new activities and public spaces to meet, gather and experience the downtown. Through adaptive re-use of public parking spaces on a limited or temporary basis, the City has the opportunity to accommodate enhancements such as a pedestrian promenade or street festivals through partial street closures, a parklet program, or other community-

desired events and activities within the downtown.



The findings from the Parking Actual Demand Study indicate that there is a surplus of public parking spaces available during the non-summer months. Occupancy during this period is well below the 85 percent; and, therefore, allows for adaptive re-use of public parking spaces to accommodate community-desired activities as a viable option. Depending upon the scale, time of year and time of day, shared parking agreements to utilize private parking spaces for public use may be needed.

On the other hand, adaptive re-use of public parking spaces during the summer months may not be ideal due to the high parking occupancy observed. The reduction of public parking spaces during the summer may be possible provided that an 85 percent occupancy level is met. Best management practices to meet practical capacity include adjustments to parking rates, offering parking alternatives on the periphery, and adding to the public parking supply through shared parking agreements to utilize private parking. While the parking study found that public parking facilities experienced full occupancy levels during certain peak periods on a summer weekend (typically 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, and 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM), it is important to note that not all off-street public parking lots were observed to be full. By modifying parking behavior, providing different options for parking location and cost, and guiding users to available parking spaces via a smart parking guidance system mobile app, there is a great potential to meet the 85 percent occupancy level in public parking facilities year-round throughout the downtown.

### 3. Design, Location, and Signage

*Parking can greatly impact the aesthetics of a downtown area. Efforts should be made to minimize the visual impact of parking facilities, locate parking in outlying areas, and provide clear, effective signage to direct people to available spaces.*

Parking areas do not contribute positively to urban design and aesthetics. Perhaps the greatest impact associated with providing more parking in the downtown is the potential to worsen traffic congestion by drawing more cars into the local street circulation system. Parking areas also pose potentially negative impacts by virtue of their design and appearance. “Tuck-under” parking (parking located at or slightly below grade

in an area underneath a raised building) presents exposed parking at street level while parking structures or garages typically present large driveway openings and/or a large, blank façade to the streetscape. These impacts may be minimized if vehicles are properly screened and sensitive architectural treatments are used.

Concentrating parking at the edges of the downtown is another way to lessen the visual impact of parking lots in areas that have high pedestrian activity. Parking areas such as those located along Cliff Drive are within walking distance of main commercial areas, but do not contribute to congestion in the highest traffic areas nor do they detract from aesthetics of the downtown core.

Developing a strategic approach to market, communicate and brand a parking system is important for residents, visitors and employees to know where they can find parking. For example, parking wayfinding signs can display real-time availability, pointing motorists to facilities with available spaces. In 2014, the



City introduced parking wayfinding signs with a “Circle P” logo denoting public parking throughout the Downtown and peripheral parking areas, which was highly successful in assisting residents and visitors to locate City public parking lots.

The City’s new mobile parking app will build on this wayfinding by offering users the ability to find available parking before they enter downtown. The City’s marketing and outreach efforts include a trolley logo, trolley and parking integrated mapping, a trolley and parking interactive webpage on the City’s website, social media postings, public outreach, and enhancements to the Trolley Tracker mobile application. Additional

signage and electronic messaging placed on Coast Highway and Laguna Canyon Road direct people to peripheral parking lots. Preparation and implementation of a Citywide Wayfinding Sign Program would help to address pedestrian and vehicular needs.

#### **Topic 4 Policies:**

1. Develop and implement a program to locate all-day employee parking outside the central portion of the downtown, and establish a convenient and reliable shuttle service for downtown employees to encourage use of outlying parking areas.
2. Ensure that all-day parking is reasonably priced and located in peripheral parking areas in order to encourage use of the City’s public transit system, improve circulation, and minimize congestion in the downtown.

3. Continue to advance the City's public transit system for beach-goers and downtown visitors through an enhanced public relations program that includes information about the location and cost of peripheral parking. This shuttle service may be combined with the employee shuttle service.
4. Improve the identification and availability of parking that serves the Downtown Specific Plan Area through implementation of parking technology, such as smart meters, parking guidance mobile apps, interactive parking maps, and dynamic real time parking information.
5. Encourage the use of shade trees, ground-level landscaping, context-sensitive lighting, and signage to improve parking design.
6. Maintain City-owned parking lots in the downtown core for short-term parking needs by utilizing time and price limits.
7. Establish a parking requirement of three (3) spaces for each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area for certain non-residential uses in the downtown.
8. Encourage efficient use of private parking spaces by encouraging privately held development owners to enter into shared parking lease agreements with the City to allow for public use of private parking spaces after business hours and during the peak summer months. These shared parking agreements may be needed for the limited or temporary adaptive re-use of public parking facilities for community-desired events and activities, including but not limited to, partial street closures and/or implementation of a parklet program during times of the year when an 85 percent target occupancy level is not achievable.
9. Allow for the limited or temporary adaptive re-use of public parking spaces for community-desired events and activities during summer and non-summer months, provided that an 85 percent target occupancy level is not exceeded. The utilization of parking spaces will be offset by a parking program combination of parking rate adjustments, public/private shared parking agreements, transit services (free trolley program) with peripheral parking, and will be monitored for an 85 percent or less occupancy level by data collection efforts. The maximum number of public parking spaces utilized shall be based on the available supply and occupancy levels.
10. Expand the annual summer data collection efforts to include all non-residential public and private parking within the Downtown Specific Plan area. This data collection is necessary to monitor utilization of parking on a recurring basis, and will inform and validate changes to parking requirements to maintain an overall occupancy of 85 percent or less over time.
11. Continue to support existing traffic mitigation efforts, such as the use of police traffic aides to direct pedestrians, bicyclists and motorists during peak demand periods.
12. Continue implementation of the smart parking guidance system that allows the City to collect real-time parking occupancy data to inform adjustments to rates for all public parking meters and lots in the Downtown Specific Plan Area. Parking rates may be adjusted gradually and periodically based on parking availability targets and actual vehicle occupancy. An increase in any given year is subject to review and approval of a coastal development permit. The City will continue to periodically review a Parking Management Plan for the summer months that outlines specific strategies to manage the downtown parking supply efficiently.

## Topic 5: Municipal Services

**Goal: Sustain a high level of cleanliness, safety and general attractiveness in the downtown through appropriate support services.**

The physical appearance of the downtown depends on a variety of factors, many of which are under the management of the City. The issues of trash disposal, road and sidewalk maintenance, policing, lighting, street trees and certain amenities are, in great part, the responsibility of the City. These functions contribute to the feeling of the downtown. The cleanliness, safety and general attractiveness of the downtown help to enhance the village.

### Issue Statements and Discussion

#### 1. Cleanliness

*The visibility of trash in the downtown should be minimized, and the City should ensure sidewalks are clean and inviting.*

An effective trash disposal system is critical to keeping the downtown attractive. The relatively large number of restaurants in a small area with space constraints for the storage of trash and recycling bins makes daily pick-ups a necessity. The City continues to work with the contracted waste disposal provider and the local merchants to ensure daily pick-ups of trash, recycling and organic waste in accordance with State law mandated commercial recycling programs.

In addition to frequent pick-ups, care must be taken to properly screen trash containers from view. Screening can be accomplished by requiring special architectural treatments for trash containers, such as currently present on Ramona Avenue between Park Avenue and Legion Street. In addition, neighboring businesses should be encouraged to consolidate their containers to minimize the visibility along alleyways.

Cleanliness and the conditions of the sidewalks and buildings affect the overall aesthetics of downtown. Many of the sidewalks have been customized with the addition of brick inserts to create a distinctive appearance. Sidewalks must be kept clean to present an attractive pedestrian environment. In fact, one of the complaints often heard by residents and visitors is the condition of the sidewalks. In a similar manner, unclean buildings make an unattractive impression on pedestrians.



The most effective manner in cleaning both buildings and sidewalks is with pressure washing. The limiting factor in using this method is current water run-off control regulations, which mandate that no wastewater enters the storm drain. This requirement means that either vacuuming and/or damming is required and raises the cost of the cleaning, particularly for buildings.

The City is currently committed to frequent pressure washing of the downtown sidewalks especially in high traffic areas, including well used publicly maintained pedestrian alleys. In addition, the City provides for day porter services to perform routine custodial maintenance, including sweeping and washing of sidewalks, streets, trash and recycling receptacles, benches, cleaning of public restrooms, and other public amenities. Day porters empty trash containers that become full between scheduled pick-up times.

## 2. Safety

*The safety of the downtown depends on a number of factors, including the presence of police, lighting and traffic controls.*

Starting in 1984, the City increased the visibility of police by introducing foot patrols throughout the downtown. The result of this presence has been positive for both merchants and the public. In addition, the City requires restaurants and bars to have personnel trained on how to handle unruly customers.

With regard to lighting, the standard streetlights through most of the downtown are historic reproductions similar to the lights used in the 1930's. These lights are lower than the previously used 20-foot high versions and are designed with interesting detail to enhance the pedestrian experience. The older, taller streetlights remain on Broadway and Coast Highway.

One disadvantage of the historic streetlights is that they do not cover as much of an area with illumination as the older fixtures. This is the case in several areas and is particularly evident on the south side of Forest Avenue between Glenneyre Street and Coast Highway. Additional lighting at this location would help to improve the pedestrian experience and business climate.

Traffic control has been enhanced by using trained personnel to manage traffic during high usage conditions, particularly on weekends and during the summer. The addition of scramble intersections on Coast Highway, as discussed under Topic 1, could further enhance pedestrian safety. Care must be taken with traffic safety measures to ensure that they do not detract from, and preferably enhance, the downtown ambiance.

## 3. Landscape Maintenance

The City largely controls the treatment of vegetation in the downtown, including the maintenance of trees in the City right-of-way, small parks and flowers. Trees provide a strong visual statement and require frequent professional trimming. Downtown trees are trimmed annually or once every two years depending on the species and the location. Small parks, such as the one on the City parking lot on Ocean Avenue and in front of City Hall, add to the plantings and provide variation in the appearance, texture and color of the urban environment.

Municipal services for the downtown are limited by the City’s budget. For example, the City is currently maintaining over 2,700 trees throughout the City with budgetary considerations limiting the frequency with which a particular tree can be trimmed. However, the appearance and horticultural health of street trees is a priority for the community and should not be deferred. In a similar fashion, trees that are removed need to be replaced with trees of appropriate size and species.

One method that has grown popular in many cities to supplement the municipal services budget is the creation of a parking benefit district. According to a 2012 study by the Urban Land Institute:

*A Parking Benefit District (PBD) ties the economic benefits of performance parking directly to improving the quality of life in the immediate area. ... Setting competitive curb parking prices often generates modest additional public revenues which can be reinvested directly into the impacted area, or district, for projects such as fixing streets and sidewalks, planting and grating trees, or for additional security or neighborhood services.*

In 2013, the City adopted the Downtown Specific Plan Area & Laguna Canyon Road Parking Management Plan. The Plan recommended several parking pricing strategies, including adjusting the pricing during the summer for parking meters and City owned lots when the demand is greatest. Basically, this strategy, called demand based pricing, raises prices in high use areas while offering lower cost alternatives on the peripheral. The key to success of this strategy has been expansion of the free trolley system.

The use of demand based pricing has been successful in modifying parking behavior and improving circulation in the downtown core as discussed in Topic 4. In addition, the rate increases for the summer have increased revenue from parking. Implementation of a PBD would direct a portion of this increased revenue back into the downtown to supplement the current budget allocations.





**Topic 5 Policies:**

1. Develop a trash management program that integrates trash and recycling receptacles and pickup schedules.
2. Encourage use of alleys as pedestrian pathways through alley beautification, requiring upgrades to the rear façades of buildings with alley frontage, and consolidating trash storage areas, when appropriate.
3. Maintain a schedule for frequent alley, street and sidewalk cleaning paying special attention to sidewalks adjacent to food service uses.
4. Work with the San Diego Water Management District to allow run-off from sidewalk and building pressure washing during times when the City is diverting storm water to the sewage treatment facilities.
5. Continue to require daily trash pick-up, including holiday pick-up, and daily cleaning of the trash enclosures for restaurant uses.
6. Maintain and preserve existing street trees, and remove and replace damaged or dying trees in a timely manner.
7. Maintain the use of police foot patrols throughout the downtown, and continue the use of trained personnel to direct traffic during high volume situations.
8. Evaluate and maintain at a minimum the bi-annual schedule for trimming City trees.
9. Explore increasing the number of flowers in the downtown by adding containers in the City right-of-way and on streetlights, and encourage businesses to plant flowers where possible.
10. Ensure that any safety measures, such as traffic barriers, are aesthetically attractive.
11. Explore techniques for funding ongoing maintenance issues, such as creation of a parking benefit district or a business improvement district.
12. Explore addition of enhanced lighting to areas, such as the south side of Forest Avenue, which can benefit from more illumination.

## Topic 6: Hazard Planning

**Goal: Balance design considerations and aesthetics with environmental hazard constraints.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion

#### 1. Flood Risk

*Flooding downtown can cause major damage to businesses, streets, and sidewalks, and efforts should be made to minimize impacts of future flood events.*

Flooding is the greatest concern of the environmental hazards potentially affecting the downtown. Downtown Laguna Beach is subject to periodic flooding due to overflowing of the Laguna Canyon flood control channel during a major flood event. According to the report from the Flood Mitigation Task Force in 2011, in the near future, this situation can be improved, but not completely resolved:

*Over the years, highway/floodway improvements of varying capacity have been constructed by the City of Laguna Beach, Caltrans, and the Orange County Flood Control District. The lack of capacity becomes acute in the downtown area, where the channel has a capacity of 2,000 cfs (cubic feet per second) entering the downtown area and continues as an open structure until reaching Beech Street. At this point, the channel goes underground, and the capacity is reduced to 1,050 cfs. A further reduction occurs at Coast Highway, where the capacity drops to 800 cfs. The result of these constructions in a heavy storm is an explosive overflow at Beach Street, resulting in rapidly flowing water down Broadway, Ocean and Forest Avenues.*

*Because of physical, financial, and environmental constraints, 100-year flood protection appears unattainable at this time, but the situation could be improved by modifying the severe bottleneck at the ocean end of the channel.*

The depth of flooding in most areas of the downtown is not tremendous, but it still presents a safety hazard and property damage risk. During extreme El Nino conditions, storms have produced flood heights of approximately one to two feet at Forest Avenue, two to three feet at Beach Street, and three to four feet at Coast Highway. Flood heights decreased toward the perimeter of the floodplain.

To qualify for federal flood insurance and to protect against 100-year flood hazards, the City has adopted federally-developed standards for construction in floodplain areas. For reconstruction in the floodplain or replacement of existing commercial buildings with no increase in building area, the requirements only necessitate that the building be “floodproofed.” This entails incorporation of special measures, such as the installation of removable flood gates, to seal the building from being inundated by floodwaters.

## 2. Sea Level Rise

*Impacts of climate change and sea level rise can lead to significant social, environmental, and economic impacts. Efforts should be taken to adapt to the impacts of sea level rise.*

An additional flooding threat is from sea level rise. Over the last century, the average global sea level has increased by seven to eight inches (International Panel on Climate Change 2013). The California coast already experiences flooding, significant storm events, and regular bluff erosion as a result of wave run-up on beaches, and the effects of sea level rise will exacerbate these natural forces. Potential damage and increase of flooding farther inland from tsunamis are also of concern due to climate change and the threat of rising sea levels. The National Research Council (NRC) projects that by the year 2100, sea level in California may rise by 17 to 66 inches south of Cape Mendocino (NRC 2012). Addressing sea level rise in the downtown requires adaptation planning in dealing with bluff erosion and providing for effective redevelopment, urban infill, and concentration of development in already developed areas.

## 3. Flood Mitigation at the Building Scale

*Flood mitigation building measures can detract from the aesthetics of downtown buildings. Creative solutions should be implemented to ensure safety from flooding while still maintaining the village character of downtown.*

The standards for new or expanded buildings and substantial improvement of residential buildings require the ground floor to be constructed at least one foot above the 100-year floodplain elevation and that no net increase in the impediment or level of floodwaters results. The most common way of accomplishing this is to construct the building on a pier foundation system that allows floodwaters to flow underneath the building.

A few buildings in the downtown, such as the Lumberyard Mall on Forest Avenue and the City Hall West Building (489 Ocean Avenue) were constructed within some of the constraints of the current floodplain regulations. Other development, such as the Plaza Building (303 Broadway) and the building at the corner of Forest and Second (381 Forest Avenue) were not required to comply with the floodplain regulations due to their status as remodels.

The incorporation of flood mitigation measures into buildings increases construction costs and also has the potential to detract from aesthetic and urban design objectives. In particular, the raising of buildings on pier foundations increases height, impairing the ability to create pedestrian orientation and interest, and diminishes the overall attractiveness and effectiveness of the building design. Examples of this can be seen on Ocean Avenue at the rear entrances to the Forest Avenue and Lumberyard Malls.

The primary method to reduce flooding in the downtown is to deploy measures upstream to reduce the flow of water. The Flood Mitigation Task Force made a number of recommendations to accomplish reduction, including increasing capacity of upstream culverts, periodic cleaning of debris from Laguna Canyon Creek, and selective removal of exotics and replanting with riparian natives in the Creek.

#### 4. Hazard Planning and Stormwater Capacity

Multiple scales of hazard planning are needed to address Downtown Laguna Beach's environmental risks.

Other City documents, such as the Safety Element and the Land Use Element of the General Plan, provide numerous goals and policies applicable to hazard planning, and the Municipal Code contains requirements for geologic and hydrologic analysis for construction on existing, subdivided lots, and for floodplain management for all areas of special flood hazards within the City, including the Downtown Specific Plan area.

Current plans call for rehabilitation of the existing Laguna Canyon Creek Channel from just upstream of Beach Street to the ocean outlet in 2021. In addition to the rehabilitation of the channel, the project will also remove and replace the transition structure at Beach Street. This is intended to reduce the hydraulic loss and inefficiency caused by the existing design of the transition structure between the open channel and box culvert at Beach Street, where the flow capacity is constricted from approximately 2,200 cubic feet per second to 900-950 cubic feet per second.

#### **Topic 6 Policies:**

1. As part of the design review process, pay special attention to mitigate the effects on the aesthetic qualities of the downtown when a development requires conformity to federally mandated floodplain management regulations.
2. Actively pursue improvements to the flood control channel from the Village Entrance to the ocean.
3. Continue to require the installation and testing of floodgates at all buildings within the floodplain.
4. Continue the program of alerting business owners and operators of predicted heavy storm events.
5. Support implementation of recommendations from the Laguna Canyon Flood Mitigation Task Force Report from November 2011 to reduce the flow of floodwaters into the downtown.
6. Continue to work with Caltrans to increase the capacity of the Laguna Canyon Creek Channel under Coast Highway.
7. Continue to implement floodplain management regulations pursuant to Laguna Beach Municipal Code Chapter 25.38 in the City's Local Coastal Program.

## Topic 7: View Preservation

**Goal: Preserve the downtown views of the hillsides, beach and ocean.**

### Issue Statement and Discussion

*Laguna Beach's natural and scenic beauty requires efforts for view preservation both in terms of building design and landscaping.*

The protection and enhancement of significant views is an important urban design issue. The hillsides and oceanfront that border and surround the downtown provide many prominent scenic views. These views can be hindered or enhanced depending upon the respect and attention they are given as part of the design process.

Proper consideration of views involves both creating and preserving view corridors. Preservation involves protecting against the blockage or interference of significant views by the insensitive siting or enlargement of buildings. Sensitive design concepts can enhance views by highlighting or framing them. Trees can impact views, but when properly trimmed and maintained, they provide a framing of critical vistas. Trees along Broadway and Forest Avenue are examples of proper framing.

The views encountered most often from downtown streets and sidewalks are those of nearby hillsides and narrow view corridors to the beach and ocean. These views lend a first-hand sense of the natural environment and contribute substantially to the enjoyment of the environment.

### Topic 7 Policies:

1. Establish building envelopes for new buildings and additions so that important views are preserved.
2. Continue to incorporate view preservation considerations into the design review process with emphasis on views of the surrounding hillsides and oceanfront.
3. Consider impact of tree selection and maintenance of trees on views.



## Topic 8: Housing

**Goal: To preserve and enhance housing opportunities in the downtown area.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion

#### 1. Existing Downtown Housing

*The downtown housing stock is limited due to the commercial focus of the area, and efforts should be made to preserve existing units and encourage new units.*

According to the 2010 US Census, there are approximately 439 housing units within the Downtown Specific Plan area with a total population of 531 people. The majority of households are non-family, single-person households. Most housing is located along Lower Cliff Drive, but there are residential buildings on South Coast Highway, Glenneyre and Mermaid Streets and Laguna Canyon Road. A few mixed-use residential and commercial structures are also scattered throughout the downtown. Nearly all of the occupied units (approximately 89%) are rental properties.

Given the commercially-focused nature of downtown, the existing housing stock is primarily limited to multiple-family rental units. A majority of the single-family dwellings are older structures that add to the overall character of the area. Some of these buildings may be considered for placement on the City's Historic Register and eligible to apply for preservation incentives. A concerted effort should be made to maintain the contribution these buildings make to the downtown. Economic pressure to convert these buildings from residential to commercial uses could result in the loss of these existing residences and discourage the development of new housing units in the downtown.



## 2. Affordable and Special Needs Housing

*The majority of Laguna Beach's affordable housing is located in the downtown where there is access to services and transportation.*

Providing affordable housing has been identified as a high priority in recent years. The 2013 Housing Element of the City's General Plan identifies that approximately 13 percent of households in Laguna Beach earn less than \$25,000 per year. Eighty percent of low-income renters in Laguna Beach overpay for housing, which means they spend more than 30 percent of their income on rent. Affordability is not only a concern for low-income residents; approximately 45 percent of all Laguna households overpay for housing, which indicates a need for more affordable units in on a widespread level.

The senior citizen population has been identified as the fastest-growing age group in Orange County, and according to the Housing Element, seniors have been designated by the City as a priority with regard to housing opportunities. The 2010 US Census identified 18.3 percent of Laguna Beach residents as aged 65 or older. American Community Survey Data from 2015 estimates that 16.7 percent of non-institutionalized senior citizens in Laguna Beach had some type of disability. For these residents, downtown housing with access to services could be an important way for them to maintain their independence as they age. Other groups with specialized housing needs that should be addressed are disabled persons, students and artists.

The City's low-to-moderate income housing inventory totals 159 units, and three out of seven affordable housing sites are located in the downtown. The table below provides a summary of the three projects developed downtown with a total of 75 affordable housing units. In addition, there are 15 units located at 793 Laguna Canyon Road housing approximately 50 students attending the Laguna College of Art and Design.

Project Name/ Address	Number of Rental Units	Program Parameters
Alice Court 450 Glenneyre Street	26	Very-Low Income Studio Units
Hagan Place 383 3rd Street	24	Very-Low Income Units for Persons with HIV/AIDS
Mermaid Terrace 485 Mermaid Street	25	Median-Income Senior Citizen Ownership Condo Units

The Housing Element identifies possible locations for low- and moderate-income housing projects that could be within the downtown area. Affordable housing options for long-term, low income residents, seniors, students, artists, and people with disabilities should be pursued downtown where residents will have access to services and transportation.

### 3. Potential for Residential Housing Opportunities

*Residential housing should be strategically located downtown so as not to detract from the small-scale, commercially-oriented nature of the area.*

While it is important to preserve existing housing downtown, residential housing could be encouraged by converting upper floor uses in existing buildings throughout the downtown. In promoting these types of projects, care must be taken to minimize conflicts between downtown commercial/entertainment venues and residential uses.

Affordable housing, senior housing, special needs housing, student housing as well as artists' work/live units should be prioritized in new downtown housing production, and incentives should be established to encourage such development. Incentives could include reduced fees, density bonuses, flexible parking requirements, and assistance in submitting federal and/or state grant applications.

### **Topic 8 Policies:**

1. Encourage the retention of residential units in the downtown.
2. Pursue opportunities to provide affordable housing for senior, students, artists and disabled and/or low-income individuals.
3. Continue to provide incentives such as reduced fees, density bonuses, reduced development standards, developer assistance with federal and other funding applications, and in-lieu housing fund contributions for the development of affordable housing that offers long-term affordability to extremely-low, very-low, low or moderate-income households and persons.
4. Encourage the preservation and development of residential uses in existing buildings when located above the ground floor, including artists' work/live units as allowed in various districts throughout the downtown.
5. Encourage mixed-use developments and conversions of second-story, commercial uses to residential units.



## Topic 9: Arts District

**Goal: Enhance the cultural identity of the City through continued development, beautification and promotion of an Arts District. The Arts District will provide opportunities for the creative community to live, create, experience, share, educate, and entertain for the benefit of Laguna’s artists, residents and visitors.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion

*The Arts District is distinct from other areas of the downtown for both the scale and nature of development. Covering approximately 45 acres at the northernmost area of the downtown, the Arts District is a home for cultural activities essential to maintaining and enhancing the City’s identity as an arts community. As one of the entryways to Laguna Beach, the Arts District provides a stage for reinforcing the City’s commitment to the arts and to the natural beauty of the surrounding hillsides.*

Physically, the Arts District straddles Laguna Canyon Road between the intersections with Forest Avenue and Woodland Drive. The area is constrained by the steep, largely undeveloped hillside slopes of Laguna Canyon and the Laguna Canyon Creek flood control channel. Laguna Canyon Road is an additional constraint, since this busy highway generates high noise levels and inhibits pedestrian activity, particularly movement between the two sides of the road.



Properties within the district are a mixture of publicly and privately owned parcels, with a predominance of arts-related uses. The publicly owned properties include the Village Entrance, the Festival of the Arts and Pageant of the Masters, and the Laguna Playhouse sites. Privately owned properties include the Sawdust Art Festival and Art-A-Fair grounds, the Boys and Girls Club, and several commercial locations. Current commercial and arts-related uses include artists' studios, an events center, food service, housing for artists and students, offices, a personal training studio, and retail.

Future development and redevelopment within this district should enhance both the arts-related identity and the natural character of the area. Year-round cultural and arts-related activities need to be encouraged. The Arts District should nurture creativity and be an environment that embraces education, cultural non-profits, artists and designers, performers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

Architecturally, projects should be in scale with the surrounding topography and designed to respect the Laguna Canyon Creek flood control channel and ecology. In addition, projects need to be designed to serve as a transition between the rustic character of Laguna Canyon and the more urban character of the downtown commercial core.



Parking to serve the Arts District and portions of the downtown commercial core has traditionally been provided on the Village Entrance site, located at the junction of Laguna Canyon Road, Broadway and Forest Avenue. More than twenty years of planning and preparation has culminated in a plan that retains most of the site's parking spaces while accommodating an attractive, abundantly landscaped area with a path between the downtown commercial core and the summer art festivals. The plan includes painting and patching the exterior of the historic sewer digester building, a remnant of the City's first Public Works project (its sewer system) and unique in its design among the New Deal projects of the 1930's. The parking area west of the channel has received special design attention and is designed to accommodate public outdoor cultural and arts-related events as well as the weekly farmers' market and the annual car show.

The Village Entrance site serves as the central parking and drop-off point for the district's cultural facilities and businesses. Future development should be encouraged to add pedestrian walkways throughout the District to allow residents and visitors to stroll to various points of interest. These walkways can be beautifully landscaped in a park-like manner with seating and covered areas scattered throughout. Public art should be included where possible.

The Arts District provides a unique opportunity for enhancing the cultural identity of the City by integrating multiple uses, including art, entertainment, housing, and retail, into a coherent vision that preserves the natural environment and rustic aesthetic of Laguna Canyon. With several properties under one ownership within the Arts District, these various uses could be implemented through a Planned Integrated Development that incorporates amenities and/or public benefits to the City such as public accessways, public art areas, and parks. It is important to recognize this district as an evolving, dynamic area that can adapt to changing needs.



### **Topic 9 Policies:**

1. Encourage enhancement of the Arts District to serve as the cultural and artistic focus of the community with adoption of flexible criteria and development standards for art and cultural uses that support and complement the zone.
2. Encourage the extension of pedestrian activity further north along Forest Avenue, Ocean Avenue and Broadway and further east out the canyon to provide an important link with key cultural sites in the Arts District and surrounding areas.
3. Implement the master plan for the Village Entrance site, which includes pedestrian circulation, parking, lighting and landscaping. Consider any permanent development on the site after the plan is implemented, especially with regard to possible conflicts with pedestrian or landscape linkages.
4. Encourage the use of public art that reflects the arts culture of the Arts District.
5. Continue to allow building heights as defined in the Municipal Code up to 36 feet for projects that meet specific findings on scale of the surrounding topography and that encourage cultural and arts-related uses. Building height should not detract from the diversity of building styles, maintenance of the pedestrian atmosphere or the village character.
6. Provide more easily accessible, informal and year-round cultural and art-related activities within the Arts District.
7. Develop urban design standards, including wayfinding signage and public transportation options that recognize and enhance the areas as a hub of arts activities.

## Topic 10: Central Bluffs

**Goal: Ensure that planning for the Central Bluffs addresses the unique opportunities to increase resident and visitor benefits.**

### Issue Statements and Discussion

*The Central Bluffs district is distinctive in the downtown for its location, landforms, and historical pattern of development. Overlooking the beach and the ocean along South Coast Highway from Main Beach Park to Sleepy Hollow Lane, the district is characterized by steep elevation changes and dramatic topography. The characteristic landforms, ocean views, and historic structures give the area an identity as a unique stretch of Southern California coastline.*

The north end of the district at Laguna Avenue is anchored by Laguna’s outstanding landmark building, the historic Mission Revival-style Hotel Laguna. Built in 1930, on the site of the City’s first hotel (dating to 1888), the Hotel Laguna once provided overnight lodging to movie actors such as John Barrymore, Rosalind Russell, Joan Fontaine, and Errol Flynn while they were filming on location in Laguna Beach. South of the hotel are some of the earliest houses in Laguna Beach, sometimes with small retail shops located along the highway edge of the same lots. The south end of the district around Legion Street contains retail shops at Laguna Village and the Laguna Surf timeshares.

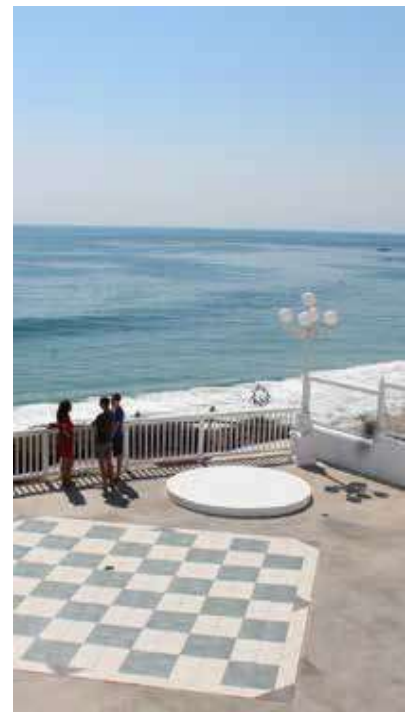
The district has a bluff top ocean overlook from Brown’s Park, another at the end of a corridor through the Wyland property, and a public beach access stairway through the middle of the Laguna Surf timeshares. The Cliff Restaurant in Laguna Village provides oceanfront dining.



The sea cliffs along the Central Bluffs generally consist of erosion-prone, relatively soft sandstone formations. Lateral support is being removed by episodic wave-induced bluff retreat, and the remaining cliffs are subject to additional failure from landslides and rock falls. Without proper planning, this erosion rate may be accelerated.

The bluffs consist of a steep, yet traversable, slope that invites foot traffic. These well-traveled paths accelerate erosion and tend to channel runoff into destructive crevices. If left unchecked, public use may result in eventual health and safety problems by virtue of accelerated sea cliff retreat and erosion. The long-range planning goals include enhancement of pedestrian circulation as well as protection of environmentally sensitive bluffs. This can best be accomplished by redirecting pedestrian access to improved walkways, thereby slowing down the rate of erosion failure. The dedication of land for bluff preservation purposes is essential if the long-range planning goals of enhanced pedestrian access and environmentally sensitive bluff protection are to be realized.

Much of this district is under single ownership, creating an exceptional opportunity to create a land use pattern that combines and balances sensitive environmental features, public amenities and new development. Minimizing bluff erosion while preserving the natural beauty, the historic character, and the human scale of the district requires the development of special planning and design criteria. Enhanced public amenities can include additional beach access, more open space and pedestrian-friendly sidewalks. Human scale of development means being attentive to mass, bulk, and setbacks.



**Topic 10 Policies:**

1. Promote coordinated development that incorporates adopted special planning and design criteria for this area as outlined in Chapter 5 of the Central Bluffs section of this Downtown Specific Plan.
2. Enhance existing view corridors and ensure that new development integrates viewshed opportunities.
3. Prevent bluff erosion by ensuring that new development balances design considerations with aesthetics and environmental constraints.
4. Require that expansions or new development incorporates building design features that are to pedestrian scale, sensitive to topographic features, articulated along Coast Highway to provide interest and relief to the streetscape, and that enhance the overall character of the community.
5. Encourage any expansion or new development to incorporate pedestrian access and amenities.
6. Encourage development that provides opportunities to better serve the community, visitors and residents, and that provides for a diversity of uses including, but not limited to: dining, entertainment, hospitality, , retailing, socializing, and special event activities.
7. Promote the preservation and adaptive reuse of historically significant structures.
8. When a proposed Planned Integrated Development incorporates public amenities and/or benefits such as enhanced public access and pedestrian ambiance, consider offering flexibility in the application of the property development standards and special planning and design criteria applicable to this district as outlined in Chapter 5 of the Central Bluffs section of this Downtown Specific Plan.
9. Develop design standards for improvements to dedicated accessways.

# 4

## CHAPTER

## URBAN DESIGN





## Introduction

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A major objective of the Specific Plan is to enhance the aesthetic qualities of the downtown and to make the area more vibrant, walkable, and welcoming for residents and visitors (figure 4.1 on the following page highlights the Specific Plan Area). These objectives are largely achieved through the implementation of urban design standards and improvements. This section sets forth a specific program for urban design in Downtown Laguna Beach. Goals include preserving diversity, strengthening the pedestrian orientation and creating a unique, memorable, and functional environment that recognizes our history while progressing us forward as a destination for the creative and cultured.

Guidelines must be set through an Urban Design Program to maintain the high standard of urban design that is expected of Downtown Laguna Beach. This allows for uniform and thoughtful improvements to the urban design fabric of Laguna Beach.

The Urban Design Program is divided into two segments. The first section is the Urban Design Framework that establishes location-based improvement recommendations, primarily for the downtown public realm. The second section consists of Urban Design Guidelines.



The Downtown Specific Plan along with the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element and Landscape and Scenic Highways Resource Document provide policy direction and design guidelines on landscape and urban design for the downtown. The Downtown Action Plan is a project that will build upon these policy related documents by developing an action plan to implement policy. The Downtown Action Plan will:

- Document all existing public areas and their conditions (streets, sidewalks, trees, tree wells, planters, public parking lots, etc.) throughout the Downtown Specific Plan area;
- Identify opportunities and constraints in enhancing the existing urban environment; and
- Include recommendations and alternatives with associated cost analysis for improvements to the existing urban environment.

Policy 4.1 and Action Item 4.4.1 from the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element provides direction for the development of the Downtown Action Plan:

Policy 4.1 - Develop a comprehensive street tree, streetscape, and urban design program for each street in the downtown.

Action 4.4.1 - Hire a qualified landscape architect design consultant to prepare a Downtown Urban Design Implementation Plan that includes:

1. Consistency with the heritage tree program.
2. Review of the general condition of trees via visual inspection including structure, roots, canopy, and health of each tree.
3. Evaluate long-term issues with the existing tree conditions, like size of planter areas, proximity to buildings, the street, and the future growth of the tree.
4. In recommending tree species and other plantings; consider the width, scale and importance of the street, sidewalk and pedestrian use, outdoor pedestrian areas with shade and seating, building mass, façade and architecture, and tree well sizes/planting areas.
5. Recommend improved tree well design and how to expand the tree planting areas (i.e., narrowing streets, converting parking spaces).
6. Recommend whether to maintain each tree, change it out to a new tree species, or other remedy to insure long-term viability and quality of the tree and streetscape.
7. Recommend urban design principles for each street including shade, seating, street lighting, sidewalk improvements, expanding planting areas, and new public gathering areas.
8. Recommend maintenance, irrigation, and long-term upkeep including monitoring and looking for ways to improve landscaping.
9. Consider the effect on traffic flow and parking to ensure there is not a negative impact on the downtown visitor experience.
10. Follow recommendations and consult tree lists contained in the Landscape and Scenic Highways Resource Document.

Downtown Specific Plan Area

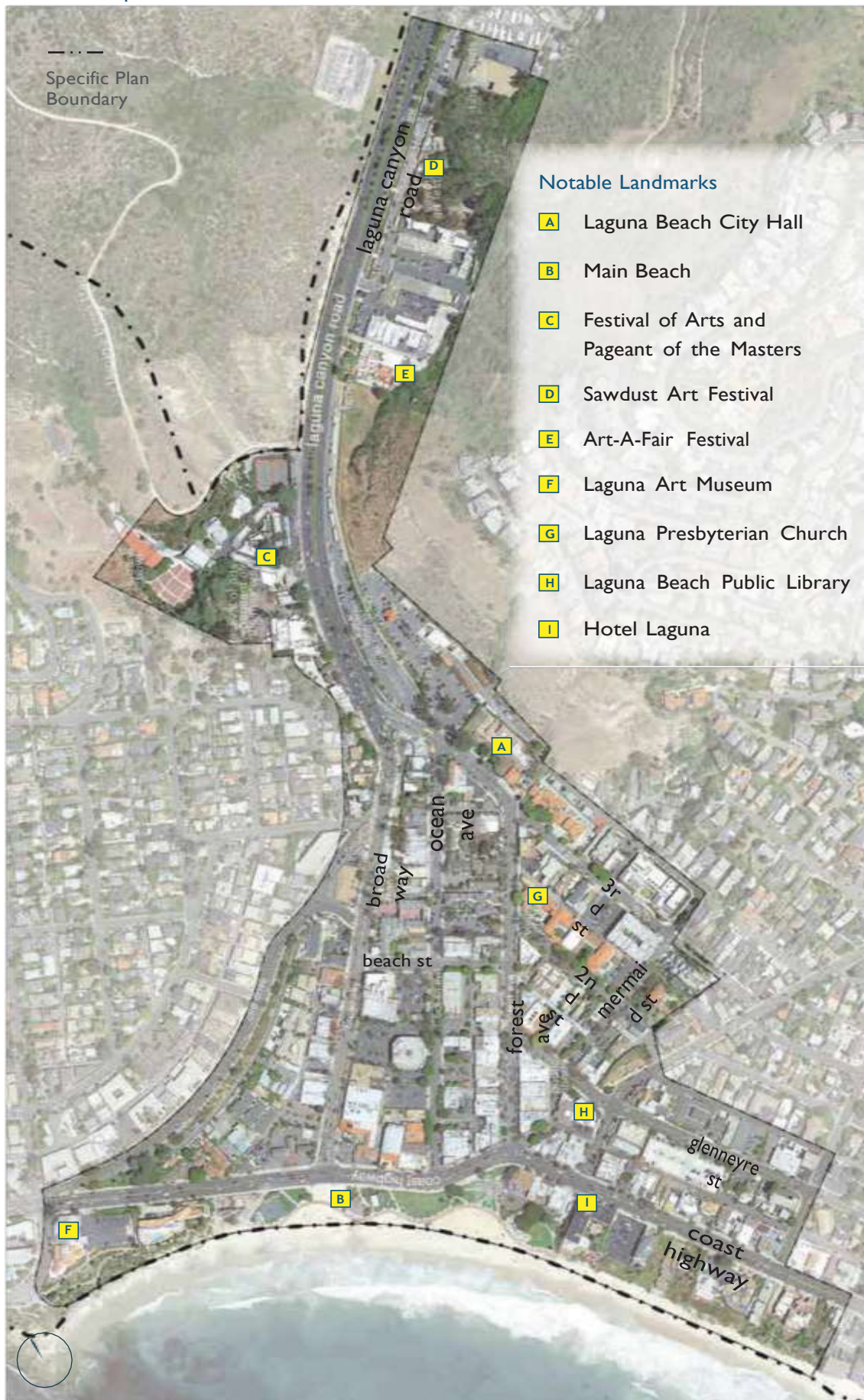


figure 4.1

## Urban Design Framework

The Specific Plan aims to enhance the unique design qualities in the downtown, preserve diversity, strengthen the pedestrian orientation and build on its distinctive physical environment. Urban design measures can help accomplish these objectives by facilitation improvements that affect pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. Described below are the primary features of the Urban Design Framework, as demonstrated on the following map (figure 4.2).

 **City Border**



**Opportunity Site** - These underutilized sites are great spaces to transform and activate key locations in Downtown Laguna Beach while also enhancing the economic health and social vibrancy of the area.



**Prominent Intersections** - These intersections have very high vehicular and pedestrian traffic volumes (especially in peak summer months) and should continue to afford opportunities for safe connectivity.



**Streetscape Enhancements** - With varied interventions, these streets can transform into great places that connect key destinations.



**State Highway** - These roadways have very high vehicular traffic and are the primary routes of access to Downtown Laguna Beach.

 **Specific Plan Area**



**Pedestrian Crossing Improvements** - These intersections should be improved to better service pedestrians and allow them to safely cross at key locations in the downtown area.



**Pedestrian Scramble Opportunity** - These intersections have very high pedestrian traffic that cross in all directions (during peak summer months) to provide a seamless transition from the commercial core to the beach.



**Bicycle Improvements** - A safe bicycle route connecting the beach with Laguna Canyon Road allows for better connectivity between major destinations.



**Alley Improvements** - Downtown Laguna Beach has a extensive alley network, this network should be celebrated and enhanced for the pedestrian users.

Opportunities

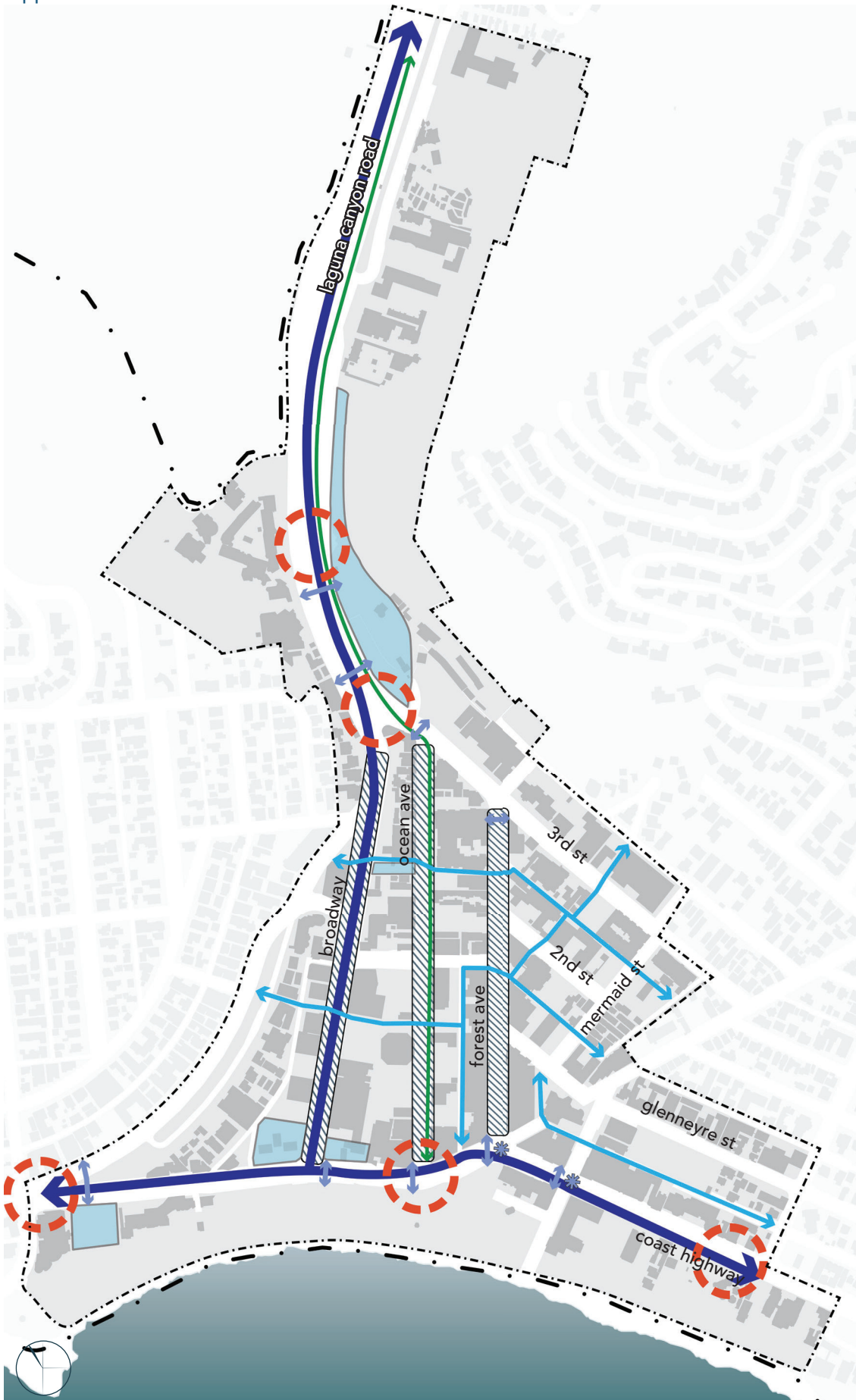


figure 4.2

## Illustrative Plan

The overall plan on the following page (figure 4.3) highlight the key opportunities for improvements in Downtown Laguna Beach. Items A through O are further described following the illustrative plan.

### Pedestrian Improvements



- A** Village Entrance/Forest Avenue/Laguna Canyon Road Intersection  
*High visibility pedestrian crosswalks*
- B** Cliff Drive/North Coast Highway Intersection  
*High visibility pedestrian crosswalks*
- C** Laguna Avenue/South Coast Highway Intersection  
*Pedestrian Scramble*
- D** Forest Avenue/South Coast Highway Intersection  
*Pedestrian Scramble*
- E** Forest Avenue/Third Street Intersection  
*High visibility crosswalks*
- F** Improved Alleyways  
*These alleyways are already frequently used by pedestrians, they should be improved to create a comprehensive pedestrian network.*

### Streetscape Improvements

- G** Forest Avenue Streetscape  
*Apply brick paving to each crosswalk along Forest and additional seating should be added (including parklets).*
- H** Ocean Avenue Streetscape  
*Create one-way street for the entire length in order to gain parking, includes typical street tree pattern and lighting.*
- I** Broadway Streetscape  
*Create opportunities for additional pedestrian oriented streetscape improvements.*
- J** Park Avenue Streetscape  
*Create a pedestrian plaza in an area where seating is limited.*

### Opportunity Sites

- K** Village Entrance Opportunity Site  
*Improved to include enhancements to landscaping, new pathways, and parking improvements.*
- L** Transit Center Opportunity Site  
*Create small-scale infill development with a pedestrian paseo opportunity.*
- M** Las Brisas Opportunity Site  
*New public park overlooking the Pacific Ocean with underground parking.*

-  Possible New Proposed Street Trees
-  Existing Trees

*Note: The preparation of a separate Downtown Action Plan will include a tree inventory of existing trees and tree planting concept for new proposed street trees in the Downtown Specific Plan area.*

Illustrative Plan



figure 4.3

## Pedestrian Improvements

Several intersections in Downtown Laguna Beach need improvement, particularly where the irregular downtown street pattern creates angled intersections. Improvements to these intersections creates a more friendly and safe environment for pedestrians.

### A. Village Entrance/Forest Avenue/Laguna Canyon Road Intersection:

As one of the main entrances to downtown, this intersection should create a welcoming pedestrian environment that signals the pedestrian-oriented nature of the Downtown Commercial Core. A high volume of pedestrian traffic crosses from the Village Entrance to the Festival of Arts and Pageant of the Masters. Pedestrian traffic south to this intersection is common from the Act V parking lot and Laguna Canyon Road on-street parking areas during summer months. The crossing at this intersection could benefit from enhanced paving or striping across Laguna Canyon Road.



Provide improved crosswalks between Village Entrance and the festival area.

### B. Cliff Drive/Coast Highway Intersection:

Cliff Drive intersects with Coast Highway at an oblique angle with an oddly shaped traffic island that creates a challenging pedestrian crossing. This intersection needs to be improved particularly for people parking along Cliff Drive, walking to the Laguna Art Museum, or walking towards Main Beach. The crossing should be well marked with signs to the north and south to alert drivers of the pedestrian crossing.



Provide improved crosswalks at the intersection of Cliff Drive with North Coast Highway.





Provide pedestrian scramble at Laguna Avenue and Coast Highway.



Provide pedestrian scramble at Forest Avenue and Coast Highway.

### C. Laguna Avenue/Coast Highway Intersection:

The community expressed support for a “pedestrian scramble” during outreach events. This improvement would allow crossings on both the north and south side of the intersection, as well as diagonally. This would create a pedestrian-oriented environment that reduces automobile speeds and fosters a seamless transition between downtown and the beach. The crosswalks should be highly visible with either colorful paint or distinctive paving, and the crossings should be signalized with pedestrian activated walk signals.

### D. Forest Avenue/Coast Highway Intersection:

This is a confusing pedestrian crossing because Forest Avenue intersects with both Coast Highway and Park Avenue at an angle. Community members expressed support for a “pedestrian scramble” at this site. Given the pedestrian-oriented nature of Forest Avenue, a scramble or pedestrian-activated signal at this intersection would be appropriate. The pedestrian environment should feel equally as safe with the use of stamped concrete or paving to slow down automobile traffic.

### E. Forest Avenue/Third Street Intersection:

Similar to several of the other intersections listed above, this is challenging for pedestrians because Third street intersects with Forest Avenue at an angle. This is a lower volume traffic intersection when compared with some of the other intersections downtown, but an enhanced pedestrian crossing would improve connectivity between the Lower Core, the Downtown Commercial Core, and the Arts District. Enhancements at this intersection could be as simple as adding a continental crosswalk or crosswalks with stamped concrete or paving on each segment of the intersection to give pedestrians options for where they cross the street.



Provide high visibility crosswalks at Forest Avenue and Third Street.

### F. Improved Alleyways:

Downtown Laguna Beach already has some frequently used alleyways, but improving certain alleyway connections could create useful linkages that are perpendicular to the existing roadway system. The existing roadway system is oriented to allow access to the beach rather than across downtown. The alley network illustrated in the Urban Design Framework (figure 4.2) shows a system of mid-block cut-throughs in addition to alleyways that would allow pedestrians to travel from Cliff Drive to the Community and Susi Q Center and from the Central Bluffs to the Commercial Core. Alleys should also maintain access for emergency services and loading. A phased approach to creating a comprehensive alley network could include improving existing alleyways by consolidating and screening trash receptacles, improving the paving, and adding attractive lighting, as illustrated in the images on the following page (figure 4.4).



Improve existing alleys to create a extensive pedestrian network.



**figure 4.4**

## Streetscape Improvements

The streetscape contains all the necessary pieces that facilitate movement for all forms of transport. It is better to think of a streetscape as a “sum of its parts” that includes things like: sidewalks, street corners, trees, landscaping, planters, seating, public art, service spaces, and more. The best approach to creating a great streetscape is to make sure that this sum of parts interacts in unison. Forest Avenue, Ocean Avenue, Park Avenue and Broadway are the main downtown streets upon which to focus streetscape improvements. The improvements shown in figures 4.5 and in the photos on the following page are recommended to be included in the entire Downtown Laguna Beach area. Continue the improvements that are already in downtown today, such as banners, street trees, on street parking, etc.

### Parklet Program

It is recommended that the City develops a parklet program that sets forth guidelines and standards for parklet design and maintenance. This program would allow parklets to be placed throughout Downtown Laguna Beach for resident and visitor public use in areas that have large volumes of pedestrian traffic.

These parklets should be placed in proximity to retail and restaurants to maximize their usage by the public.



Concept designs for parklets will need to be approved by the City before being built.

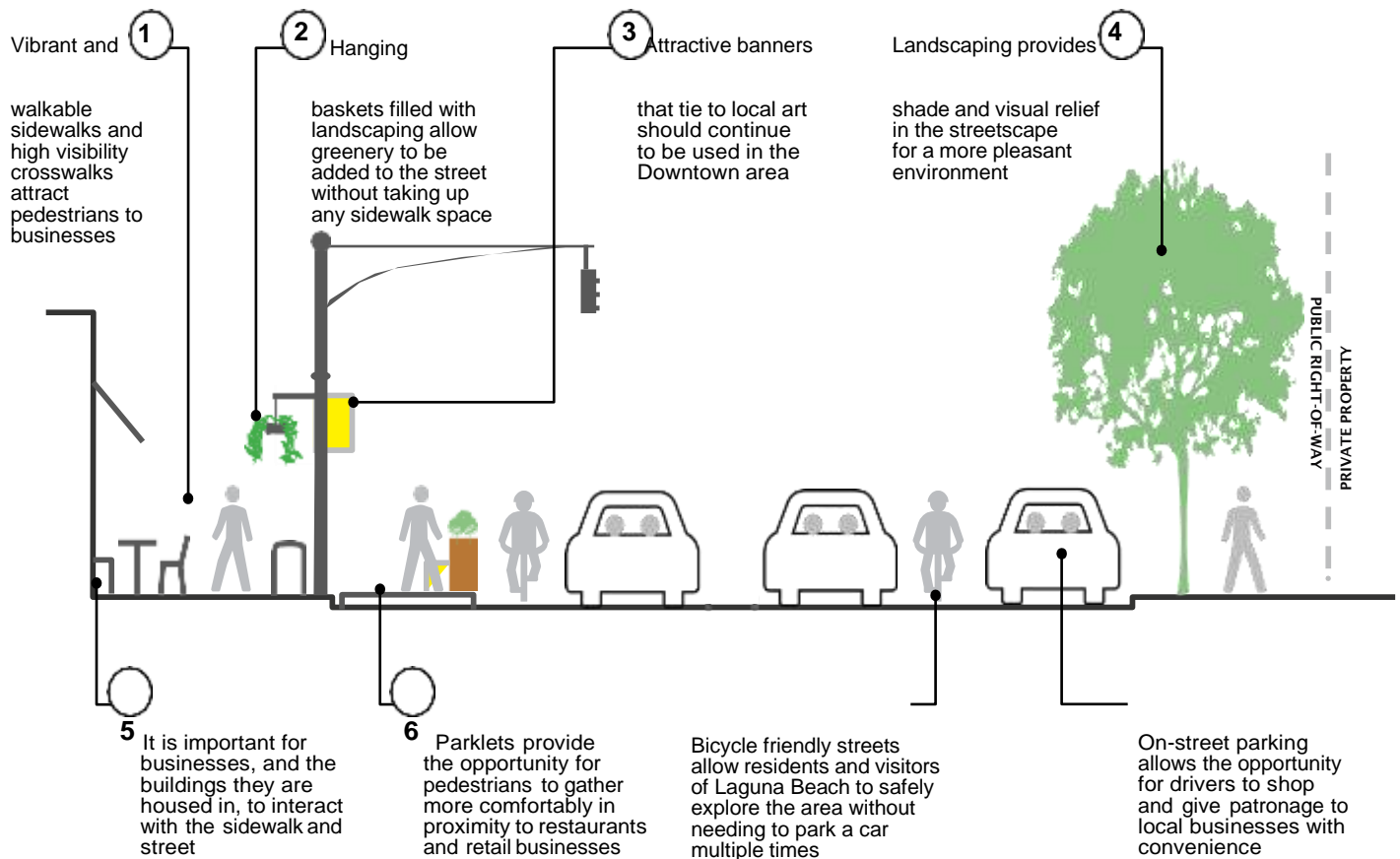


figure 4.5



## G. Forest Avenue

Forest Avenue, named for the “forest” of Eucalyptus trees planted by homesteader George Rogers in the 1880’s, has been Laguna’s “Main Street” since the town was established at the turn of the twentieth century. Forest Avenue represents historic Downtown Laguna Beach. Functionally and aesthetically, the street can be divided into Upper Forest (between Third Street and Glenneyre Street) and Lower Forest (between Glenneyre Street and South Coast Highway) where the street is one-way only and narrows to create a more intimate environment. Forest Avenue is the most heavily traveled downtown pedestrian street due to its central location, comfortable scale of one- and two-story buildings, retail uses, and attractive, eclectic architecture.

Forest Avenue should build upon its current identity as a highly-traveled special pedestrian-oriented shopping street. Many of the existing unique features should be continued, such as public art, planting areas, and special paving, throughout all of Forest Avenue. Seating areas and additional ground plane planting, coupled with additional shade trees can provide respite for residents and visitors. In addition, flowering trees can provide a visual accent at key locations on Forest Avenue. For lower Forest Avenue, consideration should be given to utilizing a continuous paving material on both the sidewalk and the street. The use of a continuous paving material on Forest Avenue between Coast Highway and Glenneyre Street will create a more pedestrian friendly street that also retains existing parking and aids in traffic calming. In addition, improvements on figure 4.5 can also be implemented on Forest Avenue, including: banners, hanging baskets, etc.



Consider introducing unit pavers on sidewalk and Forest Avenue roadway.



Continue use of planting areas at corners.



Introduce additional public art.



Introduce flowering trees at key locations.



Use unique benches.



Introduce planters to capture stormwater



Apply paving to all corners and crosswalks to continue a "brick look."

### H. Ocean Avenue

Ocean Avenue has traditionally been designated as a resident-serving street, with a diverse mix of retail, restaurants, banks, and residences. The existing street trees create an attractive canopy for pedestrians, and true to its name provides a view of the ocean when looking towards South Coast Highway.

Ocean Avenue has the potential to be converted to a one-way street for the entire length in order to gain parking. A redesign of Ocean Avenue could include a typical street tree and pedestrian lighting pattern, as well as additional bulb-outs at intersections with planting and opportunities for public art. Flowering street trees should be used at key intersections along with public art and brick paved crosswalks to further enhance the village character and retain the walkable charm of Ocean Avenue and the downtown area.



Continue to implement bulb-outs at intersections.



Continue use of public art where appropriate.



Incorporate paving at crosswalks that has a “brick look.”



Introduce flowering street trees at key intersections.



## I. Broadway

Broadway, as the extension of Laguna Canyon Road, serves as one of the main entrances into the City. For many entering Laguna Beach, the view down Broadway to the Pacific Ocean provides a dramatic sense of arrival to Laguna’s “window to the sea.”

Broadway is an auto-oriented thoroughfare that provides valuable resident-serving businesses such as a grocery store, a hardware store, and an auto-service shop. There is sufficient parking for residents to run errands, and this function should continue to be a priority for the street. However, its design could be enhanced to create a more attractive and safer pedestrian environment. The corner of Broadway and Coast Highway should be focused on streetscape improvements to enable safer access from the Commercial Core to Main Beach. Improvements could include planting additional street trees, installing planter boxes, and adding brick paving along the edges of the sidewalks. Future plans should also include plaza space within the potential opportunity sites at the corners of Broadway and North/South Coast Highway.



Continue use of decorative fencing where appropriate.



Introduce additional wayfinding signage.



Introduce canopy street trees.



Introduce pedestrian scaled lighting.

### J. Park Avenue

Lower Park Avenue is an extremely short, one-way street that serves primarily as a cut-through for residents traveling southbound on South Coast Highway. Additionally, this small underutilized portion of Park Avenue leads to essentially what is used as a service alleyway. Converting this space into a pedestrian plaza could add to the character of the area and could create more seating for shoppers and patrons of businesses in Downtown Laguna Beach. Depending on usage, this plaza could be installed on a temporary status to be used during non-peak visitor months, and then reverted to the original auto-oriented use during peak summer months.



Before



Artist rendering of proposed improvements prior to implementation of October 2017 trial program



Park Avenue temporary pedestrian plaza improvements from October 2017 to January 2018

## Opportunity Sites

One of the key attributes of Downtown Laguna Beach is its overall consistent pattern of small scale and charming buildings that offer a variety of uses. However, there are a few key sites that are underutilized today, and with the right transformation, would enhance the pedestrian and village character of Downtown Laguna Beach. These sites are as follows:

### K. Village Entrance

The Forest/Laguna Canyon Parking Lot and City Employee Parking Lot at the Village Entrance has been improved to include enhancements to site landscaping, new multi-use pathways, center median improvements, changes in site ingress/ egress, parking lot circulation and location changes, and a new access bridge across the Orange County Flood Control District Channel.



Existing Conditions



Artist renderings of proposed improvements to the Village Entrance area.

## L. Transit Center

With the potential relocation of the Laguna Beach Transit Center to on-street service, this site presents an opportunity for small-scale redevelopment in the heart of downtown. The site is constrained with long and narrow dimensions, but it spans the width of the block between Ocean and Broadway, creating a unique opportunity for a tactical, pedestrian-oriented development.



Existing Conditions



The redevelopment of the Transit Center site with a pedestrian paseo could enliven the street at night and build off of the activity from adjacent restaurants and shops. This artist rendering is meant to be used as a visioning exercise for potential long term use and is not representative of any existing planned project.

### M. Las Brisas Park

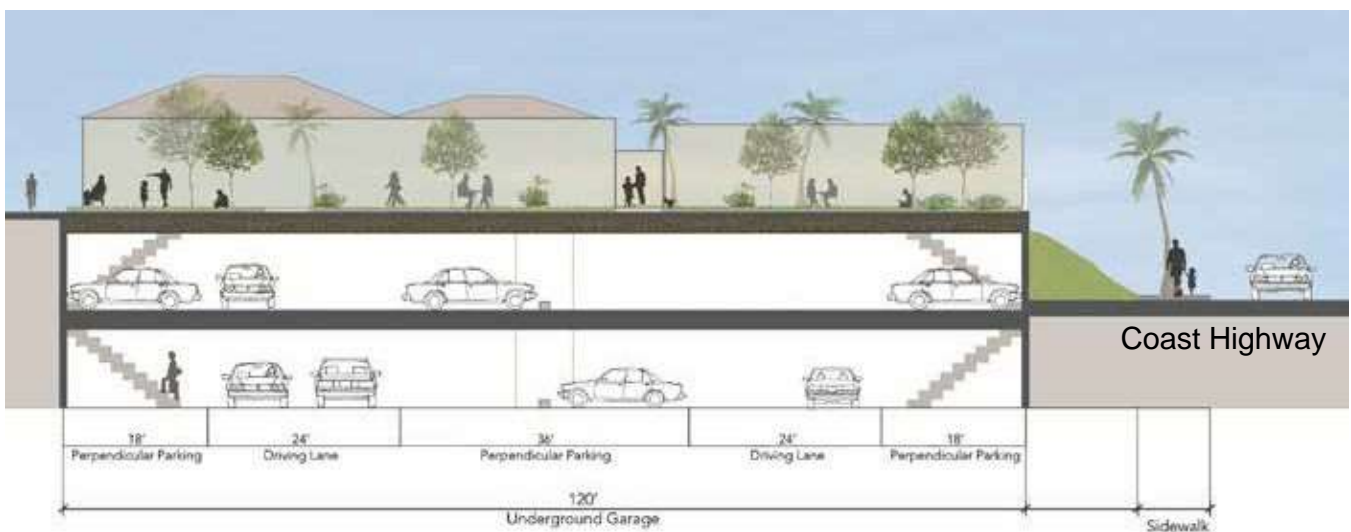
The Las Brisas parking lot provides an opportunity to create a public space in a prime location overlooking the ocean while maintaining parking areas. Because of the elevation at grade in this location, a parking structure could be placed under a new public park (see images below). This example of an innovative parking strategy also improves the character of the area.

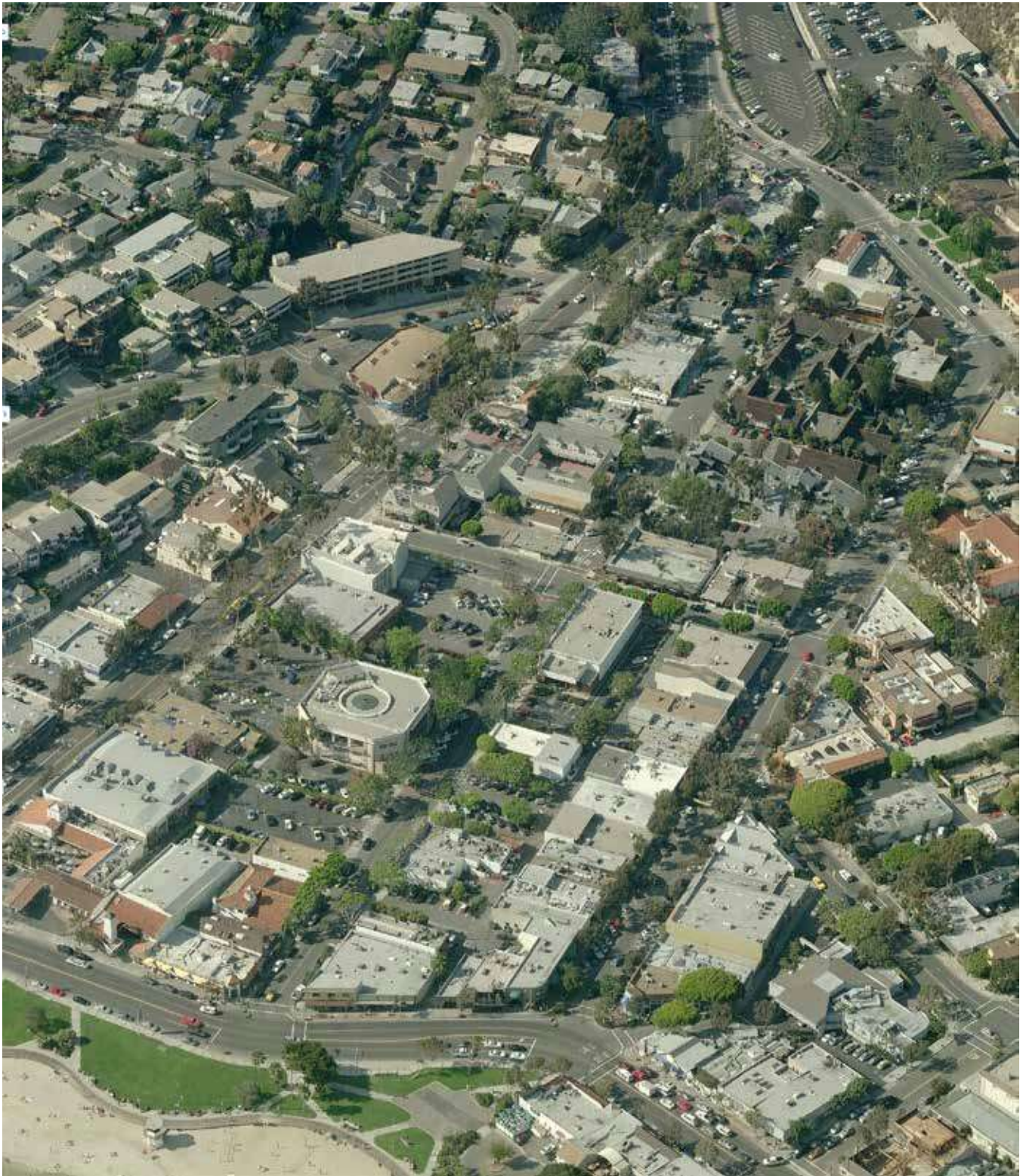


Public art should also be incorporated into the park on the Las Brisas parking lot.



The Las Brisas parking lot provides an opportunity to create a public space in a prime location overlooking the ocean without losing any parking.





Downtown Laguna Beach has a unique eclectic character created by a series of architecturally varied one- and two- story buildings.

## Urban Design Guidelines

The following Urban Design Guidelines are written statements that articulate the City's design approach to Downtown Laguna Beach. To help illustrate the key concepts, the Guidelines include photographs of existing downtown buildings that provide the basis for the area's appealing aesthetic, as well as precedent imagery from outside Laguna Beach to inspire new design ideas. The Urban Design Guidelines establish the goals and concepts for downtown design and provide the framework for the City's Design Review process. Physical improvements and site developments subject to design review shall be designed and located in a manner which best satisfies the intent and purpose of design review, the City's village atmosphere, and the design review criteria specified in Laguna Beach Municipal Code Section 25.05.040(H). Village atmosphere shall be characterized by appropriately scaled development, diverse and unique architectural designs, pedestrian orientation and sensitivity to the natural conditions of the site.

Each project that requires Design Review should be consistent with these Guidelines. Well-designed buildings, landscaping and public open spaces reflect the quality and values of a community, enhance the visual character of the City, add to its pedestrian-friendly atmosphere, and increase building and property values. A major emphasis of the Guidelines is on the architectural form, buildings details, and landscaping. The design of open spaces, parking areas and signs are also addressed.

The Urban Design Guidelines are organized into three main sections: Site Design, Architecture, and Open Space. Retaining the qualities that Laguna Beach is praised for is related to retaining the high standard of urban design that is present in the downtown core. Good urban design for the future requires a clear vision that includes all aspects of the public realm that residents and visitors interact with daily. A comprehensive set of guidelines is essential to preserving the character and legacy of Laguna Beach.



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## 1.1. SITE RELATIONSHIPS AND VIEWS

### Design Approach

Ensure that building mass, siting and setback relationships are functionally and aesthetically compatible with their surroundings.

### Design Guidelines

1. Site design should consider the impact on important views to landmarks or natural features, including mountains, ocean, and hillsides. Buildings should be positioned to “frame” views rather than obstruct them.
2. Orient buildings to allow for energy conservation and access to sunlight.
3. Integrate buildings with the pedestrian circulation network wherever possible.
4. Massing of buildings should reflect the landforms on which they are built. Building setbacks can be used to help diminish the visual impact of the mass.
5. New buildings should complement the scale, form and proportion of older development.
6. Variation and distinctive design that creates differentiation along the street should be encouraged. Configure spaces so that the majority of units minimize exposure to the south-west and west sun while allowing plenty of light and ventilation from at least two sides in each unit.



Views toward the ocean, hillsides, and mountains should be preserved and highlighted through building design.

## 1.2. BUILDING HEIGHT

### Design Approach

A diversity of building heights in the downtown should be encouraged to protect views of the surrounding natural features, permit sunlight into the streets, and maintain the pedestrian orientation, scale, and village character of the downtown.

### Design Guidelines

1. Vary building height to preserve the eclectic mix of buildings and create visual interest along the street.
2. Design buildings to protect important views, maximize sunlight onto private and community open spaces, and maintain compatibility with surrounding topography.
3. Incorporate elements into the project design that add visual interest, including changes in material, texture, color or detail, wall plane location or direction, roofline and/or window variations, and overhanging building elements to distinguish the upper floor(s) from the ground floor.
4. Overall height of new structures should be in scale with other buildings in the surrounding area.



Heights of new buildings should be comparable to existing heights in the Downtown.

## 1.3. SCALE AND COMPATIBILITY

### Design Approach

Preserve the village character of Laguna Beach by encouraging the design of new buildings and renovations to fit within the existing scale and context of surrounding buildings.

### Design Guidelines

1. Divide and vary large volumes or planes of buildings to diminish their scale.
2. Building façades should create visual interest at the ground floor by incorporating setbacks, window variations, and vertical articulation, such as columns, to reduce the scale.
3. Articulate front façades with windows, awnings, and defining features such as columns, colonnades, etc.
4. Encourage and utilize building setbacks to create patios or landscaped areas for resting, conversation, dining, shopping and other activities.
5. Reinforce the pedestrian scale of the street by distinguishing the upper floor from the ground floor. This can be accomplished with material changes, window variations, overhanging building elements, setting back the second floor and other methods which focus attention on the pedestrian level.
6. Design building entrances with unique signage, lighting, distinctive paving, and other architectural features to add interest to a façade.
7. Use strong vertical elements such as stairs, pitched roofs or towers to break up the length of a façade and create necessary variation in building style.
8. The design of the building should be considered in the context of the block as opposed to a single façade. Buildings should enhance the surrounding village character of Downtown typified by distinctive buildings with varied heights on small lots creating a pedestrian friendly atmosphere.



Varied building heights and massing should be used to maintain the existing eclectic style of the Downtown.

## 1.4. PARKING

### Design Approach

Create and maintain parking facilities that are designed and aesthetically treated to contribute to the village character of the downtown.

### Design Guidelines

1. Locate parking structures and surface lots in a manner that minimizes impacts on major pedestrian ways and encourages new pedestrian access.
2. Design parking structures and surface lots to maintain the pedestrian scale and visual interest along the streetscape by using trellises, landscaping, special paving, and other architectural details.
3. Minimize curb cuts for parking ingress/egress along sidewalks.
4. Incorporate landscaping, art features and low fences into parking lot design, particularly along street frontages, sidewalks and alleys to screen the view of parked cars.
5. Use trees, shrubs and ground cover within parking areas to break up large expanses of paving, to provide shade and reduce glare.
6. Incorporate kiosks and street furniture into the landscaping of parking areas, where appropriate.
7. Minimize impacts on the streetscape and pedestrian circulation by eliminating or consolidating parking meters or utilizing multi-space pay stations.
8. Incorporate stormwater planters and permeable paving into the design of surface parking lots to reduce, capture and/or filter stormwater runoff.



Parking lots that are adjacent to pedestrian facilities should provide a visual landscaped buffer between the parked cars and pedestrians.



Parking lot with stormwater planters.

## 1.5. PARKING LIGHTING

### Design Approach

Ensure that public parking lots or structures provide lighting that creates a safe and welcoming environment at night.

### Design Guidelines

1. Use warm, soft lighting for general illumination of parking structures and surface lots. Limit the use of brighter, whiter lighting to identify entrances and accentuate pedestrian circulation only.
2. Design lighting for parking garages and surface lots to be on low poles or fixtures, fully shielded and directed downward to prevent glare or intrusion on neighboring properties.
3. Minimize use of lights on poles (10' to 20') and ensure shielding is consistent with the City's Good Neighbor Outdoor Lighting Ordinance. Avoid lights on poles 24' or higher to prevent light intrusion onto neighboring properties.
4. Illuminate pedestrian walkways with attractive lighting fixtures that are low to the ground.
5. Use shielded spotlights to highlight trees, artwork, or other special landscape features.
6. Use solar powered lights whenever possible.



Whiter, brighter lighting should be used for accentuating entrances and pedestrian circulation.



Lighting in parking lots should be pedestrian oriented along walkways

## 1.6. LOADING FACILITIES

### Design Approach

Locate and/or screen loading facilities in a manner that maintains the aesthetics of the associated building, adjacent buildings or pedestrian ways.

### Design Guidelines

1. Whenever possible, locate loading facilities so that they are not visible from the street.
2. Minimize visual impacts by designing loading facilities to be aesthetically consistent with associated buildings.
3. Screen loading areas with fencing and/or landscaping that is compatible with the overall building design.
4. Consider safe maneuvering of delivery vehicles when locating loading facilities.
5. Minimize visual impact by sharing loading facilities for adjacent properties
6. Ensure pedestrian access is maintained when designing and locating loading zones near public thoroughfares.



Loading facilities should be situated to face alleys and not primary streets and should be adequately screened from public view with landscaping or decorative fencing.

## 1.7. TRASH, STORAGE AND EQUIPMENT AREAS

### Design Approach

Ensure that outdoor areas for trash, storage or equipment are adequately screened from public view and located to minimize noise or odor impacts on surrounding areas.

### Design Guidelines

1. Use landscaping, fencing, berms, art features or other devices integral with overall site and building design to screen trash, storage, and equipment areas.
2. Construct trash and storage enclosures with materials such as wood, masonry and high quality metal that will allow them to blend with the surroundings. Avoid the use of chain link fences.
3. Ensure that trash enclosures are of sturdy construction to withstand the impact of metal dumpsters and cans.
4. Orient the opening of enclosures away from public view or screen with sturdy gates wide enough to allow easy access for trash collection.
5. Consolidate trash areas between businesses and use modern disposal techniques, whenever possible.



Trash receptacles should have attractive screening whenever they are in public view.



## 1.8. CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN BUILDINGS

### Design Approach

Create connected commercial plazas with interior pedestrian access (paseos) that interface with the street and sidewalk system.

### Design Guidelines

1. Façades of interconnecting buildings should retain their individual identity. Avoid remodeling or painting a building to give the appearance of a single building.
2. Encourage connectivity between buildings on second and third floors so as to not obstruct pedestrian circulation at the street level.
3. Use landscaping and paving to unify pedestrian circulation and identify entrances in a complex of buildings.
4. Use public art, fountains, and gathering spaces as gateway features into commercial Plazas.
5. Maintain views through the entire length of a paseo to encourage access and egress.
6. Incorporate low level lighting in paseos to ensure safety at night.



Pedestrian alleyways linking associated buildings should be well landscaped and clearly marked.

## 2.1. MATERIALS

### Design Approach

Encourage the use of high quality materials that are compatible with the village character and architectural aesthetic of the downtown.

### Design Guidelines

1. Use natural materials, such as stone, brick, tile, stucco, and wood. Give thoughtful consideration to simulated brick, stone, tile or wood for quality assurance.
2. Avoid aggregate panels, metal or bonded metal panels and similar materials.
3. Select roofing material based on its compatibility with the architecture of the building and its natural appearance. Avoid products that appear synthetic.
4. Materials may be combined to enrich the appearance of a building and highlight architectural elements; however, only a limited number of materials should be used.
5. Utilize materials for new buildings that are distinct, but compatible with surrounding buildings.
6. Select and incorporate sustainable building materials that will withstand local environmental conditions, whenever possible.



Materials that reflect the history of the area should be employed with new development and redevelopment.

## 2.2. WINDOWS

### Design Approach

Activate the street level with transparent façades and display windows that provide public face to the street and maintain the pedestrian orientation of the downtown.

### Design Guidelines

1. Maintain pedestrian scale with windows that are subdivided by mullions, panes, or decorative millwork. Avoid large, continuous expanses of glass without careful detailing.
2. Vary the design of window elements along the street frontage to provide visual interest and minimize long façades.
3. Maintain a distinction between upper and lower floors, by using larger patterns of glass for the street level façade rather than the upper floor.
4. Where appropriate, use bay, bow and box windows to add visual interest to a façade and provide variety, shadow and texture.
5. Design windows (i.e., pattern, size, type and material) in a manner that is appropriate to the character of the building.
6. Use energy-efficient and environmentally friendly glass when possible. Avoid highly reflective glass.



Window designs should vary between frontages, and should reflect the overall design of the associated building(s).

## 2.3. ROOFS

### Design Approach

Encourage roof design that is consistent with the character of the building and sensitive to adjacent buildings and views from the street.

### Design Guidelines

1. Use a variety of roof planes to break up the scale of large buildings, identify individual spaces in a large building, and reduce perceived height.
2. Incorporate roof overhangs and eaves to add interest to the building form and provide shade and protection for pedestrians.
3. Use roofing materials that are consistent with the architectural character of the building, and convey a sense of permanence and quality.
4. Conceal roof-mounted mechanical equipment from public view by locating equipment in a roof well or by screening it in a manner appropriate to the character of the building.
5. When appropriate, use dormers to add interest to the roofline and to introduce natural light into the building.



Roof planes can provide visual interest along the street. The design and materials of a roof should reflect the architectural character of the building.

## 2.4. BALCONIES

### Design Approach

Encourage balcony design to be integral with the architectural character of the buildings.

### Design Guidelines

1. Use landscaping on balconies to contribute to the streetscape and building character.
2. Ensure balconies are well integrated with the building design and structure.
3. Use balcony railings as an opportunity for creative design. Design and choose materials that reflect the function of the balcony and the character of the building.



Balconies should be incorporated into the overall building aesthetic and should be consistent with building design, while adding visual interest to the façade.

## 2.5. AWNINGS/MARQUEES

### Design Approach

Encourage awnings and marquees that are consistent with the building's character and contribute to the eclectic village atmosphere by adding color, texture and shade to the streetscape.

### Design Guidelines

1. Design the shape and size of awnings in a manner that relates to the window or door it is covering as well as the overall pattern of the façade.
2. Use durable cloth or other high quality, lightweight materials for awnings.
3. Encourage non-fading cloth awnings subject to regular cleaning or replacement.
4. When a building contains more than one store, different colored awnings can be used for individual identification when the awnings relate harmoniously with one another and with the building as a whole.
5. Avoid fixed aluminum awnings and awnings simulating mansard roofs and umbrellas unless they are compatible with their surroundings and historically appropriate to the age and style of the building.
6. Design marquees to be in scale to the door they cover and the building façade. They should not run the length of the façade, or create an imposing presence along the street.



Awnings should accentuate the façade of the building, and should be made of attractive, durable materials.

## 2.6. COLORS

### Design Approach

Promote building colors that are appropriate to the character of the building and compatible with adjacent buildings in the surrounding area.

### Design Guidelines

1. Reserve bright, intense colors for accents, trim or highlighting architectural features.
2. Use a limited number of colors on a building to create a clean, elegant design.
3. Avoid fluorescent colors, as they are not appropriate to the village character.
4. When appropriate, use color to break up the scale of a building by highlighting various architectural elements.
5. Coordinate signage and awnings with the colors of the building façade. They can be used successfully to introduce brighter or core intense colors.
6. Design the hues, values and intensities of a color program to be compatible with adjoining building colors and landscaping elements.



The exterior of buildings should have a simple, consistent color scheme. Bright colors and patterns can be used as accents to highlight architectural features.

## 2.7. BUILDING LIGHTING

### Design Approach

Encourage the design of building lighting that creates a safe and welcoming downtown environment at night.

### Design Guidelines

1. Use lighting to add interest to the streetscape by highlighting architectural features, artwork or landscape features.
2. Avoid general floodlighting of a building, as it is not appropriate to the village character.
3. Use interior lighting of display areas to help illuminate pedestrian areas and encourage shopping.
4. Integrate sign lighting with overall façade lighting.
5. Shield lighting to prevent glare or intrusion onto neighboring areas.
6. Follow the City's standards for exterior lighting.



Façade lighting should enliven the street at night and subtly accentuate signs or architectural features. Interior lighting should be warm and welcoming, activating the street for pedestrians in the evening.



## 2.8. BUILDING SIGNAGE DESIGN

### Design Approach

Promote well-designed building signs that contribute to the village atmosphere, serve as symbols of quality for commercial establishments, and enhance the pedestrian environment.

### Design Guidelines

1. Locate signs in logical and visible areas that relate to the pattern of the façade, and avoid covering architectural features.
2. Design window signs to be in scale to the window opening and maintain pedestrian orientation.
3. Utilize small signs that project perpendicularly from the building to maximize pedestrian visibility and minimize obstruction of architectural features.
4. Avoid multiple signs on single buildings, and consolidate signs whenever possible.
5. Provide attractive, legible street numbers to identify buildings.
6. Signs should be thought of as “artwork” for the street. Incorporate unique lettering presentation and sculptural elements on signage to enhance the village atmosphere.
7. Maintain compatible sign colors with the colors of the building façade.
8. Sign illumination must contribute to the village character by bringing color, light and variety to the streetscape. Illumination that is overly bright or urban in character should be discouraged.

Note: These guidelines summarize the spirit of the Sign Ordinance; all applicants should refer to the Sign Ordinance, Section 25.54 of the Municipal Code, for all applicable regulations.



Signs should be oriented for pedestrians by projecting perpendicularly from the building façade. These should be easily distinguishable and readable for the passing pedestrian.

## 2.9. SECOND STORY RESIDENTIAL

### Design Approach

Encourage residential units located above commercial space in order to add to the vitality of the downtown and contribute to the village atmosphere.

### Design Guidelines

1. Consider the special needs for privacy and security for residential units when designing the site plan and building for mixed-use projects.
2. Residential units may be designed to relate to the street life, or they may be more introspective; perhaps surrounding a private courtyard.
3. Entrances and stairways to residential units should be clearly discernible as private and not open to the public.
4. Use landscaping to soften the transition from commercial to residential uses.
5. Ensure that night lighting does not intrude on residential units.
6. Provide private open spaces for residents where possible, including courtyards and balconies.



Downtown Laguna Beach has several good examples of second story residential units located above commercial space.

## 3.1. LANDSCAPING

### Design Approach

Ensure that landscaping is an important part of overall site and building design, and enhances the downtown public realm.

### Design Guidelines

1. Landscaping may be in the form of planting beds, raised planters, containers or window boxes when they do not intrude in the public right-of-way.
2. Use landscaping to identify entrances, enhance public spaces, define outdoor dining areas, or shade courtyards, and to create a welcoming environment.
3. Use landscaping or art features to screen trash, equipment, storage and loading areas from public view.
4. Where buildings are set back from the sidewalk or alley, landscaping may be used to treat both the setback area and the exposed walls of adjacent buildings. Ensure that trees, planting beds or raised planters that define the sidewalk edge do not impose a hazard to pedestrians.
5. Incorporate benches, kiosks or art features into the landscaping as amenities to pedestrians.
6. Select and maintain landscaping at a scale that is consistent with the building site and the overall pedestrian scale of the downtown.
7. Use drought tolerant, low maintenance vegetation to the extent feasible.
8. Design areas such as courtyards or plazas with a 24-inch box tree, or equivalent, and/or art features for every 200 square feet of paved area.
9. Incorporate vegetation in the form of potted plants, ground cover, vines, and shrubs for 25 percent of the area in spaces designed for pedestrian passage where trees are inappropriate.
10. Consider visual contributions to the public realm through the use of private landscaping.
11. Design with consideration for proper management of stormwater and irrigation.



Landscaping should be used to enhance the aesthetics and sustainability of streets, and also provide comfort and shade for pedestrians.

## 3.2. STREETScape

### Design Approach

Create a streetscape that provides visual interest, promotes activity along the street and fosters a vibrant, pedestrian-friendly atmosphere.

### Design Guidelines

1. Use public art and landscaping along streetscapes to enhance aesthetics.
2. Include opportunities for seating, shade and other elements of comfort for pedestrians along sidewalks.
3. Locate bicycle racks at regular intervals along the street and at key intersections.
4. Identify store entrances and key destinations or routes with special paving such as brick, stone, or tile to provide a visual link with the streetscape.
5. Provide outdoor seating areas for restaurants in appropriate locations.
6. Consult the Cultural Arts Master Plan, wherever appropriate.



Public art should be incorporated into the streetscape wherever possible especially in public spaces where residents and visitors can enjoy it.

### 3.3. COURTYARDS AND PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES

#### Design Approach

Encourage the creation of courtyards, other pedestrian areas and intimate pockets of activity that enrich the pedestrian experience.

#### Design Guidelines

1. Integrate courtyards and other pedestrian areas with the existing pedestrian network.
2. Design courtyards and other pedestrian areas to exhibit the same vitality and complexity of design seen in the existing streetscape.
3. Provide connections with adjacent streets or alleyways to encourage pedestrian use, courtyards and other pedestrian areas when possible.
4. Encourage active use of courtyards for dining, exhibits, refreshments, community gatherings, etc.
5. Enhance courtyards and other gathering spaces with art features, artist-designed benches, sculptures and murals.



Public spaces should utilize seating to encourage informal gathering.

## 3.4. ALLEYWAYS

### Design Approach

Create a well-designed, pedestrian-friendly alleyway network that provides connectivity, safety, and direct access to downtown amenities.

### Design Guidelines

1. Encourage businesses to provide alley entrances to their establishments whenever appropriate.
2. Use planters, awnings and landscaping to identify customer entrances as well as improve the appearance of the alley.
3. Utilize attractive, inviting signage to identify shops at alley entrances.
4. Ensure that buildings backing onto an alley have adequate lighting for security, decorative purposes and pedestrian safety.
5. Encourage the use of windows and display cases along alleyways to attract shoppers.
6. Locate customer entrances separate from service and trash areas.
7. Conceal storage, trash, loading and mechanical equipment located on a pedestrian alley from public view with fences, walls, other screening devices, and/or landscaping.
8. Enhance alley entrances with art features, archways, and landscaping.



Alleyways should be a welcoming pedestrian environment that connect the downtown network of Laguna Beach.

### 3.5. STREET LIGHTING

#### Design Approach

Provide street lighting that creates a safe environment at night and enhances the overall aesthetics of downtown.

#### Design Guidelines

1. Create an inviting pedestrian environment with pedestrian-level lighting of a warm tone.
2. Select new street lighting that is consistent with the traditional lighting style used throughout Laguna Beach.
3. Use nighttime illumination of landscaping, paths, trees or art features to contribute to the safety and beauty of the downtown.



Street lighting should be consistent with existing traditional styles in Downtown Laguna Beach, and should be located close to the ground to provide ample light for pedestrians at night.

# CHAPTER 5

## LAND USE DISTRICTS





## Introduction

Downtown Laguna Beach has distinct geographic areas that contribute to the diversity and character of the City as a whole. The intent of the Downtown Specific Plan is to promote, preserve and enhance these areas by creating special Land Use Districts that provide for the particular land uses and development standards appropriate for each area. These development regulations are intended to implement the goals and policies of the Specific Plan text (Chapter 3). The goals and policies, together with the Downtown Design Guidelines (Chapter 4: Urban Design) and the development standards contained herein, form the development regulations for the Specific Plan area. All other ordinances and sections of the Laguna Beach Municipal Code shall also apply to the Downtown Specific Plan Area, unless such standards are inconsistent with the provisions of the Specific Plan, in which case the Specific Plan shall apply. Title 25 of the Laguna Beach Municipal Code (LBMC) is referenced throughout this Chapter as supplemental development standards. The Specific Plan Area is composed of the following Land Use Districts, which are demarcated on the Land Use Districts Map.

- CBD-1 Resident Serving
- CBD-2 Downtown Commercial
- CBD Visitor Commercial
- CBD Office
- CBD Multiple-Family Residential
- CBD Public Parks
- Arts District
- CBD Central Bluffs

## Land Use Permit Requirements

Table 5-1 indicates the uses allowed within each land use district and the permit required to establish the use, if any, in accordance with LBMC Sections 25.05.020; 25.05.030 and 25.05.035. Any table cell with “--” means that the listed land use is prohibited in that specific land use district. Uses must promote the intent and purpose of the individual districts. The last column in the table (“Specific Use Regulations”) may include reference to additional regulations from the Laguna Beach Municipal Code and/or Downtown Specific Plan that apply to the use. Land uses that are not listed in Table 5-1, or are not shown in a particular land use district are not allowed, except as otherwise deemed by the Planning Commission, and subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit through a public hearing, to be similar to and no more obnoxious or detrimental to the welfare of the neighborhood than any use listed in the specific district.

As market trends and needs change from time to time, it may be beneficial to incentivize or to limit certain uses in the downtown. As such, land use permitting requirements may be changed by City Council Resolution upon recommendation by the City Council or Planning Commission, on an as needed basis per staff/consultant recommendation. Review and changes, if any, to permitting requirements for different land uses may be subject to annual review and approval at noticed public hearings by the Planning Commission and City Council. As applicable, land uses that have been changed through Resolution must continue to adhere to the “Special Findings Required for Certain Uses” section of the Specific Plan due to their potential impact on the character of the downtown.

Land Use Districts

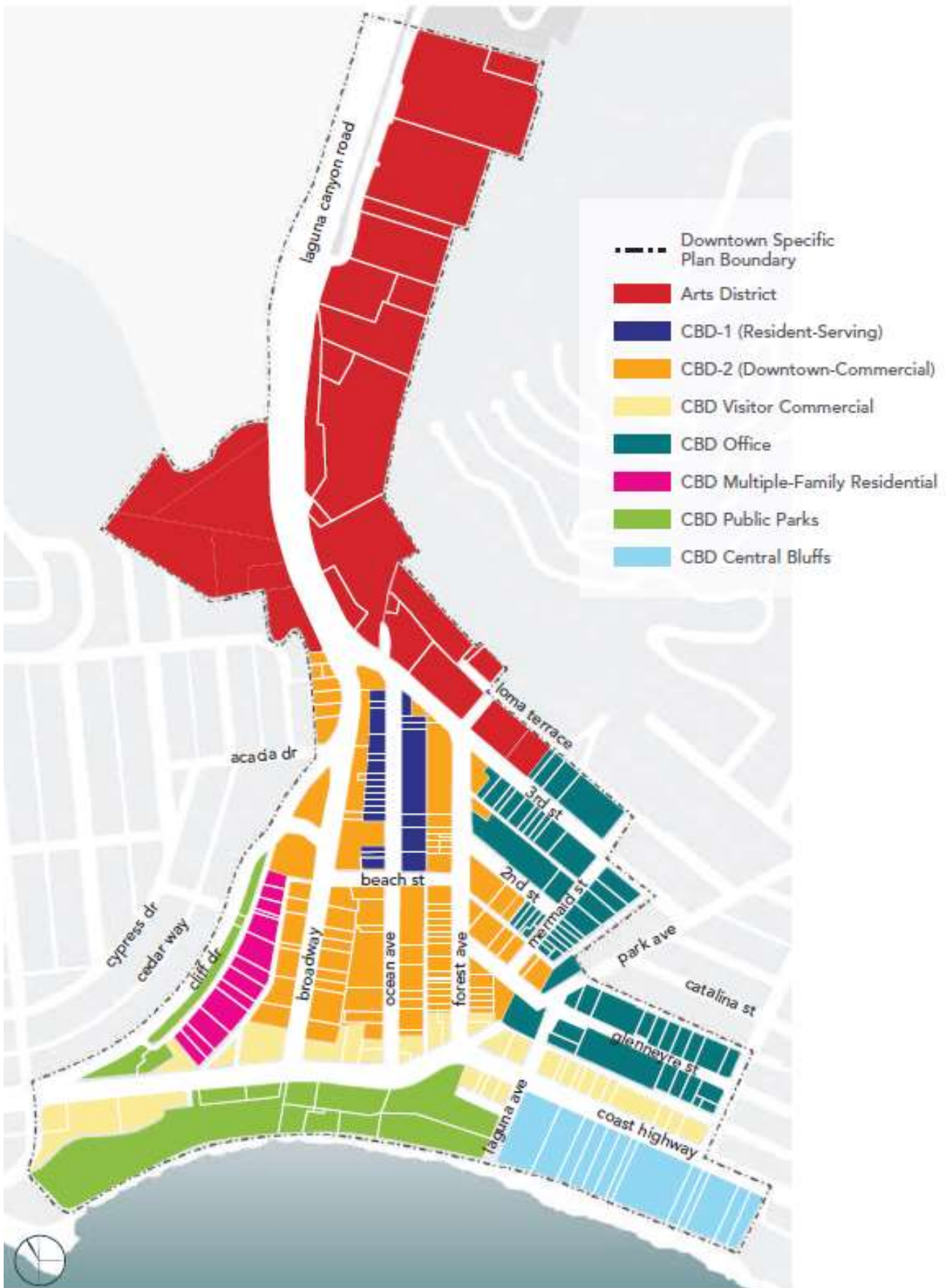


figure 5.1

table 5.1

ALLOWED USES AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS	Downtown Specific Plan Area Land Use Districts Permit Requirements								
	P	CUP	AUP	TUP	--	DA	Permitted by Right Conditional Use Permit (Section 25.05.030) Administrative Use Permit (Section 25.05.020) Temporary Use Permit (Section 25.05.035) Not Allowed Administrative Approval by Director of Community Development (Refer to General Development Standards; Q)		
Land Use	CBD-1	CBD-2	CBD VC	CBD Office	CBD MFR	CBD PP	Arts	CBD CB	Specific Use Regulations
<b>Eating and Drinking Establishments</b>									
With Waiter Service (No Alcohol Service)	P (a)	P (a)	P (a)	CUP (b)	--	--	P (a)	CUP (b)	
With Alcohol Service, Live Entertainment and/or Dancing Ending at or before 10 PM	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	--	--	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	
With Alcohol Service, Live Entertainment and/or Dancing Ending After 10 PM	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	--	--	CUP (b)	CUP (b)	
With Take-out Service	P	P	P	P	--	--	P	P	
Fast Casual (No Alcohol or Waiter Service)	P	P	P	CUP (b)	--	--	P	P	
Delicatessen (No Alcohol Service)	P	P	P	CUP (b)	--	--	P	P	
Ice Cream, Confectioner, Dessert	CUP (b)	P (b)	P (b)	--	--	--	P (b)	CUP (b)	Limit of 15 in DSP
Incidental Food and Beverages within Retail/Service Establishments	P (c)	P (c)	P (c)	CUP (c)	--	--	P (c)	P (c)	
<b>Office Uses</b>									
Business, Professional (Ground Floor)	CUP	CUP	--	P	--	--	CUP	--	
Business, Professional (Second Floor)	P	P	P	P	--	--	P	P	
Medical, Dental, Clinics	P	CUP	CUP	P	--	--	--	--	
<b>Recreation, Education and Public Assembly Uses</b>									
Convalescent Facilities	--	--	--	CUP	CUP	--	--	--	
Cultural Institutions	--	CUP	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP	
Municipally Owned or Operated Buildings	CUP	--	--	CUP	--	P(1)	CUP	--	
Commercial or Community Recreation and Entertainment	CUP	--	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP	
Schools, Public and Private	--	--	--	CUP	--	--	CUP	--	
Movie Theaters, with or without dine-in service and alcoholic beverages	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
<b>Residential Uses</b>									
Residential (2)	P	P	CUP	P	P	--	--	--	DSP Ch. 5
Artists' Work/Live	CUP	CUP	--	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP	LBMC Ch. 25.16
Guest Houses, Guest Rooms	--	--	--	--	P	--	--	--	LBMC §25.14.008
<b>Retail Uses</b>									
Art Galleries (3)	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Food, Retail (4)	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Market, Grocery, and Health Food Stores (5)	P	P	--	CUP	--	--	P	--	
Retail Supply Stores (6)	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Apparel, Shoes (Excluding 35%+ T-Shirt SKU's)	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Electronics, Computers, etc.	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Home Furnishings and Accessories	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Jewelry and Accessories	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Optics Stores (Prescription glasses, sunglasses, etc.)	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Specialty Retail (No sale of alcohol or cannabis-related items)	P (d)	P (d)	P (d)	CUP (d)	--	--	P(d)	P(d)	
Recreation, Sporting Goods	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P	
Alcohol Sales (off-sale)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP	

- (a) Subject to approval by Director of Community Development.
- (b) Subject to conditions specific only to hours of operation, and other operational issues, not menu.
- (c) Incidental complimentary food and non-alcoholic beverages within apparel stores, jewelry stores, and art galleries aimed at existing in-store customers, not to exceed 3 percent of total gross leasable area. Incidental complimentary food and non-alcoholic and alcoholic beverages within beauty salons and barber shops aimed at existing in-store customers, not to exceed 2% of total gross leasable area. One alcoholic drink per client. Per AB-1322 - no license or permit required.
- (d) Including, but not limited to books/magazines, collectibles, florists, hobbies, luggage and leather goods, musical instruments, stationary, toys/games.
- (1) Park buildings and facilities, owned or operated by a governmental agency, whose function enhances the public's enjoyment of the public park.
- (2) Excluding timeshares and subject to standards outlined in Chapter 5 of the Downtown Specific Plan.
- (3) A substantial portion of the merchandise shall be original or numbered, limited edition artwork.
- (4) Pre-packaged and/or takeout for off-site consumption only with no on-site seating. May include the sale of alcohol for off-site consumption only; however, shall not be allowed within 200 yards of Main Beach.
- (5) The sale or dispensing of alcoholic beverages for off-premises consumption in establishments 5,000 square feet or less in size or sell alcoholic beverages as its principal business shall be prohibited within 200 yards of Main Beach.
- (6) Including, but not limited to yardage, hardware, auto parts, plumbing, appliances, paint and glass, garden supplies, art supplies, office supplies, etc., with no open storage of materials and equipment.

table 5.1 (continued)

ALLOWED USES AND PERMIT REQUIREMENTS	Downtown Specific Plan Area Land Use Districts Permit Requirements									
	P	Permitted by Right								
	CUP	Conditional Use Permit (Section 25.05.030)								
	AUP	Administrative Use Permit (Section 25.05.020)								
	TUP	Temporary Use Permit (Section 25.05.035)								
	--	Not Allowed								
	DA	Administrative Approval by Director of Community Development (Refer to General Development Standards; Q)								
Land Use	CBD-1	CBD-2	CBD VC	CBD Office	CBD MFR	CBD PP	Arts	CBD CB	Specific Use Regulations	
<b>Retail Uses (Continued)</b>										
T-Shirt Stores (35%+ SKU's devoted to t-shirts, related novelty items)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP		
Temporary "Pop-Up" Stores	TUP (f)	TUP (f)	TUP (f)	CUP	--	--	TUP (f)	TUP (f)		
Thrift, Consignment	P	CUP	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP		
Wine Tasting Shops	P	P	CUP	CUP	--	--	P	CUP		
Visitor-Oriented Gifts, Souvenirs (7)	--	CUP	CUP	--	--	--	CUP	CUP		
Branded Stores	P (g)	P (g)	P (g)	CUP (g)	--	--	P (g)	P(g)	Limit of 20 in DSP	
<b>Service Uses</b>										
Animal Grooming	CUP	CUP	--	--	--	--	--	--		
Artists' Studios (8)	P	P	P	P	--	--	P	P		
Child Care	--	--	--	--	P	--	--	--	LBMC §25.08.006	
Dry Cleaning, Laundry Facilities	CUP	CUP	--	CUP	--	--	--	--		
Family Day Care, Large	--	--	--	--	AUP	--	--	--	LBMC §25.10.005	
Financial Institutions	P	P	CUP	P	--	--	CUP	CUP		
Massage Establishments	CUP	CUP	--	CUP	--	--	--	CUP	LBMC Ch. 5.61	
Music Studios (9)	P	P	P	CUP	--	--	P	P		
Packaging and Postal Services	P	P	--	P	--	--	--	--		
Pharmacies	P	P	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP		
Printing, Duplicating Services	P	CUP	--	P	--	--	CUP	--		
Fitness (Yoga, Pilates, Boxing, Barre, Spin, etc.)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP		
Hair Salons, Barbers, Nail/Skin Care Salons, Spas	P	P	P	P	--	--	P	P		
Personal Services – Not Listed Above (10)	P	P	CUP	P	--	--	CUP	P		
<b>Special Events</b>										
Temporary Uses (11)	TUP	TUP	TUP	TUP	--	TUP	TUP	TUP	LBMC §25.05.035	
<b>Transportation and Communication Uses</b>										
Parking Facilities	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP	LBMC Ch. 25.52	
Wireless Communication Facilities	AUP/ CUP	AUP/ CUP	AUP/ CUP	AUP/ CUP	AUP/ CUP	AUP/ CUP	AUP/ CUP	AUP/ CUP	LBMC Ch. 25.55	
<b>Visitor Accommodations</b>										
Bed and Breakfast Inns (12)	--	--	--	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	LBMC Ch. 25.22	
Hotels and Motels	--	--	CUP	--	--	--	CUP	CUP		
Short-Term Lodging Units (13)	AUP	AUP	AUP	AUP	--	--	--	AUP	LBMC Ch. 25.23	
<b>Other Uses</b>										
Commercial Home Occupations	CUP	CUP	CUP	P	--	--	CUP	--	LBMC §25.08.016	
Home Occupations	P	P	P	P	P	--	P	P	LBMC §25.08.016	
Dedicated Public Facility (14)	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P		
Mixed-Use with Residential on Second Floor	CUP	CUP	CUP	P	--	--	--	--	DSP Ch. 5	
Outdoor Display	DA	DA	DA	DA	--	--	DA	DA	DSP Ch. 5	
Planned Integrated Developments	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	CUP	DSP Ch. 5	
Other Uses (15)	CUP	CUP	CUP	CUP	--	--	CUP	CUP		

(f) Exception: Special Temporary Use Permit for DSP area subject to approval by Director of Community Development. Temporary "Pop-Up" stores allowed for up to 90 days.

(g) Branded Stores in any of the Retail Use categories listed in Table 5-1. Merchandise mix must be comparable to most of the applicant's other stores. Store design and architecture must reflect the unique character of Laguna Beach. Limit of 20 total combined branded retail stores within the Downtown Specific Plan Area.

(7) Merchandise bearing words or images representing local place names or other visitor destinations, local events, etc.

(8) Including, but not limited to, manufacturing, assembling, compounding or treating of ceramics, jewelry, wood, bone, canvas, cloth, felt, glass, leather, paper, plastics, textiles and yarn.

(9) Including sale and supplies.

(10) Including tailoring, shoe repair, optometry, interior design, financial services, and locksmith. All others require a CUP.

(11) One-time, seasonal, or short duration uses.

(12) Provided inn is located in a structure on the City's Historic Register.

(13) Units committed to senior, special needs and/or affordable housing are not eligible for short-term housing.

(14) Parks, walkways, trails, and parklets.

(15) Other uses the Planning Commission deems, after conducting a public hearing, to be similar to and no more obnoxious or detrimental to the welfare of the neighborhood than any use listed in Table 5-1.

## **CBD-1 RESIDENT SERVING**

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### **Intent and Purpose**

Upper Ocean Avenue is predominantly developed with a wide range of service-oriented businesses such as shoe repair, upholstery, personal service shops, and art supplies, all of which cater to the needs of Laguna Beach residents. Businesses with a service orientation should be encouraged to locate in this area in order to continue and increase the availability of such uses in the community.

### **Property Development Standards**

See the General Development Standards Section of this Specific Plan.

## **CBD-2 DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL**

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### **Intent and Purpose**

A major portion of the downtown provides a balance of resident- and visitor-serving businesses. Preservation of this balance will ensure an economically viable downtown attractive to residents, as well as visitors. The intent and purpose of this District is to maintain a proper mix of resident- and visitor-serving businesses.

### **Property Development Standards**

See the General Development Standards Section of this Specific Plan.

## **CBD VISITOR COMMERCIAL**

---

### **Intent and Purpose**

Coast Highway between Cliff Drive and Legion Street is an area with pronounced visibility and high pedestrian activity generated by downtown and beach visitors. Land use in this area should reflect a diverse range of visitor-serving uses.

### **Property Development Standards**

See the General Development Standards Section of this Specific Plan.

## CBD OFFICE

### Intent and Purpose

Sections of Forest Avenue, Broadway/Laguna Canyon Road, Second, Third, Mermaid and Glenneyre Streets are characterized by numerous civic, office and professional uses which primarily serve the needs of Laguna Beach residents. Maintaining the office and community orientation of the area is important since it is likely to experience increased pressure from visitor-serving businesses. This District is intended to ensure the continued availability of institutional, medical, dental, law and other professional services offered within the downtown area while allowing for limited residential uses and retail activities.

### Property Development Standards

The following property development standards shall apply to all land and structures in this District. See the General Development Standards Section of this Specific Plan for additional provisions.

#### A. Building Setback and Yard Area Standards.

1. *Front yards. A minimum 5-foot front setback shall be provided. Said setback shall be used for landscaping, pedestrian access or other pedestrian amenities accessible to the general public.*
2. *Side yards. One side yard setback of no less than five feet shall be provided, however, to encourage interest and relief in the building elevation, the side yard may be reduced to three feet for the rear half of the side yard.*
3. *Rear yards. No requirement; however, refer to LBMC Section 25.53.004(C) for information relative to vehicular access requirements.*
4. *For residential uses, front, side and rear yard setbacks shall be provided in accordance with LBMC Section 25.12.008 (C) (1-4), except for projects that involve City participation and that provide housing for seniors, low-income and/or disabled individuals.*

**B. Access.** For properties adjacent to Loma Terrace, any vehicular access shall be encouraged to be taken from Loma Terrace.

**C. Building Height.** Building height shall be as specified in the General Development Standards section of the Downtown Specific Plan except for the following:

#### 1. Second-Story Exception.

*Subject to a conditional use permit, properties located in the CBD Office District may be allowed an exception for a second floor addition, provided the second floor addition is used for long-term low-income, housing restricted to City employees, senior citizen, housing for the disabled, or business and professional offices exclusive of medical or dental offices. The maximum height of such a building (per the Building Height definition), including roof, chimneys, vents, mechanical equipment, mechanical enclosures, elevator shafts, stairways and other such structural elements required for the operation of the building, shall be 24 feet. (See also "Special Finding, Second-Story Exceptions.")*

#### 2. Exception to Allow Additional Building Height for Civic-Related Uses.

*Exceptions to allow additional building height for civic-related uses may be approved by the Planning Commission. Approval requires a Conditional Use Permit that makes all of the following findings in addition to those otherwise required by LBMC Title 25:*

- a. *The project is intended for civic-related uses.*
- b. *The project contributes to a diversity of building styles and heights in the CBD Office District.*
- c. *The project emphasizes the pedestrian orientation and village character that has been established in the downtown.*
- d. *The building envelope does not exceed thirty-six (36) feet in elevation at its highest point as measured from existing grade and including all roof elements and mechanical features that meet the goals of the CBD Office District.*

## CBD MULTIPLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL

### Intent and Purpose

The area of Lower Cliff Drive is predominantly developed with multiple-family dwellings that supply the community with essential rental housing. Proximity of this residential District to the beach and downtown area promotes pedestrian activity in the Central Business District. This District is intended to preserve the existing high-density residential uses in the area immediately south of Jahraus Park.

### Property Development Standards

Except as otherwise provided herein, the provisions of LBMC Section 25.14.008 shall apply.

**A. Density Bonus.** Density may be provided at the rate of 1000 square feet of lot area per unit for residential units, which are committed to long-term low-income, senior citizen and/or disabled housing, i.e., as defined under the Federal Government Section 8 Housing Program or its equivalent.

## CBD PUBLIC PARKS

### Intent and Purpose

Main Beach and Jahraus Parks are valuable community amenities that provide important recreation opportunities to Laguna Beach. These amenities are intended to be protected, preserved and maintained by the provisions set forth in this District.

### Property Development Standards

The following property development standards shall apply to all land and structures in this District.

#### A. Minimum Lot Dimensions

No requirement

#### B. Building Setback, Height, and Yard Area Standards

Building setbacks, building height, site coverage and landscaping requirements shall be determined for each development project, and shall be consistent with the urban design guidelines specified in Chapter 4: Urban Design of this Specific Plan.

## ARTS DISTRICT

### Intent and Purpose

The Arts District is a cultural center of the community that provides a focus on arts related uses, and serves as a gateway to the Downtown. The District will link the art festival areas with the downtown shopping area through a mix of cultural, social, innovative and recreational facilities and activities. The purpose of this area is to nurture a culture of creativity and to remain an authentic destination that celebrates the arts. The land use emphasis within this District is on resident- and visitor-serving uses that embrace creative education, cultural non-profits, artists and designers, performers, innovators, and entrepreneurs. The development of affordable work/live housing and engaging, public open spaces is encouraged in order to gather and experience the creative, open-minded artist community.

### Design Criteria

To ensure that future development and any expansion of existing structures advance the goals of the Arts District, all development proposals shall be subject to the following Arts District performance criteria

1. Building scale and design relate to the natural topography and development of the site would result in minimal alteration of natural landforms.
2. Building design and materials are of the highest quality and reflect the cultural arts focus of the district.
3. Development includes public walkways that link to other art related development in the District.
4. Pedestrian amenities, such as benches, display areas for public art, landscaping, water features, pocket parks and outdoor areas that can accommodate cultural, social and recreational activities, are incorporated into the project design.
5. Landscaping emphasizes native California and/or drought tolerant species and other compatible plant materials.

### Property Development Standards:

The following property development standards shall apply to all land and structures in this District. Height, story and parking exceptions for private or public projects may be allowed if determined by the City that the project confers desirable public benefits. The intent of these exceptions is to allow future development of public/private partnership projects compatible with the goals of the Arts District. See the General Development Standards Section of this Specific Plan for additional provisions.

#### A. Lot Area and Dimension Standards

Refer to General Development Standards.

#### B. Building Setback and Yard Area Standards

At a minimum, a 5-foot landscaped buffer adjacent to the flood control channel or frontage road, except for necessary driveways and pedestrian access, shall be provided.



### **C. Building Height**

Building height shall be as specified in the General Development Standard Section of the Downtown Specific Plan except for the following:

*1. Exception to Allow Additional Building Height for Desirable Public Benefit Uses. Exceptions to allow additional building height may be approved by the Planning Commission. Approval requires a Conditional Use Permit that makes all of the following findings in addition to those otherwise required by LBMC Title 25:*

- a) The project includes desirable public benefit uses including, but not limited to, student housing for students enrolled in an accredited four-year art college within the City, affordable artist housing and work space, significant arts-related uses, parking garages and/or public buildings that meet the intent of the Arts District;*
- b) The project is designed and sited to minimize massing adjacent to Laguna Canyon Road by stepping taller portions of buildings away from the road; and it uses the Laguna Canyon hillside to minimize the visual perception of the structure's height and mass;*
- c) The project contributes to a diversity of building styles and heights in the Arts District;*
- d) The project emphasizes the pedestrian orientation and village character that has been established in the Central Business District; and*
- e) The building envelope does not exceed thirty-six (36) feet in elevation at its highest point as measured from existing grade and including all roof elements and mechanical features that meet the goals of the Arts District.*

### **D. Coverage and Open Land Area Requirement**

The unique nature of the hillsides in this District requires natural slopes of 45 percent or greater shall be left open and maintained with natural landscaping. During the design review process, additional landscaping or clearing may be required for erosion control or fire protection, or to better integrate the uses on the site with the natural vegetation.

### **E. Access and Improvement Standards**

The provisions of LBMC Chapter 25.53 shall apply.

## CBD CENTRAL BLUFFS

### Intent and Purpose

The intent and purpose of the Central Bluffs District is to promote pedestrian-scale and to maintain a balance of tourist-oriented businesses and artists' uses which enhance the natural setting of the bluffs and contribute to the identity of Laguna Beach. The adaptive reuse of existing structures is encouraged, especially for structures listed on the City's Historic Register. This Land Use District is intended to provide the necessary tools to ensure that future development proposals perpetuate the unique character and orientation of the Central Bluffs.

In order to ensure that future development and any expansion of existing structures complies with applicable policies and guidelines, all development proposals shall be subject to the following special planning and design criteria:

### Special Planning and Design Criteria

#### 1. Building Scale and Design

- a) Any expansion or new development shall preserve and enhance the character and scale of the Central Bluffs by incorporating pedestrian-scale elements of design.*
- b) Buildings shall be articulated along the Coast Highway frontage to provide interest and relief to the streetscape as well as to create opportunity for pedestrian-oriented spaces (such as open-air seating, mini-parks, plazas and entrances, sculptures, landscaped planters, etc.).*
- c) Buildings shall be designed in a manner that is compatible to and integrated with natural topographic features.*
- d) Development shall enhance the pedestrian scale and orientation of the Central Bluffs through maximization of open space for public use.*

#### 2. View Preservation

- a) Any expansion or new development shall be sensitive to maximizing public views of both the ocean and the bluffs.*
- b) As a condition of approval for new building construction, the City shall consider the dedication of open space easements, the construction of view platforms or other view preserving or view enhancing measures.*

### 3. Natural Hazards and Coastal Land Feature Preservation

- a) *Any expansion or new development shall balance design considerations and aesthetics with environmental constraints.*
- b) *New construction on bluff faces and sandy portions of the beach shall be limited to public improvements related to access, view platforms and emergency repair work.*
- c) *All areas oceanward of and including the 25-foot pedestrian easement shall be dedicated to the City as a condition of development as defined in Section 25.53 of the Municipal Code.*
- d) *To achieve water conservation goals and to minimize erosion-related impacts to the bluffs, drought-tolerant plants and water-efficient irrigation systems shall be used.*
- e) *The City shall require the installation of rain gutters and other water transport devices as a condition of approval on blufftop development in order to convey water to the street (away from the bluff side). All water shall be conveyed to the base of the bluff by means of non-erosive devices when conveyance to the street is determined to be impractical.*
- f) *Any coastal land protective devices shall be reviewed for consistency with the Shoreline Protection Guidelines.*
- g) *Design solutions should require minimal alteration of natural landforms.*
- h) *Any proposed development shall preserve existing mature trees and other forms of vegetation to the greatest extent feasible.*

### 4. Pedestrian Access/Orientation

- a) *Any expansion or new development shall ensure the continuation and enhancement of the pedestrian scale and orientation of the Central Bluffs.*
- b) *The 25-foot easement may be used for public outdoor dining in conjunction with approved restaurants subject to conditional use permit approval, provided that pedestrian movement is not impeded.*
- c) *The City shall consider the suitability of vertical public access to the beach as part of any new construction or where expansion of an existing structure results in the remodel or addition of fifty percent or more of the original square footage of the building.*
- d) *The pedestrian experience shall be enhanced by utilizing open spaces for benches, art features, landscaping and mini-parks.*
- e) *Outdoor activities that enhance pedestrian interest and enjoyment shall be encouraged.*

## 5. Visitor-Serving Uses

- a) *When redevelopment is proposed, businesses and uses which enhance the character of the Central Bluffs and which support a tourist orientation shall be encouraged.*
- b) *Effort shall be made to attract long-term, destination-oriented tourists on a year-round basis.*

## 6. Historic Preservation and Infill Development

- a) *Any expansion or remodeling shall preserve the original architectural integrity of historically significant buildings.*
- b) *The demolition of historically significant structures shall be discouraged.*
- c) *Any property owner of a historic structure shall be encouraged to apply for the City's Historic Register so that incentives such as parking reductions, building and planning application fee waivers and setback flexibility may be considered.*
- d) *Any proposed expansion or remodel of a historic structure shall be consistent with the guidelines for rehabilitation found within the Historic Preservation Ordinance.*
- e) *Any proposed intensification that negatively impacts the historical character and/or affects the architectural integrity of existing buildings shall be discouraged.*

## Property Development Standards

The General Provisions of the Downtown Specific Plan shall apply to all land and structures located in this District unless otherwise indicated below.

### A. Lot Area and Dimension Standards.

Refer to General Development Standards. Exception: The merging of parcels which results in parcels larger than 5,000 square feet may be allowed when a Planned Integrated Development is proposed in the Central Bluffs District.

### B. Building Setback and Yard Area Standards

1. *Front Yard. See dedication requirements for sidewalk improvements along Pacific Coast Highway.*
2. *Side Yards. Side yards shall be determined on a case-by-case basis and shall be consistent with the Special Planning and Design Criteria established herein.*
3. *Rear Yard. See G, Land Dedication Requirements.*
4. *Structures placed on the Historic Register may be eligible for setback flexibility as provided in the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.*

### C. Open Space and Landscaping

Open space and landscaping shall be determined on a case-by-case basis in accordance with Urban Design Guidelines and applicable policies of the Downtown Specific Plan.

### D. Building Height Standards

Building height shall be as specified in the General Development Standard Section of the Downtown Specific Plan.

### E. Fences & Walls

Fencing and/or walls shall be subject to Planning Commission Design Review approval and shall not be allowed if existing views of the Pacific Ocean from South Coast Highway are reduced.

### F. Access and Improvement Standards

The provisions of LBMC Chapter 25.53 shall apply, except as modified in this Specific Plan.

1. *On-Site Turnaround. Each lot shall have on-site turnaround capability. Exception: Planned Integrated Developments need not comply with this provision.*
2. *Driveway Access. Property under contiguous ownership may be permitted one driveway per 300feet of street frontage. Such driveway shall not exceed 20 feet in width unless otherwise required for safety reasons, except where abutting a building.*

### G. Parking

The provisions of LBMC Chapter 25.52 shall apply, except as described below or as specified in the General Development Standards Section of this Specific Plan:

1. *Parking Incentives.*
  - a) *Parking credit may be available to sidewalk cafes for outdoor seating, roof deck dining and view platforms open to the public. Outdoor seating should contribute positively to the downtown atmosphere and should be available to the general public (rather than being restricted to restaurant customers). Credit may include, but shall not be limited to reduced requirements for additional parking and may be granted on a temporary or seasonal basis. To receive parking credits, the applicant may be required to participate in a funding program for seasonal expanded tram service.*
  - b) *Parking reductions are available to structures placed on the City's Historic Register. Refer to LBMC Chapter 25.45 (Historic Preservation) for specific details.*
2. *Parking Structures. Tuck-under parking shall be prohibited and all parking structures shall be designed to provide consistency with the urban design guidelines pertaining to parking as specified in Chapter 4: Urban Design of this Specific Plan.*

## H. Land Dedication Requirements

This planning area has a distinctive public use orientation and a visitor-serving nature as identified in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. Local experience has shown that such activities are normally associated with heavy pedestrian traffic and have the potential for accelerating seacliff and bluff erosion unless they are properly controlled and mitigated.

The seacliffs along the Central Bluffs generally consist of erosion-prone, relatively soft sandstone structures. Lateral support is being removed by episodic wave-induced bluff retreat, and the remaining cliffs are subject to additional failure from landslides and rockfalls. This erosion rate could be increased by uncontrolled foot traffic and landscape irrigation runoff.

The bluffs consist of a steep, yet traversable, slope that invites foot traffic. These well-traveled paths accelerate erosion and tend to channel runoff into destructive crevasses. If left unchecked, public use may result in eventual health and safety problems by virtue of accelerated seacliff retreat and erosion.

The long-range planning goals, as discussed in the Open Space Element of the City's General Plan, include enhancement of pedestrian circulation as well as protection of environmentally sensitive bluffs. This can best be accomplished by redirecting pedestrian access to improved walkways, thereby retarding the rate of erosion failure.

The dedication of land for bluff preservation purposes is essential if the long-range planning goals of enhanced pedestrian access and environmentally sensitive bluff protection are to be realized. While allowing for appropriate redevelopment, the goals and policies established for this Land Use District are designed to protect the public's historical use of the area, enhance future pedestrian use and minimize bluff erosion rates over the long term. In an effort to accomplish and facilitate these goals and objectives, the following dedications shall be required whenever feasible and to the maximum extent allowed by State law:

1. *Expansions of existing structures or any new development (as defined in LBMC Chapter 25.53) shall be required to dedicate a 25-foot pedestrian access easement as described on the attached map (figure 5.2). This easement may be used for outdoor dining in conjunction with approved restaurants and other pedestrian-related activities as permitted within this Land Use District.*
2. *Expansions of existing structures or any new development (as defined in LBMC Chapter 25.53) shall be required to dedicate a portion of the property adjacent to South Coast Highway in order to provide for a ten-foot wide sidewalk.*
3. *A dedication for public access and recreational purposes shall be required for all land situated on the sandy portion of the beach as a condition of approval for new building construction, additions to buildings, variances or subdivisions on oceanfront property.*

4. A dedication of development rights shall be required for all land situated between the sandy portion of the beach and the oceanward edge of the required pedestrian easement as a condition of approval for new building construction, additions to buildings, variances or subdivisions on oceanfront property.

### **I. Flexible Property Development Standards for Planned Integrated Developments**

Notwithstanding the aforementioned standards, flexible property development standards may be negotiated as specified below for Planned Integrated Developments when the City determines that sufficient public benefit will be realized from the proposed development.

1. *If a proposed Planned Integrated Development incorporates amenities and/or benefits to the City beyond those required by the property development standards, then the City may consider and approve changes to certain property development standards as specified below.*

*Examples of amenities or benefits to the City may include, but are not limited to the following:*

- a) The incorporation of additional open space beyond that required in the development standards, such as additional public accessways and/or view corridors*
- b) The establishment of public art areas or sculpture gardens beyond that required by LBMC Chapter 1.09 (Art in Public Places)*
- c) The inclusion of significant public amenities accessible to the public such as fountains, chairs, benches, approved lighting, landscaping and rooftop view areas*
- d) The dedication of property for use as a public park*

2. *If a proposed Planned Integrated Development incorporates significant amenities or benefits, including, but not limited to the above, then the City may consider some or all of the following incentives:*

- a) Bluff top pedestrian access easement flexibility. The bluff top pedestrian access easement may be modified if topography warrants. However, in no instance shall the minimum width of the easement be less than fifteen feet and in no case shall development either create or contribute to erosion problems or geologic instability of the site or surrounding areas or inhibit public access. Design solutions shall in no case include destruction of cliffs and bluffs by excavation or other means.*
- b) Additional building height exception. Additional building height may be permitted subject to approval of a Conditional Use Permit; however, in no instance shall the maximum building height exceed twenty-four feet above the curb elevation or from existing grade. Height variations shall be used to protect coastal views and to minimize building mass and bulk.*

*c) Side yard setback redistribution. The side yard setback requirements may be modified to allow for a “zero” setback on one side if the opposite side is increased to equal the size of the two required yards.*

*d) Outdoor dining facilities such as furniture located on roof decks may be allowed to exceed the maximum building height by not more than eight feet, subject to Planning Commission Design Review approval.*

*e) The City Council may consider reducing permit and/or development fees.*

**J. Demolition of Structures located within required easements**

As a condition of approval for expansions or remodels (as established in LBMC Chapter 25.53) the City shall require the demolition of any encroachments within dedicated easements.

**K. Concept Review**

All new development and expansions shall be required to submit plans and participate in the Concept Review process.



**Description of Dedication Baseline**

A strip of land twenty-five (25) feet in width measured easterly from the following baseline:

Commencing at a point on the most westerly corner of Lot 129 of the Laguna Beach Tract as per map thereof recorded in Book 1, Page 78 of Miscellaneous Record Maps, in the Office of the County Recorder of Los Angeles County, California; thence southeasterly along the southwesterly line of Lot 129 to the most southerly corner thereof; thence northeasterly 40 feet along the southeasterly line of Lot 129 to a point, said point being distant 21.7 feet southwesterly from the most westerly corner of Lot 1 of the Laguna Beach Tract; thence southeasterly to the most westerly corner of Lot 5, Laguna Beach Tract; thence southeasterly along the westerly line of Lot 5 to the most westerly corner of Lot 6; thence southeasterly to a point 25 feet distant westerly of Lot 9 measured along the southwesterly prolongation of the northwesterly line of Lot 9; thence southeasterly to a point 25 feet distant westerly of Lot 10 measured along the southwesterly prolongation of the northwesterly line of Lot 10; thence southeasterly to a point 25 feet distant westerly of Lot 11 measured along the southwesterly prolongation of the northwesterly line of Lot 11; thence southeasterly to a point 25 feet distant westerly of Lot 12 measured along the southwesterly prolongation of the northwesterly line of Lot 12; thence southeasterly to the most southerly corner of Lot 13.

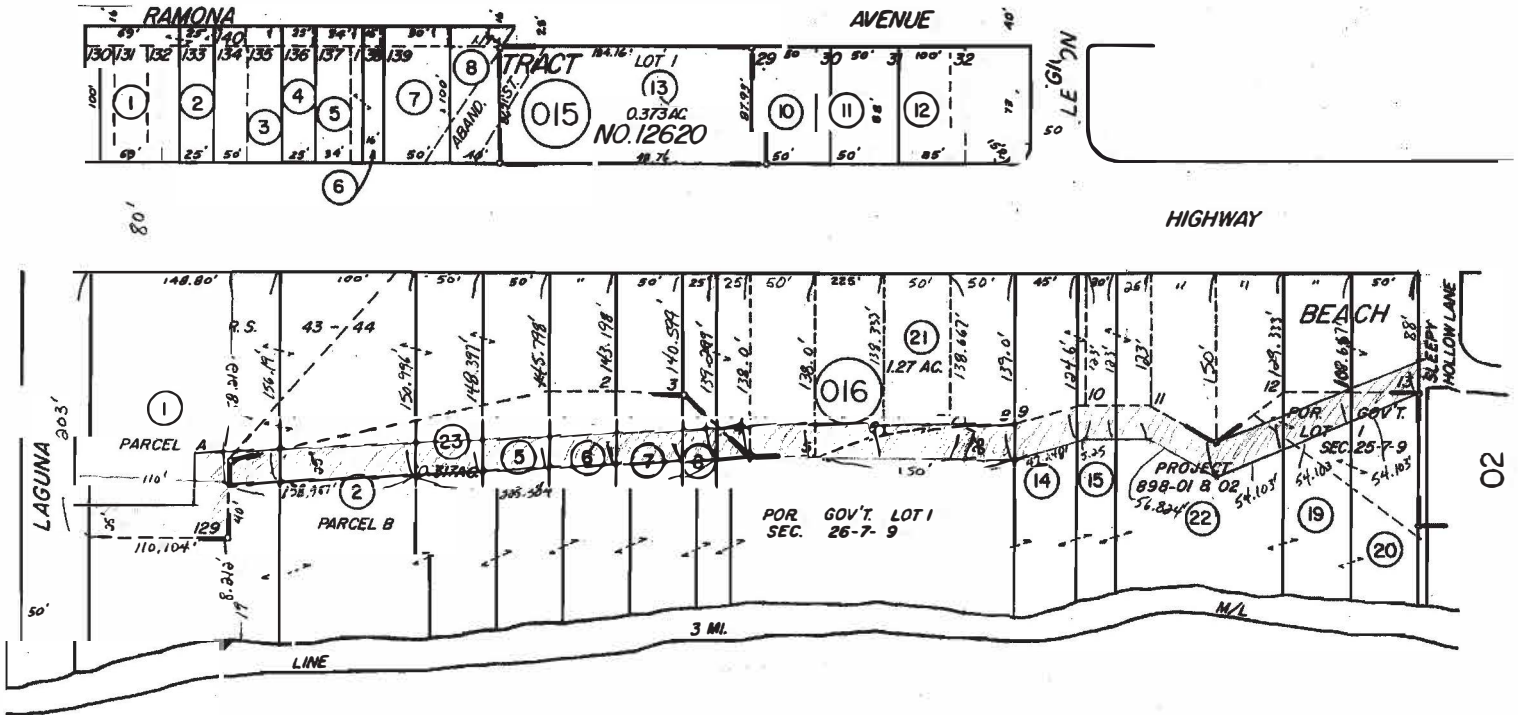


figure 5.2

**Map of Dedication Baseline**

This line follows either the edge of the sea cliff, the projection of the edge of the sea cliff prior to the landslide of the 1920's or is an extension of the Main Beach boardwalk.

## GENERAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

**The following standards shall apply to all Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Districts:**

### A. Lot Area and Dimension Standards

Parcels shall not be merged together for development purposes that exceed 5,000 square feet except for City-ownership projects; but development may occur on existing parcels that are in excess of 5,000 square feet.

### B. Building Setback and Yard Area Standards

Street corner lots shall provide a corner setback. The setback shall be a diagonal line drawn between two points on the street frontage property lines, where each point is 10 feet distant from the corner or an equivalent setback as approved by the Planning Commission.

### C. Open Space and Landscaping

Open space and landscaping shall be provided in accordance with the following requirements:

*1. Projects which require Design Review approval by the Planning Commission, and which result in an expansion of building square footage, or which result in remodeling, repair or reconstruction of existing structures exceeding \$10,000 in valuation of such work, may require landscaping which is deemed by the Planning Commission to be consistent with Chapter 4: Urban Design of this Specific Plan.*

*Landscaping requirements shall include automatic irrigation systems and may also apply to existing surface parking areas.*

*2. All projects for new development and/or expansions to create more than 10 percent additional floor area shall provide open space and landscaping according to the following provisions:*

*a) Lots less than 2,500 square feet*

*Provide ground to sky open space equal to 10 percent of the total lot area.*

*b) Lots greater than 2,500 square feet*

*Provide open space equal to 25 percent of the total gross floor area. Such open space shall be open to the sky and may be provided at both ground and upper levels. Open space calculations may include landscaping, courtyards, pocket parks, decks and other similar elements as approved by the Design Review Board. A minimum of 40 percent of the open space area shall be vegetated.*

*c) To qualify as open space for commercial development, courtyards, plazas and other pedestrian spaces must be open to the public and directly accessible from the public right-of-way. Landscaped areas must be visually or physically accessible from the public right-of-way.*

#### **D. Additional Yard Area, Building Setback, Open Space and Coverage Standards**

1. *The provisions of LBMC 25.50 shall apply except as modified in this Specific Plan.*
2. *Where side or rear lot lines abut a different zone, the minimum setback requirement of the abutting zone shall apply.*
3. *Yard area, building setback, open space and coverage standards may be modified by the Planning Commission when applied to mixed-use residential/commercial development.*

#### **E. Building Height Standards**

A variety of building heights currently contributes to the unique character of the downtown. Many existing buildings are in excess of the following height standards and would be classified nonconforming. The mix of these nonconforming structures along with new construction that conforms to the height standards will preserve the diversity of building heights that presently exists in the downtown. Therefore, in order to protect the heritage and existing scale and character of the downtown with its diversity of building heights; preserve public views of the beach, ocean and hillsides; and maintain sufficient light, air and solar access to the streetscape, the following building height standards shall apply:

##### **1. Building Height.**

*Building height (per the Building Height definition in Municipal Code Section 25.08.016) shall not exceed 12 feet and 1 floor. Notwithstanding the Building Height definition Exception (4), The maximum height, including roof, chimney, vents, mechanical equipment, mechanical enclosures, elevator shafts, stairways and other such structural elements required for the operation of the building shall not exceed an additional six (6) feet if approved by the design review authority. Compensatory height exceptions may be granted for those properties where the first habitable level must be raised above the floodplain elevation.*

##### **2. Nonconforming Building, Structure or Improvement.**

*Existing buildings that exceed the allowable height (as set forth herein this section) are considered legal, nonconforming. Nonconforming structures shall be allowed to add 10 percent of the original gross floor area or 100 square feet, whichever is less, as long as said addition does not violate the existing building or maximum height envelope. Projects are subject to Design Review and the Design Review Criteria as set forth in LBMC Section 25.05.040.*

**F. Parapet Walls**

Parapet walls shall not be permitted, unless the Planning Commission determines that use of a parapet wall(s) would not reduce the compatibility of the project with the site and adjacent properties.

**G. Enclosed Uses**

All permitted or conditional uses, except as otherwise authorized by the Planning Commission, shall be conducted entirely within an enclosed building.

**H. Residential Uses**

Residential uses (excluding timeshares) are subject to the following density standards:

1. *There shall be no more than one dwelling unit for each 2,000 square feet of lot area allowed in the CBD-1 Resident Serving, CBD-2 Downtown Commercial and CBD-Office Districts, except for the following:*
  - a) *Historically significant houses which are listed on the City's historic register may add residential units at a density of one unit per 1,000 square feet of lot area, provided the historic structure is preserved. Residential density credits shall be based on the lot size on which the structure is located and shall not include adjoining parcels or lots under the same ownership; these residential density credits shall not apply if the historically significant buildings demolished or significantly altered.*
  - b) *Residential units located in the CBD-Office District where at least 50% of the units are committed to long-term low-income, senior citizen and/or disabled housing may be provided at a density of one unit per 1,000 square feet of lot area.*
2. *In the CBD-Office District, the allowable number of dwelling units shall be reduced by one dwelling unit for each 1,000 square feet (or fraction thereof) of commercial floor area contained within a building.*
3. *Residential uses shall be designed as part of a commercial complex, with residential uses limited to the second floor not to exceed 50 percent of the gross floor area and there shall be no more than one dwelling unit for each 1,000 square feet of lot area when located in the CBD Visitor Commercial District.*

**I. Fences & Walls**

The provisions of LBMC 25.50.012 shall apply.

**J. Space Between Buildings**

No requirement, except as required by the Planning Commission or as specified in this document.

**K. Trash and Outdoor storage Areas**

1. Areas for trash or outdoor storage shall be provided for each use, in a manner that is consistent with the Chapter 4: Urban Design guidelines pertaining to trash, storage and equipment areas.
2. A trash compactor of appropriate size and daily trash pickup shall be provided for all restaurant uses.

**L. Mechanical Equipment**

No mechanical equipment such as tank ducts, elevator enclosures, cooling towers, mechanical ventilators, public utility vaults, transformers, meter boxes, backflow valves, air conditioning or heating units shall protrude through the allowable building height envelope, except as provided in E.2. of the General Development Standards. Neither shall such equipment be erected, constructed, or maintained or altered anywhere on the premises unless all such equipment and appurtenances are contained within a completely enclosed structure or within a portion of a building having walls or visual screening with construction and appearances similar to and integrated with the main building architectural design.

**M. Access and Improvement Standards**

The provisions of LBMC 25.53 shall apply, except as modified in this Specific Plan.

**N. Signs**

The provisions of LBMC 25.54 shall apply, except as modified below:

**1. Window signs.**

*Window signs shall be limited to a maximum of 10% of the window area, up to a maximum of five (5) square feet and three (3) window signs per site.*

**2. Wall signs.**

*Wall signs for individual businesses shall be limited to a maximum of fifteen (15) square feet, except where it can be found that such limited sign size is inconsistent with building size, architecture and setback from the public right-of-way.*

**3. Logos.**

*Logos (company symbol or trademark) on any exterior commercial sign shall be limited in size, as determined by the Planning Commission.*

## O. Parking

The provisions of LBMC Chapter 25.52 shall apply, except as modified in this Specific Plan. New development in the Specific Plan area shall provide parking on-site and be located behind buildings or screened from view.

**1. Parking Space Requirements for Non-Residential Uses.** *Non-residential uses such as, office, retail and food service uses shall provide a minimum of three spaces for each 1,000 square feet of gross floor area. However, the following specified uses that generate a high demand for parking are required to provide off-street parking pursuant to LBMC Chapter 25.52: places of assembly and recreational uses, cultural and educational uses, and visitor accommodations.*

*All uses having legal nonconforming parking conditions may be maintained or changed to uses with the same or lesser parking requirements as specified in this Section. Any change to a use with greater parking requirements shall comply with the provisions of Municipal Code Section 25.52.004 (E)*

**2. Parking Space Requirements for Residential Uses.** *Residential uses shall provide a minimum of one space for every studio or one-bedroom unit; two spaces for every unit with two or more bedrooms.*

**3. Parking for Long-Term, Low-Income, Senior and/or Disabled Housing.** *Parking requirements for housing projects with units committed to long-term, low-income, senior citizen's (62 years and older), and/or disabled housing may be reduced or waived subject to approval of a conditional use permit. Application for such a conditional use permit shall include the submission of a parking study that analyzes trip generation, parking demand, and potential impacts to nearby uses and the downtown.*

**4. Parking Spaces Available to the General Public.** *Subject to City Council review and approval, the City may enter into an agreement with a property owner for the use and/or management of a private, non-residential, off-street parking facility for public use that does not conflict or overlap with hours of operation for the uses on the property, including any spaces approved for off-site parking. The agreement shall address the following minimum factors: hours of availability for use by the general public, signage, maintenance, duration of agreement, and liability.*

**5. Surface Parking Lots.** *All surface parking lots shall provide, at a minimum, a four-foot wide landscaped setback with appropriate street trees adjacent to all street frontages, excluding necessary driveways. The Planning Commission may require additional buffering, if warranted by special circumstances.*

**6. Parking Structures.** *Whenever possible, the first floor above the parking structure shall be at grade of adjacent public sidewalks and further, shall not exceed five feet above grade along all other frontages; entrances to the structure should be located away from major pedestrian areas and the structure should be designed so as to minimize impacts on pedestrian views.*

*The following requirements shall apply to all parking structures that are part of a commercial or residential building and are not constructed as a structure dedicated solely to parking purposes.*

- a) A minimum 4-foot wide landscaped buffer shall be provided for all areas of parking structures which are above grade, except where abutting a building.*

*b) Properties may be permitted one driveway per 150 feet of street frontage. Such driveway shall not exceed 20 feet in width unless otherwise required for safety reasons, except where abutting a building.*

*c) All parking structures shall be designed to provide consistency with the Chapter 4: Urban Design pertaining to parking.*

#### **P. Alleyway Treatment**

Projects that include exterior alterations and are located on a site with alley frontage may be required by the Planning Commission to provide alleyway frontage improvements, including display windows, entryways, architectural features and landscape treatment to enhance the alleyway elevation. Alleyway improvements shall be provided in a manner that is consistent with Chapter 4: Urban Design. Landscaping may also be required in accordance with Section C.I., Open Space and Landscaping portion of this General Development Standards section.

#### **Q. Outdoor Display and Portable Signs**

Proper use of outdoor display will enhance the pedestrian experience in the downtown. Outdoor display of merchandise and portable signs may be permitted subject to administrative approval of an outdoor display and portable sign permit by the Director of Community Development, with the exception that outdoor display which is not visible to pedestrians from the public right-of-way is exempt from the permit requirement. All permit applications will be reviewed according to the following standards:

- 1. Outdoor displays and portable signs are to be entirely located on private property, and shall not extend into the public right-of-way. If a business does not have an alcove or area available for an outdoor display or portable sign without encroaching into the public right-of-way, they may be granted an exemption for a larger window sign or interior window display.*
- 2. Outdoor displays and portable signs shall not inhibit adequate ingress and egress to the building, and shall be placed in a location that does not affect pedestrian (including compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act) or vehicular circulation.*
- 3. Outdoor displays should be innovative and enhance the unique character and diversity of the downtown. Outdoor displays may be permitted, provided that they are limited to an area of 18 square feet and inclusive of no more than five items that are related to the type of business.*
- 4. Outdoor displays and portable signs should be compatible with the architectural attributes of the building in which the business is located.*
- 5. One A-frame sign may be permitted per business with a maximum sign size of six square feet.*

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Placement on the Register provides property owners with significant preservation incentives such as parking reduction, setback flexibility, building code deviations and density bonuses. Structures placed on the Historic Register are subject to the provisions and incentives set forth in the Historic Preservation Ordinance, established as LBMC Chapter 25.45.

## FINDINGS REQUIRED FOR CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN BOUNDARIES

### General Findings Required

In reviewing applications for Conditional Use Permits for the downtown area, the Planning Commission shall evaluate each proposed use in order to consider its impact on the City. No Conditional Use Permit shall be granted unless all of the following findings can be made:

1. The site is adequate to accommodate the use without significant adverse impact on abutting property or on parking or traffic circulation in the downtown area.
2. The proposed use will maintain a balanced mix of uses and not produce an incremental effect of similar uses that would be detrimental to the downtown and its village character.
3. The proposed use is consistent with the intent and purpose of the District in which it is located, and the goals and policies of the Downtown Specific Plan and the City's General Plan.
4. The conditions stated in the decision are necessary to protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

### Special Findings Required for Certain Uses

Due to their potential impact on the character of the community, it is necessary to require that special findings be made. In addition to the general findings required above, the following special findings for the uses identified below shall be made prior to the granting of a Conditional Use Permit for said uses:

#### A. Special Findings, Full-Service Restaurants

The following special findings are required for "full-service" restaurants as defined in Section 25.08.032:

1. There are adequate facilities on-site for the closed storage of trash and garbage generated by the use and there will be daily trash pick-up. The storage area is designed so that it can be cleaned; a plan has been submitted and approved for a regular and frequent cleaning schedule of the trash enclosure; and the refuse will be removed without creating a public nuisance and without being placed on the public sidewalks or other public ways.
2. Total restaurant size (gross square footage) or a maximum number of seats for the restaurant has been established by the Planning Commission for the use.

#### B. Special Findings, Non-Full Service Restaurants/Food Services

The following special findings are required for restaurants and food services not classified as full-service as defined in LBMC Section 25.08.032:

1. There are adequate facilities on-site for storage of trash and garbage generated by the use and there will be daily trash pick-up. The storage area is designed so that it can be cleaned and the refuse removed without creating a public nuisance and without being placed on public sidewalks or other public ways.
2. The business does not offer drive-through options for ordering or picking up food.
3. The service counter is located within the interior of the business premises and is located and arranged so that patron queues will not spill onto and over public access ways.



4. All products sold for consumption off the premises will be placed in non-CFC (chlorofluorocarbon) containers.
5. The operator of the use authorized by this permit will be responsible for the clean-up of all on-site and adjacent public areas, including the sidewalks. A practical plan for monitoring and implementing this clean-up will be provided as a condition of the permit.

### **C. Special Finding, Art Galleries**

The following special finding is required for retail art galleries:

1. A substantial portion of the merchandise shall be original or numbered, limited edition artwork.

### **D. Special Findings, Formula-based Businesses and Souvenir Stores**

The following special findings are required for formula-based businesses and souvenir stores that require a Conditional Use Permit.

1. The business will enhance and contribute to the destination quality of the Downtown Specific Plan area.
2. Both exterior and interior appearance of the business and presentation of merchandise are non-formulaic and compatible with the existing scale of development, distinctive architecture and pedestrian orientation of the established village character.

### **E. Special Finding, Second-Story Exceptions**

The following special finding is required for exceptions to the height limit as permitted under the Building Height Standards section.

1. Granting of the Conditional Use Permit will not result in an incremental or cumulative effect of second-story exceptions that adversely affect either the scale, character or diversity of building heights in the downtown or the public views of the beach, ocean and hillsides.

### **F. Special Finding/Requirement, Seasonal Uses that Coincide with the Art Festivals**

Businesses may be required to participate in a funding program for seasonal expanded tram service.

## DEFINITIONS

### Change of Use

A change of use occurs when any of the following occur: 1) a business offers or proposes to offer merchandise and/or services that are not specified in the approved Conditional Use Permit; 2) a nonconforming business operating without an approved Conditional Use Permit offers or proposes to offer a different category of merchandise and/or new services; 3) a formula-based business replaces an existing business, even when the general category of merchandise or type of service does not change; 4) a food service or restaurant use enlarges the size of its seating area, or changes some material aspect of its operation and/or presentation of its business.

### Civic-Related Use

A civic-related use is defined as a use providing for public functions; includes government offices and related facilities, community centers, hospitals, libraries, museums, public parking facilities, park uses, and public swimming pools.

### Food, retail

A retail food use means a business that sells pre-packaged and/or take-out products for consumption off-site and does not offer seating on the premises.

### Formula-based Business

A formula-based business means a use or business which offers merchandise and/or services using a formulaic or mass-marketing approach. All business or store locations are identifiable through standardized architecture, storefronts, merchandise and/or services, store layout and décor, signs, uniforms or other similar features. In addition, formula-based food service uses often have contractual or other arrangements to offer standardized menus, ingredients and/or food preparation.

### Planned Integrated Development

A Planned Integrated Development is defined as two or more parcels within the same zoning district that are proposed together as part of a comprehensive development plan, which may include more than one type of use.

### Restaurant, full-service

A full-service restaurant means a business devoted to the serving of prepared food to patrons where the food is consumed on the premises and the customer's order are served while seated at tables.

### Restaurant, non-full service

A non-full service restaurant means a business which primarily offers prepared food to patrons, but may also offer pre-packaged retail food items. Often such businesses are designed to serve a high volume of customers at a high turnover rate. The food sold may be consumed either on or off the premises and seating is provided. A non-full service restaurant does not provide full table service for patrons.

### Souvenir Store

A business with at least 20% or more of the total display area devoted to unrelated merchandise that is oriented toward visitors, including but not limited to, merchandise bearing words or images representing local place names or other visitor destination, local events.

# CHAPTER 6

## IMPLEMENTATION



## Introduction

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The Downtown Specific Plan sets forth an assortment of land use controls in the form of policies, design guidelines and zoning regulations. Implementation of these elements will require a variety of actions involving both private and publicly owned property.

The Plan affects private property primarily through regulation of land uses and physical property improvements. Implementation of these regulations will be achieved largely through the conditional use permit and design review process utilizing the decision-making authority of the Planning Commission and City Council.

Through its policies and Urban Design Framework, the Downtown Specific Plan identifies the need for a variety of physical improvements to public facilities as well as maintenance of those facilities. These improvements that include alleyway improvements, streetlights, undergrounding of utilities, and street enhancement with flowers, street furniture and sign beautification, influence the aesthetic and functional appeal of the downtown. Such improvements benefit both downtown property owners and the public at large, and successful implementation of these measures will require a sharing of costs by the public and private sectors. For example, a landowner may be expected to provide alleyway enhancements in conjunction with new development or an extensive remodeling, or to replace a sidewalk with a new paving pattern when the development project impacts the existing sidewalk. Public funds will also be necessary to achieve the policies of the Plan and to implement the improvements envisioned in the Urban Design Framework.

## Downtown Capital Improvements

Major improvements to the physical infrastructure in the downtown are planned and funded through the City's Capital Improvement Program. The City's Adopted Budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 and Fiscal Year 2020-2021, includes a number of projects planned for the downtown area in the Ten-Year Capital Improvement Plan:

<b>Year 1 \$550,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Coast Highway Intersection Improvements &amp; Ocean Avenue One-Way Conversion (Design/Construction, Supplemental)</li> <li>» Community Development and Marine Safety Lobby Improvements (Construction)</li> <li>» Main Beach Park Renovation (Design)</li> <li>» Downtown Action Plan Recommended Improvements</li> </ul>
<b>Year 2 \$1,210,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Ramona Alley Decorative Paving Replacement</li> <li>» Jahraus Park Renovation (Design)</li> <li>» Main Beach Park Renovation (Construction)</li> <li>» Loma Terrace Street and Drainage Improvements (Design)</li> <li>» Downtown Action Plan Recommended Improvements</li> <li>» Zone 4 Downtown Street Resurfacing (Design)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 3 \$1,350,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Loma Terrace Street and Drainage Improvements (Construction)</li> <li>» Jahraus Park Renovation (Construction)</li> <li>» Main Beach South ADA and Vehicle Ramp Installation (Design)</li> <li>» Citywide Curb Ramps (Design/Construction)</li> <li>» Citywide Parking Lot Rehabilitation</li> </ul>
<b>Year 4 \$1,300,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Main Beach South ADA and Vehicle Ramp Installation (Construction)</li> <li>» Zone 4 Downtown Street Resurfacing (Construction)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 5 \$200,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Park Plaza Conversion (Design)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 6</b>	---
<b>Year 7 \$550,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Park Plaza Conversion (Construction)</li> <li>» City Facilities ADA Improvements (Design)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 8 \$300,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 585 Glenneyre Street Intersection Improvements (Design)</li> <li>» City Facilities ADA Improvements (Construction)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 9 \$600,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» 585 Glenneyre Street Intersection Improvements (Construction)</li> <li>» City Facilities ADA Improvements (Construction)</li> </ul>
<b>Year 10 \$200,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Laguna Avenue Parking Addition (Construction)</li> </ul>

## Proposed Downtown Improvement Projects

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The following list of downtown improvement projects should be considered during preparation of the budget for the City's Capital Improvement Plan and the Special Projects Work Program for the Department of Community Development. Implementation of these projects will depend on funding availability, improvement priorities and staffing. Projects are not listed in order of importance or priority.

- Continual Implementation of the City's Parking Management Plan Strategies Related to the Downtown Specific Plan Area
- Cleaning Sidewalks/Streets/Alleys
- Maintenance of Public Art
- Trash Enclosure and Consolidation Plan
- Trash Management Program
- Public Art Installations: Artist-designed Benches, Sculptures, Murals and Other Art Features
- Addition of Landscaping
- Addition of Public Restrooms
- Downtown Street Lighting
- Undergrounding of Utilities (Mermaid Street & Third Street; portions of Ocean & Beach: street light wire on Forest & Ocean)
- Beautification of Public Signage to Encourage Wayfinding
- Beautification of Alleyways to Foster Pedestrian Pathways
- Textured Crosswalks
- Replacement of Parking Meters with Pay Stations
- New Street Trees & Replacement Street Trees
- Redesign and Replacement of Public Trash Containers
- Landscape Improvements for Transit Center

## Implementation Measures

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Certain additional measures are either desirable or essential to effectively carry out the Downtown Specific Plan. They include:

1. Modify Municipal Code sections as necessary to provide consistency with the Downtown Specific Plan.
2. Provide funding and staffing for Downtown Improvement Projects to ensure completion.
3. Continue to utilize an experienced retail specialist to give advice on strategies for actively recruiting and retaining businesses identified as beneficial to both residents and visitors, enhancing the village atmosphere and reflecting an appropriate mix and diversity. Conduct an annual review (or on an as needed basis) to evaluate recommended changes to land use permitting requirements, subject to City Council approval of a Resolution, upon recommendation by the Planning Commission.
4. Explore techniques for funding expert input, as well as required ongoing maintenance and desired beautification through such options as creation of a parking benefit district or a business improvement district.
5. Request an annual report from the Police Department regarding the status of alcohol uses in the downtown and any police concerns regarding alcohol or other related matters.
6. Review the Sign Ordinance for comprehensive revisions, including modifications to the size of wall signs, window signs, restricting the size, and/or number of franchise logos, and the use of window banners in the downtown.
7. Investigate City-provided watering of plantings/flowers in the downtown.
8. Establish flexible standards regulating commercial activities regarding sale of works by artists associated with artist work/live units located in the downtown.
9. Investigate providing incentives for businesses determined to be resident-serving.
10. Establish guidelines for remodeling or renovating historically significant buildings.
11. Consider adopting a Building Maintenance Ordinance to address the physical upkeep of buildings in the downtown.

12. Develop flexible criteria that will encourage innovative business mixes and activities.
13. Develop and maintain a wayfinding system to direct visitors to key points in the downtown and in other areas of the City.
14. Develop a program to locate all-day employee parking outside the central portion of the downtown, and establish a convenient and reliable shuttle service for downtown employees to encourage use of outlying parking areas.
15. Continue to investigate and acquire shared parking agreements to utilize private parking spaces for public use after business hours and during the peak summer months.
16. Investigate opportunities for the limited or temporary adaptive re-use of public parking spaces for community-desired events and activities during summer and non-summer months, provided that an 85 percent target occupancy level is not exceeded.
17. Expand the annual summer data collection efforts to include all non-residential public and private parking within the Downtown Specific Plan area.
18. Work with the San Diego Water Management District to allow run-off from sidewalk and building pressure washing during times when the City is diverting storm water to the sewage treatment facilities.
19. Evaluate and maintain at a minimum the bi-annual schedule for trimming City trees.
20. Explore addition of enhanced lighting to areas, such as the south side of Forest Avenue, which can benefit from more illumination.
21. Pursue improvements to the flood control channel from the Village Entrance to the ocean.
22. Pursue opportunities to provide affordable housing for senior, students, artists and disabled and/or low-income individuals.



23. Develop design standards for improvements to dedicated accessways in the Central Bluffs District.
24. Support implementation of the adopted Cultural Arts Plan as related to the Downtown Specific Plan area.
25. Develop a parklet program that sets forth specific guidelines and standards for parklet location, operation, design, construction, and maintenance.
26. Investigate public and private partnership opportunities to provide additional parking and public amenities when new development occurs.

## Funding

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Potential sources of funding for downtown improvements, as discussed below in a non-prioritized listing, include public and private sources of funding.

### A. Streetlight Funding

The City budget includes an annual expenditure for streetlight funding; these funds can be used for changing out streetlights in addition to undergrounding utilities.

### B. Streetscape Improvement In-lieu Fee

A fee system for new development, including remodeling, could be established as a way of charging developers for off-site improvements. This streetscape improvement fee would work in much the same way as the “Art in Public Places” program does. The in-lieu fee would be charged as a percentage of the project valuation (estimated for the building permit).

Eligible projects could include all exterior alterations, expansions and new development. In order to encourage rehabilitation of existing buildings, the percentage charged to exterior alterations could be minimal (such as 1% or less), while the percentage charged to expansions and new development could be much higher (perhaps in the range of 5-10%).

Money generated from the fee system could either be held until sufficient funds were available to complete an entire phase (or phases) or alternatively, improvements could be completed in smaller increments, as money became available.

### **C. Capital Improvement Fund**

Downtown capital improvement projects compete with other public improvements for limited capital improvement fund money. City revenues that are allocated to this fund include, but are not limited to, the real property transfer tax, building construction tax vehicle code and municipal code fines, and hotel taxes. A number of downtown improvement projects are already included in the City's Ten-Year Capital Improvement Plan. Funding of downtown improvements on a larger scale than that already planned in the Capital Improvement Program can occur, but will need to be planned for.

### **D. Parking Meter Revenues or Parking Benefit District (PBD)**

Parking meter revenues are generated yearly. These funds could be used to provide, maintain or enhance parking- and transit-related items in the downtown.

Parking Benefit Districts keep revenue from parking meters and other parking fees within the district, and utilize the funds for purposes such as ongoing maintenance issues, streetscape improvements and beautification of the district or downtown. This funding tool would involve creation of a set of guiding principles based on key stakeholder input to assist with the process and establish the rules for the parking district. Development of an action plan could establish boundaries of the district, specific locations of parking meters, assessments, and other strategies. Lastly, the development of an implementation plan would define programs, projects, funding levels, and responsibilities.

### **E. Park In-Lieu Funds**

Park in-lieu fees are assessed against new subdivisions. Funds collected are allocated to the construction of new parks. While it may be possible to use park in-lieu funds toward the development or enhancement of mini-parks and public parklets in the downtown, allocation of such funds would have to wait until new subdivisions near the downtown are approved and the fees are collected.

### **F. Housing In-Lieu Funds**

Housing in-lieu fees are assessed against residential projects of three or more units. These funds are to be used for the development of affordable housing (low- or moderate-income). Under the Downtown Specific Plan, long-term, low-income, senior, student, artists, and disabled housing for individuals is encouraged through policy statements and the use of incentives. Housing in-lieu funds can be used to provide affordable housing within the downtown for low- and moderate-income individuals in the targeted groups.

### **G. Art-in-Lieu Funds**

The Art-in-Public Places Program requires certain types of development projects to provide for the acquisition and installation of public art works. Instead of acquiring and installing artwork, project applicants may pay an in-lieu fee to the Art-in-Public Places Fund. Money collected in this fund may be used for downtown improvements that further the intent and purpose of the Art-in-Public Places Program.

### **H. Business Improvement Area/District (BIA or PBID)**

One method of supplementing the municipal services and/or capital improvement budget is to create a Business Improvement Area (BIA) or a Property Business Improvement District (PBID). This funding tool is actually a special assessment district where either the business owners (BIA) or property owners (PBID) agree to assess themselves additional fees that are then used to benefit the downtown. The revenue that is generated by this type of assessment can be used to support enhanced services, such as streetscape improvements and maintenance, within the district.

The assessments under a BIA are based on either retail revenues or number of employees and they are collected by the City in conjunction with business license fees. The assessments for a PBID are based on benefits received and square footage with the assessments collected through the County tax bills. PBID's generate substantially more revenue for business district improvements than do BIA's.

The creation and administration of a business improvement district would require substantial staff time and a high level of support from the business community.

### **I. Other Programs**

The City has a program where people may donate public improvements. An expanded version of the existing program, including a public relations campaign, could provide a small-scale source of funding.

Private fund raising could also provide supplemental funds for downtown improvements. For example, merchant association groups could sponsor fund raising events where a percentage of the raised money could be used for improvements that would benefit the downtown.