

**CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT  
STAFF REPORT**

**AGENDA ITEM:** No. 6 (Discussion Item) **DATE:** 9/21/16  
**TO:** PLANNING COMMISSION  
**CASE:** Downtown Specific Plan Update – Work Program  
**APPLICANT:** City of Laguna Beach  
**LOCATION:** Downtown Specific Plan Area  
**PREPARED BY:** Wendy Jung, Senior Planner  
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**REQUESTED ACTION:** Receive a presentation and discuss the proposed Work Program related to the Downtown Specific Plan Update project.

**BACKGROUND:** On July 15, 2014, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with MIG, an urban planning firm, to assist with the preparation of a comprehensive update to the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP). Some of the Plan areas to be evaluated for potential modification include, but are not limited to, expansion of the Civic Art District to the Act V and the Laguna College of Art and Design sites, the types and locations of the various downtown districts and their intent and purpose, allowed uses in each district, the general provisions/development standards, issue statements and policies, urban design guidelines and implementation measures.

Since then, MIG has researched past documents, conducted site visits throughout the City, completed stakeholder interviews and attended various other planning related meetings/workshops/hearings (i.e. Urban Planning Coordinating Committee, Laguna Canyon Road Task Force, DSP Update Subcommittee, Economic Development/Business Assistance Subcommittee). MIG also engaged the community through a broad-based outreach effort that included Plan Trolley events, a “Pop-Up Downtown” workshop, a DSP community workshop and three joint study sessions with the City Council and Planning Commission to discuss various key topics and policy issues. In addition, the City Council directed MIG to work with City staff and stakeholders to develop ideas for potential pilot demonstration projects to implement on a trial basis in the Downtown. On July 20, 2016, MIG introduced and discussed the topic of urban design in the DSP area with the Planning Commission.

**DISCUSSION:**

Proposed Work Program

The DSP Work Program attached as Exhibit A outlines the completed and projected tasks and timeline for the project. The existing DSP is organized into six sections as shown in the table of contents attached as Exhibit B. Currently, MIG is working on draft amendments to the DSP sections based upon prior City Council and Planning Commission policy direction and public input received on their preliminary recommendations. Beginning in October, staff will bring the draft amendments to the different sections of the DSP for review with the Planning Commission and public. In brief, the details of the Downtown Specific Plan Update will be completed and presented

to the Planning Commission for review as a draft strikethrough document in a series of hearings, and a final document will be presented to the City Council. For example, at the October Planning Commission meeting staff and the Planning Commission will begin review of Sections I, II and III. Section III is one of the most important sections because it provides a discussion of the specific issues that the Downtown Specific Plan addresses. Each issue statement includes one goal and a series of policies to achieve that goal. Once Section III is completed, we will have a base to then work on the more detailed Sections of IV, V and VI (Urban Design, Land Use Districts and Implementation Program, respectively).

Parking, Circulation and Public Transit

On January 27, 2016, a Joint Study Session with the City Council and Planning Commission was held for the DSP Update project to discuss initial recommendations from MIG, regarding larger policy issues related to the topic of parking. During the session, MIG identified the need for current data and analysis related to actual parking demand in the study area to calibrate a potential Laguna Beach-specific minimum parking standard. This effort would help to develop staff and MIG's recommendations related to parking, circulation and transit for the Downtown Specific Plan Update. The City Council expressed consensus that the best methodology is to conduct a parking demand study that is unique to Laguna Beach, and to obtain numbers that are reflective of the City's particular needs.

On August 9, 2016, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with IBI Group to complete the data collection and analysis phase of the Parking Actual Demand Study for the DSP area. The second phase of the parking study will be conducted by City staff and/or IBI Group (through an augmented contract) to determine parking ratios (actual built supply vs. actual demand) relative to current and future demand.

The objectives of the study are to determine actual demand specific to Downtown Laguna Beach that would help formulate revised minimum parking requirements (i.e. blended parking rate), and to identify strategies for accommodating additional growth and flexibility in land use by also considering transit (trolley) and parking meter rates. The parking demand study would help find potential solutions to allow for enhancements to the downtown, such as creating more outdoor gathering spaces through a parklet program and the potential for partial or full street closures to accommodate a pedestrian promenade and/or street festivals. Specifically, the study would look at actual demand for public and private parking during non-summer and summer months, to form a basis for minimum parking requirements relative to land use (built and occupied) and to provide recommendations to optimize usage of parking resources.

As the parking demand study is being conducted, the Planning Commission will continue to review other components of the draft DSP Update that are not related to parking in order to move the process forward. Following the completion of the parking study, which staff anticipates to occur in November 2016, the Planning Commission will begin to discuss the findings, in addition to potential draft regulatory and zoning change strategies. Several topics within the DSP, including but not limited to, land use, building height, and infill housing are also related to parking. Potential amendments to the DSP policies related to these topics and parking will be incorporated into the draft strikethrough document and reviewed with the Planning Commission in

November/December 2016. Eventually, the parking demand study will also be utilized as supporting documentation to the Downtown Specific Plan when the update is considered by the California Coastal Commission for a Local Coastal Program Amendment.

MIG Deliverable Memos

MIG's scope of work includes several tasks associated with the Downtown Specific Plan Update, and the majority of these tasks include deliverables in the form of memos. These memos consist of MIG's research and analysis on the various issues and topic areas in the downtown and provide the basis for MIG's recommendations. Staff will be providing binders to the Planning Commission that contain each of these memos prior to the October meeting. Staff will be referring to these memos when applicable to provide the Planning Commission with background on MIG's recommendations as we move through the work program.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends that the Planning Commission receive a presentation and discuss the proposed Work Program related to the Downtown Specific Plan Update project.

**ATTACHMENT:** Exhibit A: DSP Update Work Program  
Exhibit B: Existing DSP Table of Contents

**CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH**  
**DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN UPDATE**  
**WORK PROGRAM**

**Background/Scope of Work**

On July 15, 2014, the City Council authorized the City Manager to enter into a contract with MIG, an urban planning firm, to assist with the preparation of a comprehensive update to the Downtown Specific Plan. Areas of the Plan to be evaluated include, but are not necessarily limited to, expansion of the Civic Art District to the Act V and Laguna College of Art and Design sites, the types and locations of the various districts and their intent and purpose, allowed uses in each district, general provisions/development standards, issue statements and policies, design guidelines, and implementation measures.

**Phase 1: Vision, Goals and Analysis (including Community and Stakeholder Engagement and Project Management)**

During this phase, MIG researched past documents, conducted site visits throughout the City, completed stakeholder interviews, attended various other planning related meetings (i.e. Urban Planning Coordinating Committee and Laguna Canyon Road Task Force), spearheaded the public participation program and worked on completing Phase I deliverables.

<b>August 7, 2014</b>	Project Kick-Off Meeting
<b>August 8, 2014</b>	DSP Subcommittee Update
<b>November 6, 2014</b>	Plan Trolley public outreach event (First Thursday's Art Walk)
<b>November 7, 2014</b>	Plan Trolley public outreach event (Laguna Beach high school football game)
<b>December 5, 2014</b>	Plan Trolley public outreach event (Hospitality night)
<b>December 20, 2014</b>	Plan Trolley public outreach event (Winter Fantasy at Sawdust Art Festival)
<b>November 15, 2014</b>	"Pop-Up Downtown" Workshop on Ocean Avenue
<b>December 10, 2014</b>	Planning Commission Update
<b>February 3, 2015</b>	DSP Subcommittee Update
<b>March 19, 2015</b>	DSP Subcommittee Update

**Pilot Demonstration Projects**

On February 24, 2015, the City Council directed MIG to work with City staff and stakeholders to develop ideas for potential pilot demonstration projects to implement on a trial basis in the Downtown.

<b>March 18, 2015</b>	Pilot Project Steering Committee Meeting #1
<b>April 1, 2015</b>	Pilot Project Steering Committee Meeting #2
<b>April 22, 2015</b>	Outreach to Downtown Businesses Meeting
<b>May 5, 2015</b>	City Council Meeting (Proposed concepts for consideration)
<b>June 2, 2015</b>	Outreach to Downtown Businesses Meeting
<b>June 16, 2015</b>	City Council Meeting (Proposed implementation plan and request for funding)

**Phase 2: Develop Draft Plan Framework**

During this phase, MIG is developing the draft plan framework for the DSP Update and evaluating the DSP in conjunction with City Council and Planning Commission objectives/direction and public input, for potential amendments to sections of the specific plan document. In addition, MIG is working on completing Phase 2 deliverables. City staff is working with IBI Group to complete a parking demand study to determine the actual demand specific to Downtown Laguna Beach that would help formulate revised minimum parking requirements (i.e. blended parking rate), and to identify strategies for accommodating additional growth and flexibility in land uses by also considering transit/trolley and parking meter rates.

<b>July 1, 2015</b>	DSP Subcommittee Update
<b>July 9, 2015</b>	Economic Development/Business Assistance Task Force Meeting (Retail presentation and update from MIG team member, Michael Berne)
<b>July 15, 2015</b>	DSP Subcommittee Update
<b>July 20, 2015</b>	DSP Community Workshop (Interactive workshop with overview of refined topic areas and strategies for updating the DSP, including land use, parking, mobility, placemaking, urban design, key opportunity sites and infrastructure).
<b>August 11, 2015</b>	Joint Study Session #1 – City Council and Planning Commission (Overview of public input received, preliminary observations, discuss key ideas, strategies and policies)
<b>December 3, 2015</b>	Joint Study Session #2 – City Council and Planning Commission (Retail and commercial uses; Conditional Use Permit process)
<b>January 27, 2016</b>	Joint Study Session #3 – City Council and Planning Commission (Parking)
<b>May 16, 2016</b>	Distributed Request for Proposal for DSP Area Parking Actual Demand Study
<b>July 20, 2016</b>	Planning Commission Meeting (Urban Design)
<b>August 9, 2016</b>	City Council authorized City Manager to enter into a contract with IBI Group to complete data collection and analysis phase of Parking Actual Demand Study for the DSP area. Projected completion in October 2016.
<b>September 21, 2016</b>	Planning Commission Meeting (Project Update and Discuss Work Program)
<b>October 2016</b>	Use City staff or augment contract with IBI Group to complete second phase of Parking Actual Demand Study. This effort will determine parking ratios for actual built supply vs. actual demand. Projected completion in November 2016.

**Phase 3: Draft and Final Specific Plan**

During this phase, MIG will complete and submit the draft DSP Update strikethrough document to City staff for review and complete the final plan. Upon completion of the parking demand study, the findings and other parking issues will be discussed further with the Planning Commission. Potential amendments to the DSP policies related to parking will be incorporated into the draft DSP Update strikethrough document for review with the Planning Commission to obtain direction and public input.

<b>October 2016</b>	Planning Commission Meeting (Begin review of draft amendments to sections of DSP)
<b>November 2016</b>	Planning Commission Meeting (Review and discuss parking issues, potential draft regulatory and zoning change strategies and parking demand study findings)
<b>Nov/Dec 2016</b>	Planning Commission Meetings (Continue review of draft amendments to sections of DSP)
<b>January 2017</b>	Planning Commission recommend City Council approval of draft DSP Update
<b>February 2017</b>	City Council review of draft DSP Update
<b>March 2017</b>	City Council approval of draft DSP Update

**Coastal Commission Review of Local Coastal Program (LCP) Amendment**

<b>April 2017</b>	Staff to submit LCP Amendment to California Coastal Commission for certification upon City Council approval.
<b>April 2018</b>	Approval of LCP Amendment by the California Coastal Commission.

**Note:** Depending upon the number of public hearings necessary for the Planning Commission to review the draft updated specific plan prior to their final recommendation, the City Council approval date of March 2017 may be delayed.

**DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN  
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