

To: Chairperson Kemp and Members of the Planning Commission

From: Becky Jones

RE: Downtown Specific Plan/ MIGS Task 2.13 Urban Design (07/20/16)

Unfortunately, the Task 2.13 product is extremely disappointing because it contains no analytical examination of the suggested “opportunities” and doesn’t address several important planning issues:

A. The General Plan calls for preserving existing scenic vistas, placing emphasis on ocean and coastline views including preserving views of the coastline from the hillsides and views of the hillsides from the coastline.

1. Won’t locating large two-story buildings adjacent to Coast Highway have the potential of negatively affecting views of the coastline from the hillsides?

2. Won’t locating large, two-story structures on the north and south corners of Broadway at Main Beach significantly narrow the view corridor that characterizes this major “Gateway,” a view corridor that encompasses views of the ocean and coastline (part of Laguna’s “window to the sea”) that have historically greeted visitors entering along Broadway? Won’t they compromise the experience?

3. Will developing any of the sites identified as being opportunities for adding second stories result in blocking views of iconic structures (for example, Hotel Laguna, Lifeguard Tower, Presbyterian Church clock tower) or views of the hillsides or coastline from adjacent locations?

4. The issue is not that we want to encourage building more second stories but that we want to know where second stories can be added without any impact. Where can we add additional height in the downtown without affecting any views? The analysis should have considered each proposed site, identified the impacts on the fabric of the downtown, and completed a view analysis when warranted.

B. Increasing parking and decreasing congestion have been long-standing problems in the downtown; in addition, the Coastal Commission has stipulated that any parking that is removed in the downtown and along Coast Highway must be replaced on a one-to-one basis. The trolleys are wonderful, but they can only do so much. We don’t want to create more parking in the downtown, but we do need to protect whatever parking we have. The downtown is more than a tourist destination: It is also a working downtown for residents.

1. What is the rationale for placing major commercial buildings on the north and south corners of Broadway at Coast Highway when this intersection is already among the most congested in town? The building on the south corner shows no additional parking and the building on the north corner designates parking by simply redrawing part of the already existing public parking lot located between the

service station and Coast Hardware, reassigning the spaces currently serving the public to serving the building.

2. Given the Coastal Commission's policy on parking, how do we replace the parking removed in the various suggestions for Ocean, including that it appears from the view of the model that the parking has been removed from around the Wells-Fargo Building.

3. Our surface parking lots are not just under-utilized properties, but have value in and of themselves: They serve as clean-air generators, and with the right aesthetic improvements, could enrich the streetscape and pedestrian environment.

C. The diversity of scale, including a variety of heights, small lots, and pedestrian orientation are identified as being central to the "Village character" of the downtown, a quality we are trying to preserve.

1. What is the current ratio of one-story to two-story buildings in the downtown? How do we keep this diversity?

2. The "scramble" intersections should serve to facilitate pedestrian movement and reduce automobile congestion at busy intersections, as will improvements to the intersection at Forest and Laguna Canyon Road.

D. We need to realistically address what is practical in the here and now as well as compile a wish list for the future when today's potential opportunities may be realized.

1. Like the earlier suggestion that we move the library, the current suggestion that we move the transit center is without value unless a better location for this important function is identified. What are the alternatives?

2. The suggestion that Laguna Creek be restored to its natural state is a very welcome suggestion, but there will not be sufficient space to do so in the suggested design that has artists' kiosks lining the creek bank adjacent to Laguna Canyon Road.

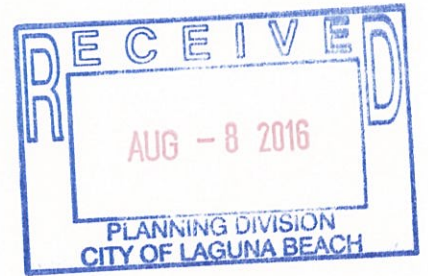
3. What can we do now to improve aesthetically challenged areas such as the gas-station-covered corners at Broadway and Coast Highway?

4. Much has been done to make the transit center visually attractive, but is there something else we can do?

5. How can we improve the appearance of the least attractive parking lots in the downtown while still preserving their capacity? Is there some way to make these lots function more efficiently?

resist.org

Frances Finley
PO Box 1488
Laguna Beach CA 92652-1488



To City Council Members
and City Management Officials

Yet again another very large sum of money is going towards the revamp of Downtown and the "specific" plan for our community. Always from an out of town team.

Now you agree the bus depot must be located out of town. Where does that leave we passengers on our main line service for our business we attend to close by. Where we make connections for the OCTA.

None of you in office ever uses the Laguna transportation let alone these out of towners who are clueless how our bus system works, nor do any of you care to.

How you presume to this relocation that makes no sense boggles the mind. Like the old saying goes "if it ain't broke don't fix it."

Ride our wonderful buses for a week and reconsider.

Frances Finley

Frances Finley
36 year Laguna resident
A six day a week rider

Don't throw my fellow passengers
under the Bus