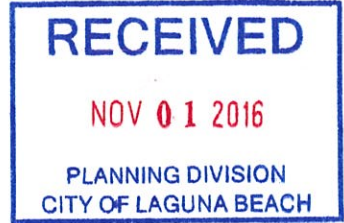


LAGUNA BEACH  
Chamber of Commerce



2016 Board of  
Directors

October 31, 2016

Larry Nokes  
President  
Nokes & Quinn

Gregory Pfof  
Director of Community Development  
CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH

Ken Fischbeck  
President-Elect  
Laguna Crest Enterprise

Dear Greg:

Debbie MacDonald  
Vice President  
Tommy Bahama

After reviewing *Section I: Introduction* of the Downtown Specific Plan, the Chamber of Commerce suggests that the following be addressed in the update to this section.

Aaron Talarico  
Secretary  
Talarico & Associates

The DSP was originally written in 1988 and the last comprehensive review was in 1999. The DSP has been successful in preserving Village Laguna's physical character, particularly the look and feel of a traditional downtown. Today, we live in a different economic era, particularly with the advent of Internet shopping. Recognizing the changing nature of commerce, the revised plan needs to emphasize functionality, providing the flexibility needed to meet today's rapidly changing resident and visitor needs and enhancing vitality, while maintaining the special qualities of the downtown.

Dave Rubel  
Treasurer  
Frederic H. Rubel  
Fine Jewelers

With regard to *Section II: Profile of Downtown Characteristics*, the Chamber suggests the following be addressed:

Carmelit Green  
Director  
Troy Lee Designs

1. The descriptions of the streets and areas in the downtown need to be updated to accurately reflect both the existing conditions, and to lay out a framework for a comprehensive urban plan that integrates the different elements.
2. Changes in transportation and circulation have had a large impact on the downtown since the last DSP update. Parking considerations have changed dramatically and need to be addressed. The factors driving this change include:
  - a. The advent of a more robust and reliable trolley system that reduces the number of cars coming into the downtown;
  - b. Availability of reliable traffic and parking data procured through extensive studies over the last 10 years, including the adoption and partial implementation of the *Downtown Specific Plan Area & Laguna Canyon Road Parking Management Plan*;
  - c. The adoption of the *Enhanced Mobility and Complete Streets Transition Plan*; and
  - d. The soon-to-be-completed parking demand study and the possibility of moving to a blended parking rate.
3. The City is committed to the arts, beyond the commercial art festivals as evidenced by the creation of the Cultural Arts Plan.

Dawn Knepper  
Director  
Ogletree Deakins

Kavita Reddy  
Director  
Buy Hand

Cary Redfearn  
Director  
Lumberyard

Scott Sanchez  
Director  
Firebrand Media

Mauricio Souza  
Director  
Montage Resorts

Laura Henkels  
Executive Director

4. Laguna's visitors have changed in profile over the years and they now visit year round because of the:
  - a. Population growth in the surrounding cities;
  - b. Existence of large hotels like the Montage, St. Regis and Pelican Hill;
  - c. Ready access via the San Joaquin and Foothill Toll Roads; and
  - d. Increasing popularity of social media.
5. Demands from consumers, both resident and visitor, have shifted dramatically from buying things to doing things and will continue to change rapidly. The revised DSP should provide the flexibility of use needed to meet the changing needs of residents and visitors, now and in the future.

The above forces have had a profound impact on our lives and our downtown. These introductory sections should address where we have been, what we are going through now, and set the stage for recommendations to meet our needs, today and into the future.

Very truly yours,

LAGUNA BEACH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Nokes', written in a cursive style.

Larry Nokes  
President

cc: Planning Commission

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**From:** Barbara Metzger <barbara.metzger@att.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 05, 2016 11:49 AM  
**To:** Jung, Wendy CD  
**Subject:** draft recommendations for DSP Section I

Wendy--

Here are my comments on the draft of Section I of the Downtown Specific Plan:

Replace Figure 1 with a photo of lower Forest Avenue.

On p. I-1, delete the commas around the new phrase "and the process that created it" and change "is" to "are"

Delete photo of 2014 event and the graphic of the planning process.

Delete the new sentence on p. I-2 or at least replace the words "a Pop-Up Downtown Workshop" with "a workshop"

Thanks--

Barbara

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**From:** Becky Jones <becky-jones@cox.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 06, 2016 10:52 PM  
**To:** Jung, Wendy CD  
**Cc:** Sue Kempf; Anne Johnson; Roger McLane; Ken Sadler; Susan McIntock Whitin  
**Subject:** Introduction, Downtown Specific Plan

To: Chairperson Kempf and Planning Commissioners

From: Becky Jones

RE: Downtown Specific Plan, Chapter 1, Introduction

1. I have some concern about referencing the Lumberyard Mall as “an example of the village atmosphere.” The picture on page 8 is a great view and should be included in the document, but the rear of both the Forest Avenue Mall and the Lumberyard Mall create extremely negative effects on the Ocean Avenue streetscape, significantly impacting the pedestrian friendliness of the street in these sections. Perhaps Peppertree Lane or a view along Forest Avenue would be a better choice as “an example of ‘village atmosphere’ in the downtown area,” especially since we don’t want to encourage additional malls. We could also just use the photograph without designating it as “an example of village atmosphere.”

2. I recommend eliminating the time line diagram that follows the section on “Citizen Participation.” I have some specific suggestions for language changes in this section that are given below.

3. I recommend the following changes in wording; page references are for the strike-through version of the chapter:

Page 1-1, Introduction

a. Paragraph 1, line 3 – The suggested new language “several decades” is both inaccurate and too general; I recommend the more specific four decades.

b. Paragraph 2, line 1 – The suggested new language “For many years” is again too general; I recommend the more specific Since the 1970’s.

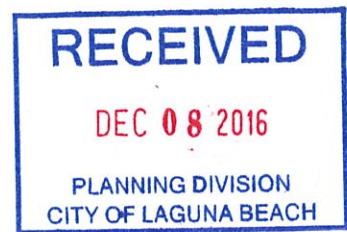
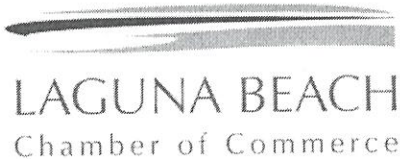
c. Paragraph 3, line 5 – The suggested new language “interact” does not match the friendly tone of the rest of the sentence; I would prefer come together or share the town or greet friends and acquaintances. Obviously, I’m struggling here and haven’t yet found the magic phrase. I want to convey the sense of the downtown being a common destination for residents where neighbors or friends will meet on the street and wave to one another or share greetings or catch up on news, the kind of place where whenever you’re there, you see someone you know.

Page 1-2, Citizen Participation

d. Paragraph 3, lines 3-7 – I recommend that the list of participants reads “composed of representatives from the Design Review Board and Planning commission and from various community organizations” followed by the alphabetical list of groups. Listing the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission as community groups seems awkward both in flow and in accuracy.

e. Paragraph 3, lines 11–15 – I recommend eliminating lines 13 through 15 which describe the Ocean Avenue pop-up workshop and conclude the section by saying including onsite pop-up workshops. Becky Jones

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-  
-  
-



**2016 Board of Directors**

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Lumberyard

Scott Sanchez  
Director  
Firebrand Media

Mauricio Souza  
Director  
Montage Resorts

Laura Henkels  
Executive Director

December 7, 2016

Dear Planning Commission,

Please accept the attached document on behalf of The Board of Directors of The Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has been working on suggested revisions to the Downtown Specific Plan and request that the attached suggestions are given careful and serious consideration.

It is the Chamber's goal to keep Laguna Beach a vibrant and thriving place to do business, and we believe the suggestions contained in the document will ensure that our business community will thrive.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

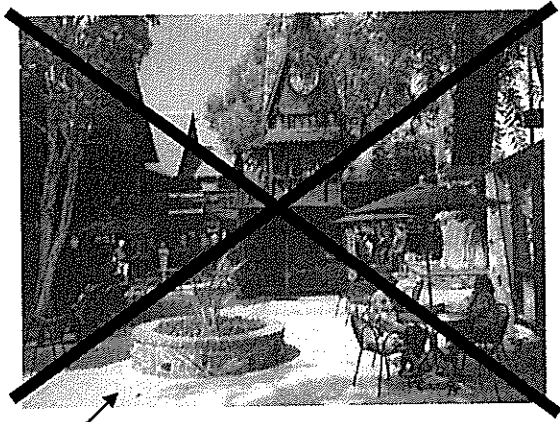
Laura Henkels

Executive Director  
Laguna Beach Chamber of Commerce

cc: Greg Pfoft  
Wendy Jung

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

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 several decades 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."



Replace with photo not of a mall – suggest one of Forest Avenue.

Figure 1- The Lumberyard Mall is an example of "village atmosphere" in the downtown area.

For many years, 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, they agree that these qualities should be preserved. As a result, the downtown village area of Laguna Beach remains, against almost overwhelming odds, unique. It also remains an area where residents can stroll, shop, worship, do business and interact. In short, it is a place that fosters a community conversation. This document, and the process that created it, is intended to ensure that the conversation continues.

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 subsequently, amendments were made to the Plan in 1990, 1992, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2007, and 2008. The Downtown Specific Plan was given a comprehensive review and update in 1999. This document reflects the most current update of the Downtown Specific Plan, adopted in \_\_\_\_\_.~~

The Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) was originally written in 1988 and the last comprehensive review was in 1999. The DSP has been successful in preserving the look and feel of a traditional downtown. The changing nature of commerce, transportation and circulation requires revisions that emphasize the flexibility needed to meet rapidly changing resident and visitor needs and enhancing vitality, while maintaining the special qualities of the downtown.

### **Intent and Purpose of 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. Moreover, specific plans establish a comprehensive approach to planning and development issues by integrating community goals and policies, development standards, and implementation measures, including capital improvement programs, under one document.



## Description of the Planning Area

The physical boundaries of the Downtown Specific Plan are delineated in Exhibit A. 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 known as the Civic Art District that includes many of the civic and art institutions in town.

downtown

## 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 ~~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.

## Citizen Participation

Citizen involvement played an instrumental role in the early development of the Downtown Specific Plan, and in later reviews of the Plan. Initially, the City Council formed a Citizen's Advisory Committee composed of representatives from various community groups – Architect's Association, Arts Commission, Board of Realtors, Chamber of Commerce, Coalition of Neighborhood Associations, Design Review Board, Downtown Merchants Association, Laguna Art Festival Board, Laguna Beach Taxpayers Association, League of Women Voters, Planning Commission 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 also involved extensive workshops with interested citizens and representatives from the business community, including representatives from the Civic Art District Association. The most recent update process included multiple

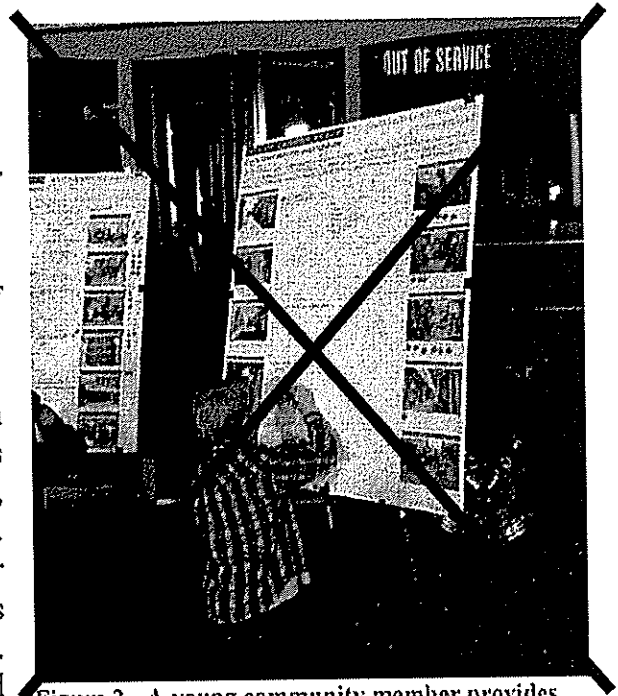


Figure 2 - A young community member provides input at a 2014 Pop-up workshop event.

community workshops, including a Pop Up Downtown 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:

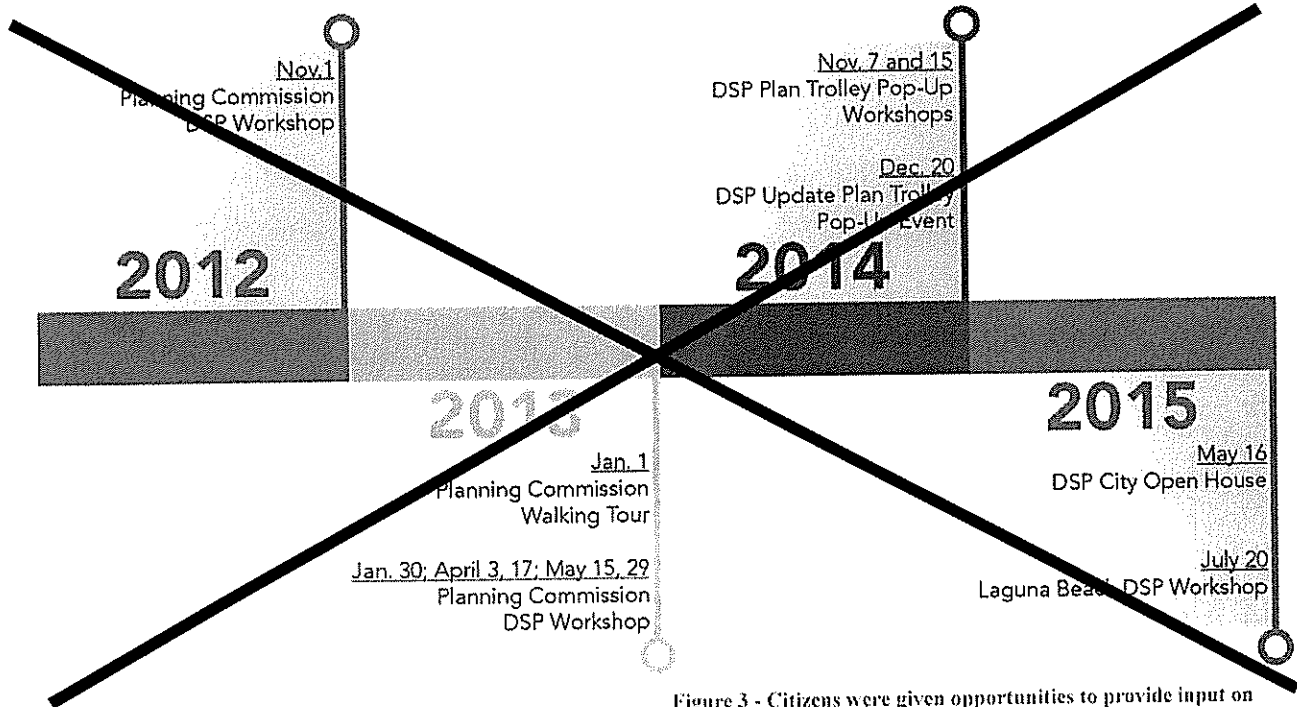


Figure 3 - Citizens were given opportunities to provide input on the direction and content of the Specific Plan, and their input has guided the formation of this Plan.