

TO: Laguna Beach Planning Commission and Planning Staff

DATE: September 11, 2017

FROM: Ad Hoc Committee on the Downtown Specific Plan Revisions

SUBJECT: Revision to Section (Chapter) III, Topic 4 of the Downtown Specific Plan

We are submitting our suggested revisions to Section III, Topic 4.

General Comments:

- As noted in our correspondence regarding Section III, Chapter 4, we are recommending removal of this topic from the revised DSP.
- This topic was originally developed to address economic pressures 10 to 20 years ago. In the current economic climate and with the changing nature of commercial uses covered in Topic 3 (Downtown Commercial Uses), many of the policies are now irrelevant.
- Those policies that are still relevant can be appropriately moved to other topics as show in the attachment.

MIG Submission - 1. Existing Built Fabric of the Downtown:

- The content in this section is basically a restatement of the material covered in more depth under Topic 1 (Village Character).

MIG Submission – 2. Potential Improvements to Underutilized Sites:

- The initial two paragraphs suggest utilization of surface parking lots for small-scale development and to “. . . create a more pedestrian-friendly environment by providing a consistent street wall . . .” This conflicts with this group’s suggested language in the discussion under Topic 1: “Existing surface parking lots offer a different sense of open space and 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 passage ways between streets. These can be improved for pedestrians by creating attractive walkways as part of new parking plans.
- The final paragraph addresses additional housing opportunities, a subject that is covered in Topic 9 ((Housing).

MIG Submission – 3. Shared Space and Co-working:

- The intent of this section seems to be justification for existing Policy 6 on parking relief for shared second-story office uses. The parking issue is covered under Topic 5 and needs to be discussed in that section.

MIG Submission - Topic 3 Policies:

- Of the six policies in both the original version and the MIG revisions, two are identical, one is modified, and three are different as shown in the attachment.
- We believe that the policies that are still relevant can be moved to other topics and those that are not should be eliminated as shown in the attachment..

Attachments:

1. Topic 4 Policy comparisons.

Thank you for your consideration.

Bob Chapman, Ann Christoph, Kate Clark, Norm Grossman, Becky Jones, Barbara Metzger, Kavita Reddy, David Rubel, and Kent Russell

Attachment 1 - Topic 4 Policy Comparisons

Original	MIG	Comments
1. Discourage intensification that will result in the displacement of unique and/or resident-serving shops that contribute to the village character.	1. Encourage infill development that will result in resident-serving retail that contribute to the village character.	<p>The original policy is intended to keep small-scale of physical development. This issue is addressed in the suggested revisions to Topic 1, Policy 2: “Promote and maintain the historic character and scale of the downtown by limiting enlargement of existing buildings to be consistent with village character.”</p> <p>The MIG policy encourages new development, particularly on existing city parking lots. This intensification is currently not justified as explained below in discussion of MIG suggested Policy 2.</p>
2. Evaluate cumulative effects of intensification on City services and infrastructure.		This policy is unnecessary as parking and trash services are handled under Topics 5 (Parking) and 6 (Municipal Services).
3. Discourage lot and building consolidation that conflict with the small-lot development pattern characteristic of the Downtown Specific Plan Area.		This policy should be moved to Topic 1.
4. Preserve the historic downtown development pattern of small buildings on small lots.	3. Preserve the existing development pattern of small scale urban fabric on small lots.	Similar comment to the original Policy 3 above, this concern is more appropriately addressed in Topic 1, particular Policy 2 noted above.
5. Discourage the subdivision of existing buildings unless it enhances village character and satisfies the increased parking requirements.		As discussed in the suggested revisions to Topic 3, economic pressures both locally and nationally have made this policy obsolete. Parking demands are addressed under Topic 5.
6. Permit sharing of second-story office space by professionals without requiring additional parking when no permanent walls are used to divide existing space.	6. Permit sharing of second-story office space by professionals without requiring additional parking when no permanent walls are used to divide existing space.	This policy is addressing parking codes and belongs under Topic 5.
	2. Promote the transformation of surface parking lots into active, pedestrian-oriented uses.	As discussed in Topic 1, “existing surface parking lots offer a different sense of open space and provide excellent opportunities for enhancements . . .” This

		discussion recommends passive pedestrian-oriented uses, not “small-scale infill development” as recommended by MIG.
	4. Consider locating temporary uses such as kiosks and pop-up stores on underutilized sites.	Although reasonable in nature, the problem is identifying “underutilized sites.” The MIG narrative mainly uses this term for surface parking lots; under those conditions, this policy could present problems as noted above.
	5. Promote small-scale infill housing development in appropriate locations along Broadway, at the Village Entrance site, and on underutilized sites with the CBD Office District.	This policy concerns an issue that has already been addressed in Topic 9 (Housing).