




TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 27, 2019

TO: CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Gregory Pfost, Director of Community Development
Wendy Jung, Senior Planner *WS.* 

CC: John Pietig, City Manager
Phil Kohn, City Attorney
Lisette Chel, City Clerk
Jim Pechous, Assistant Director

SUBJECT: Final Draft Downtown Specific Plan Update and Next Steps

Background/Planning Commission Action and Recommendations

From 2015-2019, the Planning Commission and public reviewed and discussed proposed amendments to the various sections of the existing Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) as part of a comprehensive update. The Planning Commission conducted three public hearings to review the Draft DSP update document on August 21, October 2, and November 20, 2019. At the third review hearing, the Planning Commission considered a revised Final Draft DSP and recommended to the City Council approval of the proposed DSP update document and the Negative Declaration, and adoption of the Local Coastal Program Amendment 19-4482 and Zoning Ordinance Amendment 19-4483, subject to recommended changes and considerations by the City Council. The following list includes additional edits identified by staff that were recommended by the Planning Commission to be incorporated into the document:

1. Change the word "tourist" to "visitor" throughout the entire DSP document.
2. Page 14. Provide additional clarification in the third bullet point regarding greater flexibility in development standards to address updates to lot area and dimension standards.
3. Page 36. Omit the photo currently located at the bottom left of the page or replace with an image representative of flooding hazards specific to the DSP area.
4. Page 43. Replace the photo with one that depicts a structure currently listed on the City's Historic Register.
5. Page 47. Reformat and relocate the table that identifies structures in the Downtown listed on the City's Historic Register and structures eligible for the National Register, to be located after page 43 before the Topic 1 Policies. In addition, include some photo examples of historic buildings identified in the table.

6. Page 90. Include a statement to clarify that the Downtown Action Plan is underway in Fiscal Year 2019-2020.
7. Page 136. Add the following text to 3.1 Landscaping, Urban Design Guideline #10: Encourage green walls, vines, and shrubbery to hide long bare walls.
8. Page 144-145. Bold the new text “Please note: Permit requirements for different land uses may be changed by City Council Resolution on an annual or as needed basis. Please consult with City staff for current requirements,” included in table 5-1, and add “as described in further detail on page 142” to the first sentence of the note.
9. Page 150. Revise Section E. Access and Improvement Standards to reference the provisions of LBMC Chapter 25.53 shall apply, instead of Chapter 25.52, and omit the text regarding off-site parking, as it is no longer relevant. Special provisions for off-site parking are established within LBMC Chapter 25.52 and more appropriately referenced within the General Development Standards, Section O. Parking on page 164.
10. Page 151. For the Arts District, add a new Section G. for Concept Review that includes similar language as the concept review section for the Central Bluffs District on page 158.
11. Pages 151 and 158. Add text “unless deemed minor by the Community Development Director” to the existing and proposed sections regarding Concept Review.
12. Page 159. Revise text/format for the word landscaping in the Section C(2)(b) paragraph.
13. Page 159. Ensure that edits to this section are incorporated to indicate the following [proposed text underlined for reference/emphasis below]:
 - a. The following standards shall apply to all Downtown Specific Plan Land Use Districts, unless otherwise specified in other land use districts.

The Planning Commission also recommended the following areas for further consideration by the City Council:

- A. Pages 14, 80 and 159. Consider adding clarification to the summary on Page 14, Chapter 3, Topic 8, Policy 6 on page 80, and to the section on page 159 to allow an exception for parcels to be merged together for development purposes that exceed 5,000 square feet for mixed-use development, that would include a mix of non-residential, and market-rate and affordable housing, when located on Broadway, in the Arts District and in the CBD Office District. The Planning Commission recommended staff provide alternatives that the City Council consider and determine an allowable percentage for the different type(s) of housing.
- B. Page 81. Remove reference to Woodland Drive, as the DSP boundary and proposed Arts District borders the Boys and Girls Club property to the north and not Woodland Drive.
- C. Page 82. Remove reference to the Laguna Canyon Planning Study as it was a planning study and not an adopted plan.
- D. Page 157. Add “as determined by the Planning Commission” to the end of the first sentence for section I(2)(b) regarding the additional building height exception in the Central Bluffs District.

- E. Page 156-157. Add an incentive to section I(2) to allow visitor-serving uses above the ground floor in the Central Bluffs District when proposed as part of a proposed Planned Integrated Development project.
- F. Consider the suggestion raised by resident Joe Hanauer regarding incentivizing smaller units in the Downtown, and ask staff to provide specific incentives for City Council consideration and incorporation into the DSP.

Next Steps

The attached Final Draft DSP Update Document, which is the same presented to the Planning Commission at their November 20, 2019 meeting, will be introduced to the City Council for review at their December 17, 2019 meeting. The final draft document is being released approximately three weeks in advance of the meeting to allow the City Council and public additional time for review. Prior to the December 17, 2019 City Council meeting, an agenda bill will be prepared to address the introduction of the document and above noted changes/considerations, where staff will be seeking City Council and public comment on the document.

After the December 17, 2019 meeting, staff anticipates revising the final draft document to incorporate the above noted changes/considerations and City Council direction; then, this item will return to the City Council at a regularly scheduled meeting in January or February 2020 for review of the final draft, including responses to the comments received on the Negative Declaration, and a first reading of the ordinance approving the DSP.

If the City Council or public has any questions regarding the Downtown Specific Plan, they can contact Wendy Jung, Senior Planner, at (949) 497-0321 or wjung@lagunabeachcity.net.

Attachment

Final Draft Downtown Specific Plan Update Document
(Version Dated: October 21, 2019)