

**INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY  
CITY OF LAGUNA BEACH, CALIFORNIA**

1. Project Title: Downtown Specific Plan Update  
Local Coastal Program Amendment 2019-4482  
Zoning Ordinance Amendment 2019-4483
2. Lead Agency Name and Address: City of Laguna Beach  
Community Development Department  
505 Forest Avenue  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
3. Contact Person and Phone Number: Wendy Jung, Senior Planner  
(949) 497-0321
4. Project Location: City of Laguna Beach, Downtown Specific Plan Area
5. Project Sponsor's Name and Address: City of Laguna Beach  
Community Development Department  
505 Forest Avenue  
Laguna Beach, CA 92651
6. General Plan Designation: Central Business District (CBD)
7. Zoning: Downtown Specific Plan Area:  
CBD-1 Resident Serving  
CBD-2 Downtown Commercial  
CBD Visitor Commercial  
CBD Office  
CBD Multiple-Family Residential  
CBD Public Parks  
Civic Art District<sup>1</sup>  
CBD Central Bluffs
8. Description of the Project: The purpose of the Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) is to provide policy direction and implementation measures that serve to guide growth, design and development standards in Downtown Laguna Beach, with the primary objective to preserve and enhance the unique character of the Downtown. The DSP coordinates and is consistent with the City's General Plan. The DSP provides a framework for policies, urban design and land use to be considered and acted upon in a comprehensive, coordinated manner for a range of topics related to the Downtown. The DSP focuses on topics such as village character; identity as an art colony; downtown commercial uses; parking, circulation and public transit; municipal services; hazard planning; view preservation; housing; and special planning areas that include the Central Bluffs District and proposed Arts District.

The proposed project consists of the adoption and implementation of the DSP, Local Coastal Program and Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The updated Specific Plan is a policy- and regulatory-level document that does not include any development proposals; and therefore, it would not directly result in physical environmental effects.

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<sup>1</sup>Proposed to be renamed as Arts District with modification to boundary delineation.

The proposed Specific Plan contains recommendations for various pedestrian and streetscape improvements and opportunity sites that are based on an updated urban design framework and revised urban design guidelines. These recommendations are intended to be used as guidance for the City in implementing these types of improvements at potential opportunity sites as well as undetermined sites throughout the plan area and would not entitle or fund any specific projects. Therefore, although the DSP identifies recommended improvements for specific locations, the recommendations for those sites are not binding on the City and thus would not result in any direct physical changes to the environment. Any future projects that would be implemented consistent with the proposed Specific Plan would require further design and engineering and would be subject to further CEQA review of project-level impacts by the City, and Planning Commission and/or City Council review and approval of required entitlements.

This Specific Plan is the most current update, culminating from a multi-year process that included extensive public outreach and comprehensive review of urban design and land use issues. The revisions to the goals, including the specific policies, guidelines and standards within the document support an overall vision for the future of the Downtown. The key updates to the DSP include:

- Allowing for changes in permitting requirements to occur on an as needed basis in order to incentivize or limit certain land uses in the downtown.
- Fostering opportunities and promoting diversity in housing type and affordability as part of mixed-use development and conversion of existing second-story buildings to help fulfill the need for downtown housing with access to services and transportation.
- Providing for greater flexibility in development standards such as increased building height and simplified parking requirements to meet future needs and growth.
- Establishing an urban design framework that identifies key opportunity sites and provides recommendations on pedestrian and streetscape improvements, such as pedestrian crossings, improved alleyways, and public parklets to make the area more vibrant, walkable and welcoming for residents and visitors.
- Revising urban design guidelines to provide further direction on elements such as site design, architecture and open space to property owners, developers, designers, City staff and appointed and elected officials involved in review of proposed development projects.
- Rebranding of the former Civic Art District as the Arts District to encourage a greater focus on art and cultural uses and to nurture a culture of creativity.
- Updating flexible criteria and development standards for proposed planned integrated developments that incorporate public amenities and/or benefits in special planning areas such as the Arts District and Central Bluffs District.

9. Surrounding Land Uses and Setting: The City of Laguna Beach is located along the Pacific Ocean, generally between Dana Point and Laguna Niguel to the southeast, Irvine to the north, and Newport Beach to the west. Laguna Beach's location between the ocean and the hillsides and canyons led to the current small-town residential community development pattern. Laguna Beach has remained primarily a residential community. Commercial areas are limited to small neighborhood serving and visitor-serving uses dispersed throughout the City, and with a central downtown City center area.

The Downtown Specific Plan area comprises the City's central business district, and is generally framed by Laguna Canyon Frontage Road, the Pacific Ocean, Legion Street and Cliff Drive. The Plan also

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

	Aesthetics		Air Quality		Biological Resources
	Cultural Resources		Geology / Soils		Greenhouse Gas Emissions
	Hazards & Hazardous Materials		Hydrology / Water Quality		Land Use / Planning
	Mineral Resources		Noise		Population / Housing
	Public Services		Recreation		Transportation / Traffic
	Utilities / Service Systems		Tribal Cultural Resources		Agriculture and Forestry Resources
	Mandatory Findings of Significance				

DETERMINATION: On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	<b>X</b>
I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	
I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.	
I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.	
I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.	

Wendy Jung  
Signature

10/21/19  
Date

Wendy Jung, Senior Planner  
Name

encompasses the area called the “Central Bluffs” situated on the south side of South Coast Highway between Laguna Avenue and Sleepy Hollow Lane. In addition, the Plan includes the entrance to the village from Laguna Canyon Road, an area that includes many of the civic and art institutions in town.

10. Other public agencies whose approval is required (e.g. permits, financing approval, or participation agreement): The City of Laguna Beach is the approving agency. Since this project involves an amendment to the City’s Local Coastal Program, the California Coastal Commission is required to approve the project.
11. Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code §21080.3.1? If so, has consultation begun?  
Letters, serving as formal notice of this project, were sent on August 29, 2019 to:
  1. California Cultural Resource Preservation Alliance, Inc. (CCRPA)
  2. Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation
  3. San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians
  4. Juaneno Band of Mission Indians
  5. Tongva Ancestral Territorial Tribal Nation
  6. Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians
  7. Gabrielino Tongva Tribe

As of the date of the preparation of this Initial Study, no requests for consultation have been received from the aforementioned tribes.

Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, public lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and to reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process (see Public Resources Code §21083.3.2). Information is also available from the Native American Heritage Commission’s Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code §5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code §21082.3(e) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**1. AESTHETICS Would the project:**

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	1			X	
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The proposed project does not include any development; however, the DSP update provides for greater flexibility in development standards such as increased building height. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations, discretionary review and must be consistent with the policies of the DSP. In addition, the DSP contains a dedicated topic on view preservation as the hillsides and oceanfront that border and surround the downtown provide many prominent scenic views. The stated goal of this topic is to preserve the downtown views of the hillsides, beach and ocean. The policies included within this topic will serve to protect and enhance view corridors in the downtown. Furthermore, urban design guidelines that address site relationships and views are identified within the Specific Plan. Positioning buildings to frame views rather than obstruct them, and special consideration of the impact on important views to natural features including mountains, ocean and hillsides are imperative to site design.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings or historic buildings within a scenic highway?	1			X	
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The proposed project does not include any development; however, the DSP update provides for greater flexibility in development standards such as increased building height. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations, discretionary review and must be consistent with the policies of the DSP. The DSP also includes a chapter devoted to goals, issue statements, and policies for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing the character of the Downtown. Specific issues are discussed within this chapter and cover various topics including village character. The stated goal of this topic is to “preserve and enhance the village character of the downtown.” Several policies that foster preservation of existing large trees, including heritage trees have been carried over from the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element and included in the DSP. Additionally, historic preservation is addressed within this topic as many of the historic buildings in the downtown such as the landmark Hotel Laguna located on South Coast Highway, display the City’s architectural heritage and serve as models for preserving the downtown’s character into the future. The DSP continues to maintain special planning and design criteria for areas such as the Central Bluffs District and proposed Arts District (existing Civic Art District). Any future physical improvements and site developments are subject to the City’s Design Review process and shall satisfy these criteria, including but not limited to, natural hazards and coastal land feature preservation, historic preservation/infill development, and building scale and design. The village character policies and special planning and design criteria contained in the Specific Plan will protect, improve and adaptively manage these resources as the community evolves.

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	1			X	
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The proposed project does not include any development; however, the DSP update provides for greater flexibility in development standards such as increased building height. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations, discretionary review and must be consistent with the policies of the DSP. The purpose of the DSP is to provide policy direction, guidelines, development standards, and implementation actions that will preserve and enhance the unique character of Downtown Laguna Beach. The essence of Laguna Beach, one of southern California's most picturesque communities, is the distinctiveness and diversity of its landscape setting and eclectic built environment, particularly within the Downtown. Its topography, rock outcrops, vegetation, ocean and coastline are tied to the artistic, historic and scenic image of the City. Highway entrances and corridors showcase the broad qualities of its landscape and set the stage for the experience of downtown and residential neighborhoods. The Downtown's visual character is typified by the built environment, which features a mix of retail, office, restaurant, residential, public, and open space uses set in limited-scale, low-rise development that includes a diversity of building heights and diverse architecture ranging from traditional to contemporary or eclectic. This unique character combined with the pedestrian-friendly environment is what distinguishes it from surrounding cities. The project will serve to ensure that the existing visual character of the Downtown is retained or enhanced.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	1			X	
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The DSP includes an urban design guidelines section that addresses site design, architecture and open space, which identifies design approaches and guidelines regarding windows as well as lighting for parking areas, buildings and streets. Window design is important in activating the pedestrian orientation of the Downtown, but should not be highly reflective nor create issues such as glare. The intent of the lighting guidelines is to encourage design that creates a safe and welcoming downtown environment at night. Other aspects such as shielding, placement and tone of lighting are addressed as a means to prevent glare or intrusion on neighboring properties. Laguna Beach has adopted ordinances to reduce artificial lighting and glare from buildings and outdoor areas. Along with allowing starry night sky views for community enjoyment, efficient lighting reduces electricity consumption and contributes to a more sustainable community by reducing fossil fuel use for electricity production and greenhouse gas emissions.

**2. AIR QUALITY (Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations.) Would the project:**

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	1, 3				X
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The basis for project air quality review in California is evaluating consistency with the Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) regulations. The proposed project relates to the SCAQMD's Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) through the land use and growth assumptions used to forecast projected air pollution emissions in the Basin. The SCAQMD's AQMP provides a blueprint as to how the SCAQMD expects to bring the Basin into attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS). The AQMP is based on the designated land use and allowed density for a project site as described in the various approved General Plans throughout the Basin. To the extent that a proposed project is consistent with the growth assumptions in a General Plan for its jurisdiction, it is also considered consistent with the SCAQMD's AQMP. Such consistency dictates that a project would not create any significant regional air quality impacts because such impacts have already been anticipated within the framework of the regional air quality planning process. The proposed project includes the adoption of an updated DSP and does not include any development, therefore, does not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the AQMP.

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	1, 3				X
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The proposed project does not include any development or changes in land use; therefore, the project will not violate any air quality standard, contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, or result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant. The proposed project will not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations because it is not anticipated to result in any net increase in emissions.

c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	1, 3				X
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See 2(b).

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	1, 3				X
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The proposed project will not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations because it is not anticipated to result in any net increase in emissions.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	1, 3				X
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The project will not create or result in any objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people.

**3. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES** Would the project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	1, 2			X	
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While the proposed project does include urban design guidelines and development standards for the design, installation, maintenance and modification of vegetation, these actions only pertain to vegetation used on developed lots for landscaping purposes; therefore the project is anticipated to have a less than significant impact on sensitive habitats, species, riparian habitats, or other sensitive natural communities protected by regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	1, 2			X	
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See 3(a).

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means?	1				X
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The proposed project does not include development, therefore, no substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means will occur.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	1, 2			X	
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The proposed project is not expected to substantially interfere with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	1, 2				X
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The DSP contains similar policies to the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element on heritage trees and landscapes. The goal being to continue to enhance appreciation and protection of heritage trees and landscapes. The intent of the policies is to give priority to protection of these resources. Therefore, the DSP does not conflict with any local policies protecting tree preservation, and seeks to enhance existing tree preservations policies.

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan or other local, regional or state habitat conservation plan?	1				X
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The proposed adoption of the DSP update does not impact or modify existing development regulations or City policies that would affect plans for habitat or natural community conservation. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations. Therefore, no impact will result.

**4. CULTURAL RESOURCES** Would the project:

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?	1				X
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The proposed project includes the adoption of an updated DSP, which maintains existing historic preservation policies. Policies are intended to encourage preservation of all historic structures, with an emphasis on those buildings identified on the City's Historic Register, as well as encourage the re-use of historically significant buildings. The project would not result in substantial adverse change in a historical resource or archaeological resource. The project would not directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site, or disturb any human remains.



Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	1				X
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See 4(a).

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	1				X
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See 4(a).

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	1				X
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See 4(a).

**5. GEOLOGY AND SOILS Would the project:**

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury or death involving:					
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i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.)	1				X
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**The proposed project includes the adoption of an updated DSP, a regulatory and policy document. The project would not expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure, liquefaction, landslides, or substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil.**

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	1				X
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See 5(a)(i)

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	1				X
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See 5(a)(i)

iv) Landslides?	1				X
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See 5(a)(i)

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or loss of topsoil?	1				X
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See 5(a)(i)

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	1				X
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The project includes adoption of an updated DSP and does not include any development; therefore, the project will not result in an impact with regard to unstable geologic units or soils, on- or off-site landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	1				X
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No development is proposed to be located on expansive soil; therefore, the project will not create substantial risks to life or property.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	1				X
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The project does not include any development and an alternative onsite wastewater treatment system (AOWTS) is not required; therefore, the project does not have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative onsite wastewater treatment systems.

**6. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** Would the project:

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	1, 4			X	
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California’s Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375) requires the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy to reduce per capita GHG emissions through integrated transportation, land use, housing, and environmental planning. Pursuant to SB 375, the Air Resources Board (ARB) set per capita GHG emission reduction targets from passenger vehicles for each of the state’s 18 MPOs. For the SCAG region (including Laguna Beach), the targets are set at eight percent below 2005 per capita emissions levels by 2020 and 13 percent below 2005 per capita emissions levels by 2035. The 2012–2035 RTP/SCS achieves per capita GHG emission reductions relative to 2005 of nine percent in 2020 and 16 percent in 2035. The SCAG Sustainable Communities Strategy GHG emission targets are based on regional “land use” and “housing” estimates that were derived utilizing anticipated growth factors and existing/projected land use densities.

The proposed project includes an update to the DSP policies, guidelines, development standards, and implementation actions, and is not expected to result in a project-level or cumulatively significant impact to greenhouse gas emissions. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations.

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purposes of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	1, 5			X	
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The City's Climate Protection Action Plan (CPAP), which the City Council adopted on February 6, 2007, was developed to set a roadmap for implementing key provisions of the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement. The broad goal is to reduce GHG emissions 7% below 1990 levels no later than 2012, which would mean a reduction in Laguna Beach of 10% from present levels. The recommendations of the CPAP include measures to reduce emissions across the City, with a focus on transportation and activities that consume electricity. The proposed DSP update would be consistent with the CPAP by encouraging increased use of alternative modes of transportation, reducing traffic congestion, as well as providing guidelines that encourage energy conservation design of buildings, use of sustainable building materials, solar powered lights, and increased energy efficiency. As such, implementation of the Specific Plan updates would serve to reduce GHG emissions. Furthermore, the proposed Specific Plan would not directly propose or grant any entitlements for development or change any existing General Plan land use designations and, as a policy and regulatory document, would not result in any direct physical changes to the environment; therefore, it is not expected to conflict with the City's Climate Action Protection Plan.

**7. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** Would the project:

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use or disposal of hazardous materials?	1				X
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The proposed project does not involve the transport of hazardous material or release of hazardous materials into the environment. In addition, no development is proposed; therefore, the project will not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The proposed project includes the adoption of an updated DSP, which will not create a significant hazard to the public or environment.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	1				X
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See 7(a).

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	1				X
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See 7(a).

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	1				X
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See 7(a).

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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e) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	1				X
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**The proposed project does not include any development; therefore, the project will not impair implementation or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response or emergency evacuation plan.**

f) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	1				X
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**The proposed DSP update does not involve specific development. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to evaluation of fire and safety hazards. Therefore, no impact will result from the DSP update.**

**8. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY** Would the project:

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	1				X
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**The proposed project includes the adoption of an updated DSP, which will not violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirement because the project does not include any development.**

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	1				X
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**The proposed project does not include any development. The proposed DSP will not deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge.**

c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?	1			X	
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**The proposed DSP update does not include physical development; therefore, it is not expected that the project would result in substantial erosion or siltation. The DSP update includes similar policies to the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element and urban design guidelines to minimize impervious surfaces and maximize drainage infiltration in parking and landscaped areas, new streetscapes and new development, and to identify opportunities to increase drainage infiltration including conversion of existing impervious surfaces to pervious surfaces. All future development will be subject to compliance with City policies related to hydrology and water quality.**

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner, which would result in flooding on or off-site?	1			X	
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See 8(c)

e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	1			X	
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See 8(c).

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	1			X	
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See 8(c).

g) Place housing within 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) or other flood hazard delineation map?	1				X
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**The proposed project includes the adoption of an updated DSP, a policy and regulatory document. The project does not include any development. All future development will be subject to compliance with City policies related to hydrology and water quality and the City's ordinance regarding floodplain management.**

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures, which would impede or redirect flood flows?	1				X
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See 8(g).

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	1				X
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**The project does not include any development; therefore, it will not expose people or structures to significant risk of flooding.**

j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami or mudflow?	1				X
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**The project does not include any development; therefore, it will not expose people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding or inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.**

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**9. LAND USE AND PLANNING** Would the project:

a) Physically divide an established community?	1				X
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**The proposed project includes adoption of an updated DSP, and will not physically divide a community.**

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	1, 2				X
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**The proposed DSP update is consistent with the City's General Plan and Local Coastal Program (LCP). The goals, design guidelines and implementation programs in the DSP are designed to support and enhance the goals and policies of the General Plan and the LCP. The land use designation of the DSP as Central Business District (CBD) will not change and is consistent with the General Plan. The proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; therefore, no impact will result from the DSP update.**

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	1				X
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**The plan area is not subject to any habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans. There would be no impact.**

**10. MINERAL RESOURCES** Would the project:

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	2				X
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**There are no known mineral resources that have been mapped in Laguna Beach. No California Department of Conservation Mineral Resource zones exist in the City. Project implementation would not result in the significant loss or availability of a known or locally important mineral resource, and no impacts to mineral resources are expected from the project.**

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	2				X
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**See 10(a).**

**11. NOISE** Would the project result in:

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	1, 2				X
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**The proposed DSP update will not generate any noise, groundborne vibration or groundborne noise. The proposed project does not include development; therefore, exposure of people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels would not be an impact, nor would people be exposed to ambient noise levels. Future development will be subject to compliance with City policies and building regulations. Therefore, no impact will result.**

<b>Issues and Supporting Information Sources</b>	<b>Sources</b>	<b>Potentially Significant Impact</b>	<b>Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated</b>	<b>Less Than Significant Impact</b>	<b>No Impact</b>
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b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	1, 2				X
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See 11(a).

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	1, 2				X
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See 11(a).

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	1, 2				X
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See 11(a).

**12. POPULATION AND HOUSING Would the project:**

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	1, 2			X	
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The proposed project includes the adoption of an updated DSP, and does not include any site-specific proposals, or grant any entitlements for development. Future improvements implementing the proposed Specific Plan may include the development of new housing that would directly increase the population in the DSP area, but it is not anticipated that it would induce a substantial population growth in the area. With the majority of the DSP area built out with the majority of parcels dedicated to non-residential uses, new housing opportunities would therefore result from either redevelopment, the potential for second-story additions or conversion of existing second-story commercial uses to residential units. Similar to the City's Housing Element, which contains programs and policies to address the City's future housing needs by encouraging housing that provides diversity in type and cost, the updated DSP includes comparable housing policies with the ultimate goal to preserve and enhance housing opportunities in the downtown area. This impact would be less than significant.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	1				X
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The proposed DSP update will not displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people in the Downtown; therefore, no impact will result.

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	1				X
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See 12(b).

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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**13. PUBLIC SERVICES**

a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:					
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i) Fire protection?	1, 2			X	
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**The proposed DSP update does not include any physical development, or grant any entitlements for development. Therefore, the proposed project would have no direct impact on public services. In the future, build out of the DSP area with both private development and public improvements could increase the amount of persons and buildings in the project area, thereby increasing the demand for fire and police protection and other public services. However, such increase in activity in the Downtown would be consistent with the growth envisioned in the City's General Plan. In addition, given the adequacy of the City's existing public service facilities and the limited expansion potential of the DSP area, the proposed project would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities. Therefore, impacts would be less than significant.**

ii) Police protection?	1, 2			X	
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See 13(a)(i).

iii) Schools?	1, 2			X	
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See 13(a)(i).

iv) Parks?	1, 2			X	
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See 13(a)(i).

v) Other public facilities?	1, 2			X	
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See 13(a)(i).

**14. RECREATION**

a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	1				X
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**The proposed project involves the adoption of an updated DSP, and would not increase the use of recreational facilities. The project does not require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, or otherwise affect existing recreational facilities.**



Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	1				X
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See 14(a).

**15. TRANSPORTATION / TRAFFIC Would the project:**

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	1, 6, 7				X
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The proposed project includes adoption of an updated DSP, and does not include any development. Future development proposals will be reviewed for compliance with the City’s transportation and traffic standards and policies. The proposed DSP includes a topic discussion to address parking, circulation and public transit that includes goals, issue statements and several policies. The new and improved goal seeks to “Develop flexible parking requirements and programs to promote community-desired land use, events, and activities.” Additionally, it states “Continue to utilize parking management techniques, including public transit, to improve circulation and reduce congestion throughout the Downtown.” The discussion of this topic addresses three issue areas: 1) Parking Supply, Occupancy Levels, User Groups and Standards; 2) Parking Management Techniques; and 3) Design, Location and Signage. The policies are consistent with the City’s Parking Management Plan for the DSP area and Laguna Canyon Road, which includes a toolbox of strategies to efficiently manage existing public parking, and outlines a multi-year strategy for improving the City’s parking management and circulation. There are various parking strategies to manage and accommodate parking demand, such as the successful operation of the City’s free trolley system, including service to and from existing and potential future peripheral parking lots. Additionally, through continual implementation of parking technology, such as the smart parking guidance system, City is able to collect real-time parking occupancy data to inform adjustments to rates for public parking meters and lots throughout the Downtown. Through the use of these strategies, overall parking demand will continue to decrease, resulting in more available parking capacity. The City conducted a Parking Actual Demand Study for the DSP area to obtain current data and analysis related to actual parking demand specific to Downtown Laguna Beach. The findings from the parking study indicated that both the required parking for the DSP area per the City’s current minimum parking requirements and the existing built supply of parking spaces for the DSP area relative to actual built square footage are in excess of the actual parking demand. Therefore, by reducing and simplifying the parking requirement to a ratio relative to the actual demand for Downtown Laguna Beach, it will provide for flexibility in land use and facilitate the opportunity for shared parking among land uses of different types, sizes, and peak and non-peak operating hours in the Downtown. Furthermore, continual data collection efforts will assist with monitoring utilization of parking on a recurring basis and will inform and validate changes to parking requirements to maintain an overall occupancy of 85 percent or less over time. The project will not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance, or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system.

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	1, 6, 7				X
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See 15(a).

c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	1				X
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The DSP area is not within the influence area of any airports. Therefore, the proposed DSP would not result in an increase or change in air traffic levels. As such there would be no impact.

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	1				X
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The proposed project does not include any development; therefore, the project will not substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses.

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	1				X
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The proposed project does not include any development; therefore, the project will not impact emergency access.

f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	1				X
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The proposed DSP update includes policies to encourage continual implementation and advancement of the City's public transit system, improve circulation and minimize congestion in the Downtown. The proposed project will not conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities.

**16. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS** Would the project:

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	1				X
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The adoption of an updated DSP would not affect wastewater treatment requirements of the Regional Water Quality Control Board or result in construction of a new water or wastewater facility or expansion of existing facilities. The project does not require any additional water supply or wastewater capacity.

b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	1				X
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See 16(a).

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	1				X
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See 16(a).

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	1				X
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See 16(a).

e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	1				X
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See 16(a).

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	1				X
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**The proposed DSP update will not generate solid waste, as no physical development is involved. Therefore, no impact will result.**

g) Comply with federal, state and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	1				X
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**The proposed project does not include any development and would not impact landfill capacity. The project complies with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.**

**17. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES**

a) Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

**Pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1, prior to the release of a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report for a project, a lead agency (the City) shall begin consultation with a California Native American tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of the proposed project if: (1) the California Native American tribe requested to the lead agency, in writing, to be informed by the lead agency through formal notification of proposed projects in the geographic area that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the tribe, and (2) the California Native American tribe responds, in writing, within 30 days of receipt of the formal notification, and requests the consultation. In this regard, the Community Development Department keeps on record a list of Native American Tribe contacts that have indicated that they are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Laguna Beach geographic area and have requested that the City contact them with the release of environmental documents.**

**City staff have contacted by letter the CCRPA, the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, the Gabrieleno Band of Mission Indians – Kizh Nation, the Juaneno Band of Mission Indians, the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians, the Tongva Ancestral Territorial Tribal Nation, and the Gabrielino Tongva Tribe and requested that they respond with any project concerns or consultation. As of the date of the preparation of this Initial Study, none of the aforementioned tribes requested to provide such consultation to the City in regard to the subject project.**

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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i) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code section 5020.1(k).	1				X
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As indicated above in 17(a), staff contacted by letter local tribe organizations that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Laguna Beach geographic area and have requested that the City contact them with the release of environmental documents. As of the date of the preparation of this Initial Study, no tribes requested consultation or provided information that indicates that the project may impact significant tribal cultural resources. The project would not result in substantial adverse change to any resource listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources or in a local register of historical resources. However, if during future development, such Native American resources are discovered or uncovered, the project development will cease operation until an independent Native American Consultant reviews any resources and can consult the City with regard to future development constraints for protecting such resources.

ii) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.	1				X
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As indicated above, staff contacted by letter local tribe organizations that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the Laguna Beach geographic area and have requested that the City contact them with the release of environmental documents. As of the date of the preparation of this Initial Study, no tribes requested consultation or provided information that indicates that the project may impact significant tribal cultural resources. The project would not result in substantial adverse change to any resource determined to be significant pursuant to 5024.1(c) of the Public Resources Code. However, if during future development, such Native American resources are discovered or uncovered, the project development will cease operation until an independent Native American Consultant reviews any resources and can consult the City with regard to future development constraints for protecting such resources.

**18. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES** Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance (Important Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, or other agricultural resources, to non-agricultural use?	8				X
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The project site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, and has no other potential agricultural resource. As such, no impact is anticipated.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	8				X
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Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Impact	Less than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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The project site has a General Plan land use designation of Central Business District (CBD), which does not allow agricultural uses. The proposal includes a renaming of the Civic Art District to the Arts District and minor boundary delineation with the adjacent CBD Office District. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act Contract, and no impact is anticipated.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), or timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	8				X
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The project site does not contain forest lands or timberland. The City of Laguna Beach does not have any existing Timberland Production Zones. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland or timberland production zones, and no impact is anticipated.

d) Result in the loss of forest land, conversion of forest land to non-forest use, or involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	8				X
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The project site does not contain any forest lands as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g). In addition, the project site is not located in the vicinity of offsite forest resources. Thus, the proposed project would not result in the loss or conversion of forest land to non-forest use, and no impact is anticipated.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Important Farmland or other agricultural resources, to nonagricultural use?	8				X
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The project site is not designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency. Therefore, no Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, Farmland of Statewide or Local Importance, or active agricultural operations will be converted to a non-agricultural use, and no impact is anticipated.

**19. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

**No. Given the previous discussion and analysis in this Initial Study, the proposed DSP update does not have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of rare or endangered plants or animals, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. The proposed project consists of the adoption and implementation of the DSP, Local Coastal Program and Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The updated Specific Plan is a policy- and regulatory-level document that does not include any development proposals; and therefore, it would not directly result in physical environmental effects. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations.**

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of the past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)

**No. Given the previous discussion and analysis in this Initial Study, the impacts of Specific Plan implementation are individually limited and not considered cumulatively considerable. Although incremental changes in certain areas can be expected as a result of future improvements envisioned in the proposed DSP update, all environmental impacts that could occur would be considered less than significant. The proposed project consists of the adoption and implementation of the DSP, Local Coastal Program and Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The updated Specific Plan is a policy- and regulatory-level document that does not include any development proposals; and therefore, it would not directly result in physical environmental effects. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations.**

c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

**No. The proposed project will not cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly. The proposed project consists of the adoption and implementation of the DSP, Local Coastal Program and Zoning Ordinance Amendments. The updated Specific Plan is a policy- and regulatory-level document that does not include any development proposals; and therefore, it would not directly result in physical environmental effects. Future development within the Downtown will be subject to environmental review as required by federal, State and City regulations.**

**20. SOURCE REFERENCES**

1	Draft Downtown Specific Plan Update Document.
2	City of Laguna Beach General Plan – Land Use Element, Housing Element, Open Space/Conservation Element, Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management Element, Safety Element, Historic Resources Element, Noise Element, Landscape and Scenic Highways Element.
3	Southern California Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) regulations and Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP)
4	Senate Bill 375 and Assembly Bill 32.
5	City of Laguna Beach Climate Protection Action Plan.
6	Downtown Specific Plan and Laguna Canyon Road Parking Management Plan.
7	Downtown Specific Plan Area Parking Actual Demand Study.
8	California Important Farmland Finder, <a href="https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/">https://maps.conservation.ca.gov/DLRP/CIFF/</a> (January 16, 2018).