

Public Feedback – May 2024

Overview

On May 16, 2024, City representatives engaged with local residents in a series of public meetings to gather initial feedback and ideas for a new Facilities Master Plan currently in development.

This marks the first phase of development for the Plan, which will assess the present and future needs of more than 288,000 square feet of facilities throughout Laguna Beach. These facilities include public safety buildings, community and art centers, parking lots, the library and more. City representatives hosted four 45-minute stakeholder meetings, each dedicated to a specific topic, including: 1) the Susi Q Center and the Community & Recreation Center, 2) Festival of Arts complex and the Laguna Playhouse, 3) the Animal Shelter, and 4) the Library. Participation in each meeting ranged from 10 to 35 residents, providing valuable community insights.

Participants' input was gathered through a process of notetaking during meeting discussions. Key themes were highlighted on flip charts during the meetings for further community discussion on the given topics. Additionally, resident comments submitted via email prior to these meetings were incorporated into this summary.



Susi Q Center + Community and Recreation Center

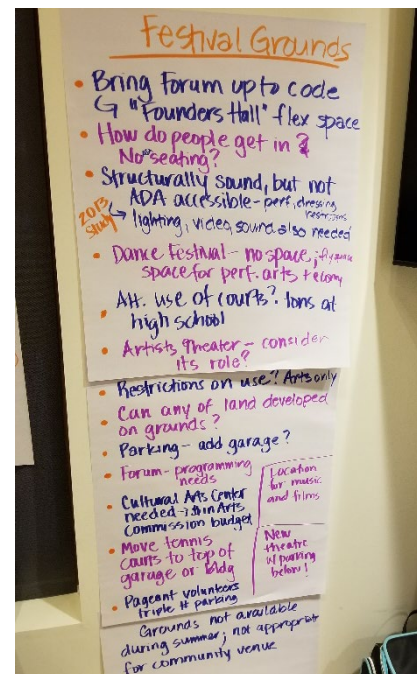
Overall, community members shared themes that include the need for improved parking and accessibility, better utilization of existing spaces, modernization of facilities, enhanced digital and emergency capabilities, and the creation of dedicated spaces for various community and social activities.

1. **Meeting Spaces for Nonprofits:** Continuous need for more meeting spaces for local non-profits.
2. **Mixed-Use Concerns:** Opinions are divided on mix of uses at the Community Recreation Center (CRC). Some believe certain facilities (like offices and safety facilities) are unnecessary for a recreation center.
3. **Utilization and Accessibility:** The CRC is perceived as underutilized and inaccessible. People don't seem to know how to access the CRC and say the gate is frequently locked.
4. **Emergency Preparedness:** Enhancing building functionality with solar power, backup generators, and operational manuals for emergencies.
5. **Digital Capabilities:** Improved digital capabilities for public meetings and additional office spaces.
6. **Parking Management:** Generally, not enough parking available for the facility. Issues with parking management during peak hours; need for better communication and signage.
7. **Outdoor and Social Spaces:** Desire for more outdoor amenities like bocci ball courts, shuffleboard, outdoor lounge space, and social spaces for community interaction.
8. **Community Pool:** Residents suggested ideas for a temporary pool following an upcoming community pool closure, as well as long-term plans such as incorporating a rooftop pool into the Plan.
9. **Solutions for Space:** Suggestions for utilizing space creatively included providing spaces for traditional weddings, a ceramic studio and reviving the room next to City Hall for the dance studio it once was.
10. **Building Expansion:** Consideration of building upward or reconfiguring existing spaces to accommodate more functions and activities.

Festival of Arts + Laguna Beach Playhouse

Feedback from participants clarified the need for additional spaces for performing arts. Ideas for repurposing existing spaces emerged, such as tennis courts and parking structures. Facility structural and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance issues were raised as priorities to address. Finally, parking and expanding facility spaces would help increase accessibility and utilization.

1. **ADA Compliance:** Urgent need to make the Forum theater ADA compliant and update it to modern standards.
2. **Utilization of Existing Spaces:** Suggestions to repurpose existing spaces like tennis courts for alternative uses, including cultural arts centers and parking structures.
3. **Performance and Rehearsal Spaces:** Need for dedicated, properly equipped spaces for performing arts, including rehearsal areas and flexible performance venues.
4. **Parking and Traffic Issues:** Ongoing challenges with parking logistics, particularly during peak tourist seasons and large events.



5. **Parking and Facility Expansion:** Exploration of multi-level parking solutions and expanding facilities like rehearsal spaces, storage, and office spaces. Discussion about potential for artist housing behind the Playhouse.
6. **Support for Performing Arts:** Emphasis on creating dedicated spaces for different types of performing arts, including film, music, and theater, to foster community growth.
7. **Addressing Structural Issues:** Need to address structural and code compliance issues within the Playhouse.

Laguna Beach Animal Shelter

A fairly recent remodel of the Animal Shelter, necessitated by a flood in 2010, was mentioned as improving the site and building generally, but resulted in the reduction of available parking and space for offices and adoptions. Ideas emerged to expand the space and add to its use and accessibility. Additional feedback included upgrading technology and facility resilience in emergencies.

1. **Space and Facility Limitations:** Limited space and outdated facilities constrain the shelter's operations and potential expansions.
2. **Technology and Adoption Space:** Upgrading technology for better animal information display and creating dedication adoption spaces.
3. **Volunteer and Accessibility Needs:** Improving facilities to accommodate volunteers with diverse abilities and making the shelter more ADA compliant.
4. **Emergency Preparedness:** Priority on establishing a power backup system and improving overall facility resilience during outages.

Laguna Beach Library

The predominant themes in the community's feedback are strong support for refurbishing the Laguna Beach Library and maintaining its current downtown location. While it was mentioned that parking and traffic surrounding the library has been an issue, significant opposition to relocating the library or converting the site into a parking structure was apparent. Residents emphasized the library's cultural, historical, and communal importance.

1. **Preservation and Enhancement:** Commitment to keeping the library at its current location while enhancing its facilities and services.
2. **Modernization and Accessibility:** Calls for a comprehensive renovation, including improved study spaces, meeting areas, and aesthetic upgrades.
3. **Parking and Traffic:** Addressing the poor parking and traffic flow around the library, exacerbated by surrounding activities.
4. **Community and Cultural Integration:** Suggestions for incorporating local art, historical sections, and expanding the library's role as a cultural and educational hub.

Additional Commentary

Parking Issues: The primary problem in Laguna is parking. There are suggestions to convert fields into parking lots and explore creative solutions like elevating soccer fields to add parking underneath.

Mobility and Traffic: Need for a mobility plan to improve access to facilities, considering current lack of a bike/pedestrian master plan.

Traffic and Noise: Addressing noise and traffic impacts on neighboring homes.

Appendix

Flip Chart Notes from May Meetings

Community and Recreation Centers

CRC

- Parking needs
- Non-profit meeting space
- Maybe too many uses?
 - Decide what it should be
- Location for pool?
- Gym – opportunity for performance space
- Mobility plan for center?
- Infrequently used? Looks closed...
- Parking or pool in courtyard
- Limited -> designed as school
- Impact of neighbors
 - Use, noise, traffic
- Is chapel needed?
- Wedding spaces needed?
- TK or Pre-K space
- Open studio, support ceramics
- Evaluate bldg. now / 3 years + future
- Pool on garage
- Temp pool on grass?
- Pool, engaging center, safe for neighborhood
- Skate park – incorporate
- How CRC evolve throughout seasons? Lighting...
- Soccer field not accessible
- Ingress/egress – concerns
- Field on top of garage
- Timing = better traffic (youth get dropped off)
- Add gyms + rooms (lifetime fitness)
- Bigger non-profit groups
- “Susi Q South”
- Consider going up
- Be wary of short-term fixes that eat up budget

Susi Q

- Space for non-profit meetings
- Fair weather manual
- Art studio ventilation
- Solar, back up generator etc -> emergencies
- Parking 8-5 only for center

- Better signage, monitoring
- App?
- New office spaces (2 at least)
- Large room in City Hall?
- Is IT up to date? Zoom
- Better use of lawn (bocce, shuffle, yoga)
- 2nd level addition in center?
- Take advantage of youth learning
- Add a casual lounge area (now offices)
- Great relationship with seniors + youth + community (multi-generational)
- Senior only small salt pool

Laguna Playhouse and Festival Grounds

Festival Grounds

- Bring Forum up to code
 - Founders Hall flex space
- How do people get in? No seating?
- Structurally sound, but not ADA accessible – perf, dressing + restrooms
 - Lighting, video and sound also needed (2013 study)
- Dance Festival – no space; fly space; space for perf. arts
- Alternate use of courts? Tons of courts at high school
- Artist theater – consider its role?
- Restrictions on use? Arts only
- Parking – add garage?
- Forum – programming needs
- Location for music and films
- New theatre w/ parking below!
- Cultural Arts Center needed -> \$ in Arts Commission budget
- Move tennis courts to top of garage or bldg.
- Pageant volunteers triple numbers of parking needed
- Grounds not available during summer; not appropriate for community venue

Playhouse

- Add parking garage at back?
- Theater much different animal than concerts... requires practices/rehearsals
 - Hourly rental not sustainable
- Ingress – egress conflicts/turning issues
- Pageant needs silence -> garage would impact -> consider Susi Q?
- Fly space (open air- raise/lower)
- No sprinkler system
- Lights just replaced; AC now
- Interior code issues + roofing
- Lobby, storage, office improvements
- Build over the parking lot?

- Doing some practices at CRC
- Expanded uses/areas (storage, offices, etc) don't need to be on-site
- 150 seat flex space desirable
- Artist housing (maybe behind Playhouse)

Laguna Beach Animal Shelter

- Shelter different from other facilities
 - Major remodel after 2010 flood, reopened 2011
- Limited space is major challenge
- Work on creek reduced parking spaces
- Adoptions currently done in the office space of shelter
 - More dedicated space needed
- Outdoor run space? Currently play yard
- Supporting humans who support the animals
- Tech upgrade, more digital solutions
 - Put in info about animals easily
- Dogs afraid to walk Laguna Canyon Road due to traffic
 - Animals need yard space to run
- Creek and position near hill are constraining
- "Unconditional" for senior dogs coming and Pacific Marine Mammal Center - create more parking pressure
- Office staff currently at police department in City Hall; will move here once new building finished -> more parking pressure
- Ideally, two-story facility – could be open to people relinquishing unwanted pets (can't do now)
- Need indoor space for big dogs to be washed – currently tub with lift, unusable for most volunteers
- More accommodating, inclusive building welcoming to more volunteers
- No real way to make the facility ADA compliant
- Supplemental radio out back supports public works, police, fire, and more
 - No back up, goes down if shelter goes down
 - Grid too hold for battery backup, could use solar
- Power goes down often
- Priority improvements: power back-up, solar panels if building can take
- Noise in shelter -> concrete echoes
- Public walkway connecting to Unconditional and down to dog park
 - Solves dog walking problem on Laguna Canyon

Laguna Beach Library

- Library stays in current location!
- Fairy garden
- More shared spaces
- Build an iconic building (Manhattan Beach) – Multi-story
- More study spaces
- Meeting area – author talks

- Subject to OC library oversight
- Public buildings represent values
- Library needs a facelift
- Showcase literary history in building (poetry contest, festival)
- Highlight overall LB history
- Poetry reading takes up whole library – no space left
- Parking & traffic = challenge
 - Van on demand?
- Bookshop below -> renovation needs
- Parking is dark – lights not working
- Homeless issues
- Mural – literary history
- Sky lights/windows
- Historic feature – multi-story rejected
- Possible to build over the parking?
- Consider another story below grade
- Get rid of dropped ceilings
- LED lights
- Interior aesthetic – art
- Incorporate visual arts (kids are with amazing art in past)
- Second story possibility?
- Kids History of LB Contest!
- Exterior lights
- Restrooms – need more!
- Mosaic on exterior – Art competition
- Air conditioning – 1972!
- Needs solar & heat pump
- Open patio – needs cover/enclosed to be more usable
- Natural energy