

# The Physical Environment

The City of Laguna Beach, situated on a spectacular stretch of Pacific Coastline, encompasses an 8.7-square mile area unlike any other in Orange County. The area includes secluded beaches, pristine ocean waters, steep hillsides, inaccessible canyon bottoms, prominent ridgelines and vast areas of open space that provide a natural buffer, separating Laguna Beach physically from urbanization occurring elsewhere in the County.

## Land Use

Figure 10 illustrates that developed land in Laguna Beach makes up 41% of the total leaving over 59% of the land as recreation/open space and hillsides. Of the developed land, 35% is residential and 4% is commercial/light commercial, including the central business district. Laguna Canyon is the only section of the city zoned for industrial use.

The Laguna Beach General Plan is amended on an ongoing basis. Most recently, in 1998 the City amended the Land Use and Open Space/Conservation Elements, and in 1999 amended the Transportation, Circulation and Growth Management Element.

Over the years, significant zoning changes have taken place, including the reduction of zoning densities by half (1970's), the adoption of more stringent height limitation regulations (1972), the adoption of more



restrictive hillside development standards (1989) and prohibition of internally illuminated signs in commercial areas (1983).

Laguna Beach is made up of distinct neighborhoods, defined in part by the natural landscape and the built environment. Each neighborhood is distinct with its own landmarks and local history (see Figure 11). Hillside living is a predominant characteristic of Laguna Beach which makes view preservation an important issue.

**Figure 10**  
**LAGUNA BEACH LAND DISTRIBUTION**

Land Type	% of Total Land Area
Recreation/open space and hillsides	59%
Residential	35%
Central Business District	2%
Commercial/light commercial	2%
Industrial	1%
Institutional	1%

Source: City of Laguna Beach

Although residential development dominates within the City, a number of significant commercial projects are currently underway. One of these is the Treasure Island Resort, which has recently been approved by the City Council and City voters and is under review by the Coastal Commission. The project proposes the conversion of a 30-acre, closed mobile home park to a new resort community with 275 rooms, restaurants, health spa and meeting rooms. The project also includes 17 single-family homes and 14 condominiums and provides public access to beaches and a park with a bluff walkway.<sup>1</sup> The redevelopment of the Boat Canyon Shopping Center in North Laguna is also underway.

Figure 11  
**LAGUNA BEACH**  
**PRINCIPAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

