



November 1, 2000

Dear Community Member,

The City of Laguna Beach has many fine assets—diverse residents, beaches, hillsides, open spaces, distinct neighborhoods, good schools, fine parks, a vibrant downtown, and a long-standing heritage emphasizing arts and culture.

Our community has fostered a rich and intriguing history of lively events including art, film, and music festivals, and more recently, the popular First Thursdays Art Walks. We have also had a heritage of colorful people who have been our mentors such as Edgar Payne and the early plein air artists who first established us as an art colony, Jim Dilley and Fred Lang who taught us to protect our environment, and Eiler Larsen who instilled the tradition of welcoming visitors. Throughout the years, a unique blend of entrepreneurs, artists, intellectuals, activists, free spirits, and visionaries have continued to imbue Laguna with a unique vitality and creativity.

During the recent visioning process, Laganans have said that they want to retain and enhance the unique small-town qualities that have made Laguna Beach special, and that they view our diverse mix of people and the natural beauty of our city as our most important resources. They want to protect and preserve both of these.

Laganans have also emphasized the importance of maintaining and fostering a community that is environmentally responsible and economically sustainable. While the consequences of environmental responsibility need to be consciously identified, assessed, and taken into account, the goal still needs to be vigorously pursued. In addition, our residents recognize that while tourism drives the economy of the city, tourism has become a major, year-round force and its impacts on our quality of life are extensive. Defining how we coexist with our visitors while preserving our quality of life and our environment is central to planning for Laguna's future.

Our community also desires to avoid a Laguna Beach that is too structured and too perfect. We want a city that nurtures diversity, and values the contributions of residents as well as business people and tourists. A commonly expressed visioning theme is to promote interaction, involvement, and enthusiasm among all our citizenry.

During the last nine months, over 1,000 community members have participated in this visioning process, and their many opinions reflect our city's tradition. Now, we are beginning the second phase of the visioning process—the development of a Strategic Plan. Our mission is to forge a consensus about where Laguna Beach should be going and how to get there.

As we continue with this phase, our debates will be vigorous, passionate, and heart-felt. The process must be inclusive of all interests in our town and representative of all points of view. That is how consensus will emerge. To this end, we urge the participation of all members of the Laguna Beach community.

Sincerely,

The Vision Steering Committee