



To preserve and enhance the unique village character of Laguna Beach

June 23, 2022

City Council
505 Forest Ave.
Laguna Beach, CA 92651

Re: OC Flood Control District channel repairs

Dear City Councilmembers,

Village Laguna has been following the development of this project for some time and welcomes this opportunity to comment on the plan most recently considered by the planning commission.

This area adjacent to the flood control channel is more than just a place for easements for maintaining the creek channel or providing a buffer area within a Caltrans easement. It frames the most important entrance to our city. It should continue the character of the Canyon that we are so dedicated to preserving, and it should be beautiful, creating the setting for the art venues that follow.

From the beginning, you have been concerned about the project's aesthetics, given its prominent location at the entrance to our village, and in April 2021 you voted to pay for more attractive fencing and paving. In August 2021 the Planning Commission reviewed the plans in concept and expressed concerns about the loss of all the site's mature trees. In May of this year the Planning Commission reviewed the plans you are now seeing here and once again was concerned about the proposed removal of all the trees. Commissioners asked about the possibility of (1) saving them with root barriers, (2) repairing only the areas of the channel that are in fact damaged (which would seem to leave most of the trees intact), and (3) increasing the size and/or the number of the trees proposed as replacements. They ended by recommending that you consider their comments on the aesthetics of the project. We hope that you will do that tonight and find ways to include substantial trees in the landscape plan. One option to consider is engineering the structure of the channel wall to accommodate large trees.

We encourage you to assume responsibility for and negotiate enhancements that will save as many trees as possible and replace the others with substantial trees that are consistent with the Landscape and Scenic Highways Element of the General Plan (coast live oaks and California sycamores) and the existing landscaping of the Village Entrance. Please provide a process whereby revised landscape plans will be submitted for public review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Anne Caenn".

Anne Caenn
President, Village Laguna