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Thoughts on making Laguna better

In response to recent issues concerning parking transportation in Laguna Beach — particularly with the new slated Irvine development — I would like to make a few suggestions, which may or may not have been touched upon already.

First, change Laguna from an old-fashioned, car-oriented, parking-meter town, into a modern, cutting-edge beach-town with improved mass transportation, pedestrian-friendly zones, and an outside piazza/sidewalk atmosphere downtown, such as one finds, for example, in the Mediterranean.

Severely restrict parking inside the entire town, and shuttle people into Laguna by bus, rail or both.

Build underground parking structures if possible on Canyon Road, or else coordinate with the Orange County Transportation Authority to run regular connections between Laguna and the surrounding areas.

On the bus or train provide people with brochures, including detailed transportation maps for getting around, as well as coupons to the many local shops/restaurants that help make Laguna so wonderful.

While they are on the bus or train, make sure to play a video loop on flat screen TVs describing the history of Laguna, including its significance in the arts and surfing communities, while also attaining them to the beauty of the land, and most importantly perhaps, the fragility of the ecosystem.

Show them pictures of whales caught in nets, fish that have swallowed plastic bags, or better yet, a picture of the island of trash floating out on the ocean. How big is it now, anyhow — how many square miles? And while you're at it, make sure to tell them not to leave their food unattended on the beach for seagulls to rip apart and munch on. And tell them to pick up their trash — however many signs and reminders it takes.

Unload all the people near where Laguna Canyon Road meets Forest Drive and then have trolleys/buses/trains running around, perhaps along Coast Highway and Cypress Drive in North Laguna, and Coast Highway and Glenneyre in South Laguna, including, of course, bike and pedestrian lanes converging at this main terminal.

The entire Village Area should be converted into a pedestrian shopping mall, with outdoor seating, decorative landscaping, and an area for artists, musicians, skateboarders and others to perform.

People should be funneled to Main Beach and back through this pedestrian mall, and there should be a giant crosswalk/bridge across Coast Highway, and a major stop to go north or south by public transportation — commuter rail preferably — with stops at all major beaches.

Finally, do away with most of the metered parking sites downtown or make some so exorbitantly priced as to discourage use, and create reserved parking for Laguna residents/workers only, and don't make them pay for it. Every household/business should be given one or more passes, with an option to buy visitor passes.

In short, coming to and living in Laguna should be a more enriching aesthetic experience. This should be a pedestrian and bike-friendly town, with an emphasis on the arts, healthy living, supporting local businesses, and keeping the environment clean, however many signs, trash cans, or bag dispensers it takes.

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