

March 25, 2025

To the Mayor and City Council of Redondo Beach,

Thank you for providing space for youth input on the city's strategic plan for the upcoming year. The Youth Commission would like to see a revitalization of the Pier and South Bay Galleria, further optimization of the Beach Cities Transit service, and an overall emphasis on providing "third places."

In Ray Oldenburg's 1989 novel, *The Great Good Place*, he introduces the concept of a "Third Place"—not home nor work/school, but a space for members of a community to gather and interact in a wholesome shared space. In addition, services provided at a third place often do not have a cost barrier, so socio-economic status does not stand in the way of participants finding commonalities.

Though libraries, cafes, and gyms exist, the city's opportunity and intention to improve the Redondo Beach Pier and South Bay Galleria is a prime opportunity to incorporate youth interests into city plans. The key to mitigating the crises of Redondo Beach youth—drug abuse, poor behavior and conduct, and declining mental health—is connection. While our generation does not have spaces such as bowling alleys, arcades, and roller rinks as readily available as they were in the past, there is potential for modern hubs of that kind to serve current youth.

In addition to minimal cost barriers, adequate transportation is also vital for a successful third place. In our teen survey, spanning 214 Redondo Beach adolescents, 32.23% cited transportation as an obstacle to their presence at the Teen Center and 39.25% do not have a means of travelling independently within the city to events and activities. For this reason, we request an improved Beach Cities Transit system, specifically regarding transit timeliness. The BCT is a cost-effective way of travelling between South Redondo, North Redondo, and beyond, but when the bus schedule is unreliable, teens are deterred from the service. The Commission is excited to open the Teen Center at Perry Park this Spring, and luckily, the BCT 102 bus stop at Rindge Lane and Grant Avenue will be .2 miles away, a 3-minute walk. But we hope to see a bus system that is held more accountable and better-timed and also better advertised among youth. Improved and reliable public transit will not only help close the gap between city youth without transportation and the Teen Center, but can also improve their sense of independence.

In the age of high academic standards in both middle and high school and overloaded schedules filled with time-consuming and pricey extracurriculars, teens need spaces to unwind and spare their wallets. 93.43% of survey respondents said plain "hangouts" were their favorite social activities. Redondo Beach teens do not need elaborate events and spaces, just *a* space to express themselves, explore new talents, and engage face-to-face. Specifically regarding the Redondo

Beach Pier, besides a lack of affordable activities, other factors that deter teens are aesthetics, cleanliness, and general perceived safety. Though RB youth have notable commodities at the pier such as a skate park, a shift towards more family-friendly, affordable, and appealing stores and restaurants would increase youth attendance and satisfaction.

Based on the 170 written responses we received in our survey, Redondo Beach teens are eager to interact with each other, they just don't have the space. In addition to the reopening of the new-and-improved Teen Center, I hope the City Council considers the concept of a third place as a golden key to connecting Redondo Beach youth and igniting passion and social responsibility.

Sincerely,

Redondo Beach Youth Commission