

March 23, 2025

To the Mayor and City Council of Redondo Beach,

Introduction

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 waterfront, increased E-bike safety and awareness efforts, promotion of the 2028 Olympics and World cup, and continued commitment to mental health efforts in Redondo Beach.

Revitalization of the Waterfront

Public, non-privately owned waterfront spaces (often called "blue spaces") are vital for children and teenagers because they promote mental and physical health, foster social equity, and facilitate educational opportunities, according to the California Coastal Commission. Unlike private developments that restrict access, public waterfronts act as "democratic commons" that bring people together, reducing social disparities and improving quality of life for all, regardless of economic status.

The Youth Commission urges the City Council to invest in these spaces despite the pressure to privatize waterfront areas for ventures like Beach Life concerts or private clubs. The community will benefit more from local parks near the water, cafes and restaurants, or public art projects. Areas near Ruby's and Captain Kidd's remain a parking lot, but productive urban design could utilize the ocean view and turn it into a blue space. These blue spaces lower stress, improve mood, and enhance psychological well-being, often more effectively than green spaces. Public waterfronts ensure that children from all socioeconomic backgrounds can enjoy the water, rather than having it reserved for private owners. For teens, public spaces act as a "third space" outside of home, school, or work where they can build social cohesion and feel a sense of belonging. Accessible waterfronts encourage active recreation, including swimming, walking, and paddling, which fights obesity and fosters better physical health.

Additionally, local artists can showcase their art near the water, as they have attempted to do on the Redondo Pier. Public art enriches communities by fostering cultural identity, enhancing public spaces, and stimulating local economies. It increases community pride and cohesion while ensuring access to art outside of galleries, turning ordinary streetscapes into vibrant, engaging, and memorable places for everyone. Turning deserted spaces into beautiful beachfront art, open to the public, will make the city better for teens and adults alike. The Youth Commission strongly suggests the Council takes into account the impacts of blue spaces and community art projects – which give our city life and purpose.

E-bike Safety & Awareness

According to Cornell University, e-bikes have a projected sale of over 2 million units by 2028, a large majority of which are of users who use E-bikes as they commute from home to work or school. While these vehicles offer convenient transport and lower carbon footprint, a study at Harvard University found that e-bike injuries have more than doubled each year, going from 751 in 2017, to 23,493 in 2022, proving how safety is of vital importance. In 2023, the Beach Cities Health District (BCHD) conducted a survey to compare the amount of traditional pedal bikes to electric bicycles. The high schools of Mira Costa and Redondo Union had 75-88% of the bicycles were ebikes, showing the growing need for bicycle support regulations for safety, especially of students, in the South Bay and Redondo Beach.

Keeping the safety of students and residents alike in mind, the Youth Commission strongly supports the idea of expanding the funding and support of the introduction of safer bike pathways in Redondo Beach. This is especially pertaining to routes that students take to school, particularly Redondo Union High School. We would also smile highly upon a reconsideration of Redondo's part in the South Bay Bicycle Master Plan. An additional proposal is the continued and increased promotion of E-bike safety, awareness, and information, especially pertaining to documentation of E-bike serial numbers, emphasized by our Police Department.

The Youth Commission would like to establish this as an especially pressing matter, devoting multiple meetings this year to information surrounding E-bikes in Redondo Beach and at Redondo Union High School.

LA28 Olympics & World Cup

The Youth Commission strongly supports the continuation of Goal 1.3 and asks that the City Council consider giving the Youth Commission an active role in how Redondo Beach engages with the 2028 LA Olympics and World Cup. With these historic global events on the horizon, we see a real opportunity for our city to celebrate what makes it special, shine a spotlight on local businesses, and bring the community together in a meaningful way.

With that in mind, the Youth Commission is proposing a community centered initiative focused on local memorabilia and community events that reflect the spirit and identity of Redondo Beach. We recommend that the City either establish a new committee or designate an existing one to oversee this effort. Our vision includes engaging residents directly in the creative process, generating excitement around The Games, and partnering with local businesses to promote a positive economic impact throughout the city. We also hope to explore collaboration with neighboring Beach Cities to expand the reach of these efforts. The Youth Commission believes that with the right support, Redondo Beach can create something that truly represents our community on a global stage and leaves a lasting impression on residents and visitors alike.

Mental Health Services

The Youth Commission strongly supports Goal 2.2, which outlines the city's continued commitment to mental health access across city limits. The strategic goal specifically resonates with the Youth Commission's continued desire to improve upon teenagers' feeling of belonging. Over the past two years this commission has been proud to call the City Council a partner in opening and maintaining "3rd spaces" for teens, which encourage community specifically for teenagers and kids alike. Through our partnership we have seen growth specifically at our teen center, which has become a cornerstone in the youth community.

Beyond "third spaces" our city has made historic investments in "one stop shop" mental health organizations like Allcove, which provide a space and a place for our community to have mental health access. However, 3rd spaces are simply one part of the solution towards the adoption of a broader and more connected youth community. For those deep in isolation, and for those struggling with mental health issues, especially given the digital age, our city and its services need to be there for them. In 2023, the Centers for Disease Control found that 40% of high schoolers surveyed felt a feeling of sadness or hopelessness in the past year, and 20% of respondents reported seriously considering committing suicide in the past year. While national data illustrates these trends, the issue of mental health transcends down to local communities including our own. According to the LA County Outpatient Center, every 1 in 3 youths face mental health challenges. By targeting this issue at the local level as the goal outlines with a mental health officer and partnership with surrounding cities, we believe these challenges can continue to be addressed and managed.

What the city has done, by opening Allcove and being a partner with the youth of this city, has been transformational in creating spaces that we can rely on and depend on. We are proud to be in a city that prioritizes the mental health goals of all, and we are confident that with the completion of Goal 2.2, the city can continue to be a leader in the mental health space.

Conclusion

Thank you for considering youth perspective on the city's Strategic Plan, and we hope that you again consider our proposals surrounding the Pier, E-bike services, LA28 and World Cup promotion, and city-wide mental health services.

Sincerely,

The Redondo Beach Youth Commission