

UPTOWN PLANNERS

Uptown Community Planning Group Meeting Minutes

May 7, 2024

Present: Martin Alonzo (arr 6:10), John Barney, Mary Brown(arr 6:32), Matthew Brown, Dylan Brynn, Matt Driver, Patty Ducey-Brooks, Juli Hyde, Laura Kuffner, Don Liddell, Stu McGraw, Tami Ratliffe, Mike Singleton, Mat Wahlstrom, Jim Walsh, Susan White

Absent: Mary McKenzie

I. Board Meeting: Parliamentary Items/ Reports

A. Introductions/ Roll Call

1. Call to order at 6:03 PM
2. Meeting opened

B. Adoption of Agenda and Rules of Order

MOTION to approve: Susan White, second Juli Hyde
Approved unanimously
Chair abstains

Reports from Officers and Representatives

C. Secretary - Approval of Minutes of April 2, 2024

MOTION to approve: Susan White, second John Barney
Approved unanimously
Chair abstains

D. Treasurer's Report - None

E. Balboa Park Committee Report – None.

Chair requests volunteer Representative to fill open Uptown Planners' seat on this committee, recognizing that with the current CPG issue this appointment may not happen.

Two volunteers provided brief statements about their qualifications and why they were best fit to serve.

- **Mike Singleton** – previously served on Balboa Park Committee for almost 10 years, represented UP for approximately 5 years. Spends a lot of time in the park and professional background as Park Planner for park design and citywide park master plans. Working with Bankers Hill Community Group to try to get more amenities for West Mesa in Balboa Park. High-level of interest, wants to see park improved and preserved.

- **Matt Driver** – have not previously served on any Balboa Park boards. However, I grew up in the neighborhood and have a deep history here. My family raised here, my grandfather has been here since 1906, and our family has remained. I think the fact that I don't have history on the board would allow me to bring a new perspective. I spend a lot of time in Balboa Park with my children and wife. I am interested in preserving the park and making it better for future generations.

Board comment:

Don – Matt, I really respect your motivation and based on what I've seen so far, I'm counting on that going forward. I've known Mike for 25 years and I think he will be great, I hope no one will object.

Public comment:

Question for Mike: What kind of amenities are you talking about for the park?

Ans: We've been petitioning the city to do public outreach to identify what the community feels would be most appropriate. We've done surveys in the past and have come up with things like: expanded playground, better walking and biking through the park, Kate Sessions nursery volunteer center, community center potentially at the Fire Alarm Building – those are the main ones. Requires public to have better input.

Chair appoints: Mike Singleton as Representative and Matt Driver as Alternate Representative. Chair will follow-up regarding the process to proceed.

F. Airport Noise Advisory Committee Report – Chair to appoint Uptown representative to fill open seat on the Committee, requests volunteers. Responsibilities were included with Agenda.

John Barney volunteered and appointed by Chair.

G. CPC Report – Mat Wahlstrom, Rep.

- Blueprint San Diego – CPC members discussed the limited timeline to share info about this project with their CPG prior to a vote, despite this concern it was approved 14-9.

- Update to Council Policy 600-24 and CPG Recognition – some discussion about CPG recognition, however, as it only applies to Uptown at this point and CPC already rendered its decision when it sent letter to City Council recommending only elected members serve on CPGs, nothing further. It appears City Council is moving forward with the CPC recommendation, and any appointed group that is chosen to replace an elected group can only have as its first order of business the preparation for an election to ensure all its members are elected by the community. The currently existing CPG with elected members, will continue to serve on all other matters until after an election is held.

H. Reminder of requirement to complete Brown Act training – Chair reminded Board Members to complete all online Brown Act Training requirements including the test and submit by June 2024, per Shannon.

I. Chair's Report – Jim Walsh

1. Status of pending/ unresolved inquiries – there were 2 unresolved inquiries, however, down to one as the City responded to the concern about safety at intersection of Monroe & North Ave in University Heights. The city plans to install a safety crosswalk because it's a speeding area. The complainant is objecting to this resolution, because he believes it is insufficient, that is in process. We have one more complaint that is outstanding re: safety concern at intersection of El Cajon and Park Blvd. Chair followed up with Transportation Dept and response pending.

2. April 25 meeting with Councilmember Whitburn's staff – Chair requested meeting with Councilmember Whitburn to introduce himself as new Chair, briefly discuss concerns re: Plan Hillcrest and invite Councilmember to this meeting. Councilmember unavailable so Chair met with 4 members of his staff – reviewed general concerns with Plan Hillcrest and asked Councilmember to re-think his position on CPG representing Uptown and to support Uptown Planners. Staff response was they would relay this info to the Councilmember.

3. May 21 City Council Meeting at 2PM – City Council to meet re: CPG Recognition city-wide and amendments to city policy 600-24

II. Non-agenda Public Comment

- Sharon Gehl – Stephen Whitburn is at Budget Meeting tonight

- Lu Rehling – encourage board and audience to attend City Council Meeting on 5/21 and stand up for Uptown Planners so it may continue.

III. Representatives of Elected Officials, Agencies, and Institutions

A. Ryan Darcy, Chief of Staff and Logan Braydis, Community Representative from Councilmember Whitburn's office –

Logan reported there will be a virtual Budget Townhall with Independent Budget Analyst via Zoom on May 15 at 6:30PM. Tonight, there is an in-person Budget Townhall which the Councilmember is attending. This week City Council is reviewing budgets from each department to understand where city resources are being allocated and to hear from the public about their priorities. Tomorrow there is an opportunity for public input at Council chambers at 6PM, also available virtually via Zoom or City TV. Mayor will release his revised budget on May 14. Councilmembers will issue their Final Budget Priority Memo to the Independent Budget Analyst (IBA) on May 23. The IBA will release their final report on recommended revisions to the Mayor's FY 2024 – 2025 proposed budget June 5. Encourage all to participate.

Public Comment

- Are there competing committees like this that the Mayor has to select? I don't think the community is aware of this.
Ans: In 2022 reforms implemented to make CPGs more representative of the community, two groups submitted competing applications: Uptown and La Jolla. Uptown is the only one going to committee.
- City policy is that preference be given to existing CPGs.
-This board has already been elected by the residents of Uptown and the Council making a decision to disband/replace them is overturning an election and seems undemocratic
Ans: (Logan) my e mail is on the Agenda if anyone wants to send their thoughts.
- Can both groups exist? Where can we see the leadership of the different groups?
Ans: the applications for both groups are public documents and available from the Councilmember's office

Board Comment

- Don – what happens next with CPG process on May 21?
Ans: City Council will meet 5/21 to review CPG recognition and amendments to Council policy 600-24. They will vote on Uptown Planners or Vibrant Uptown package.
- Mat W – will there be a question on the CPG ballot for people to choose if they want to be represented by Uptown Planners or Vibrant Uptown, so they can decide which group they want to represent them
Ans: if the other group is chosen, this board could choose to run in that election

B. Sophie Barnhorst, Mgr. Govt & Community Relations at Airport – will attend this meeting quarterly to provide updates. Huge project going on and appreciate your patience with construction and traffic. Project is 60% done. The first 19 gates will open Sept. 2025. First phase of parking structure will open Aug. 2024. Have exciting Art Exhibit in the terminal. New air service with addition of an airline and more British Airways flights.

Public Comment

- Any plan for airport to have shuttle service, at least around the urban core? Uber rates up, \$30 to airport each way.
Ans: currently offer the San Diego Flyer, a free electric shuttle from Old Town Transit to Airport and SANDAG studying options and collecting data, we are partners in the process.
- Is blue super shuttle coming back?
Ans: Still offered
- Any plans to clean-up Old Town transit center? It's disgusting and visitors first intro to San Diego
Ans: Logan will to check (D3 Councilmember is Chair of MTS)

Board Comment

- Mat W – is there still plan to have an inside track along the fence for shuttles?
Ans: yes, and there will also be an On-access road so anyone driving to the airport can use, it will take 45k cars/day off Harbor Dr to reduce congestion. Will open in Sept. 2025.

IV. Information Items

- A. District 3 Budget Town Hall – Via Zoom** Presentation with the Office of the Independent Budget Analyst: May 15, 6:30 pm, via Zoom. Link is on the Agenda. Pre-registration is requested.

V. Consent Items – none

VI. Action Items

A. America’s Finest City 47th Annual Half Marathon – Request support of event scheduled for August 18. Requester: Ellen Larson, In Motion Events (unable to appear in person)

MOTION to provide letter of support for AFC 47th Annual Half Marathon - Mat W, second John Barney

Approved unanimously

Chair abstains

B. Response to the city’s proposed amendment to the Uptown Community Plan (aka Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment)

1. Introduced representatives from city Planning Department available to answer questions: Coby Tomlins, Program Mgr., Community Planning, Phil Trom, Program Mgr., Sustainability & Mobility, Shelby Buso, Chief Sustainability Officer, Sustainability & Mobility

-Chair requested all to reserve their questions for Tom Mullaney, Mat Wahlstrom, and Planning Dept staff until after all the presentations finished

2. Uptown United’s response to proposal and DEIR – Presenter: Tom Mullaney, President, Uptown United. Presentation materials available with link on Agenda.

As background information, Tom explained that Uptown community worked for 7 years on the prior Community Plan Update, 2009 – 2016. The final document was a high-density growth plan containing enough allowable development capacity for 50% more housing units and population. Based on city growth projections, there was enough growth potential for 50 years. Upon adoption, City Council expressed support for this plan covering 6 blocks in the core of Hillcrest.

The new plan has been expanded to a far-reaching project changing the land use for an area 14 times as large as the original plan. Tom reviewed/discussed the highlights of his presentation, and urged the Board to reject the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment as it is, and to require the city to re-evaluate and scale it back to something that fits the current growth forecast. Uptown is not downtown. Tom stated, he believes the residents and business owners of Uptown would be willing to work with city staff for a realistic, meaningful, and beneficial plan.

3. Plan Hillcrest Committee Report - Presenter: Mat Wahlstrom, Chair, ad hoc Plan Hillcrest Committee Presented ‘Plan Hillcrest Requests...’based on specific recommendations made at 12/5/23 Committee Meeting, believe should be incorporated into whatever motion is made by Uptown Planners, as the Committee did not get a chance to make a motion to the full board with this information, due to the time constraints imposed by the city.

Background information prior to that covered in Report – the first update to Uptown’s Community Plan of 1988 was approved in November 2016, following nearly 8 years of work by the community. Community Plans normally remain in place for 20 years, however, in Nov 2019, we heard the city was thinking about something called ‘Plan Hillcrest.’ From March 2020 until Oct 2023 ‘Plan Hillcrest’ was all speculative discussion, feeling things out, asking “what would people like?” On Oct 6, 2023, the Planning Department released its first Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment DRAFT along with a notice that the deadline to submit comments was November 17, 2023. Report background information picks up here - see Report.

Requests from ad hoc Plan Hillcrest Committee Meetings:

Four Overall Observations summarize the community's concerns below with additional detailed comments organized by element:

- 1) Mobility is speculative – transportation must come first
- 2) Density is disproportionate and inappropriate – new zoning, CC-3-10, CC-3-11, RM-4-11, would increase density by 100% and 137% beyond current maximum, more than allowed downtown
- 3) Recreation, Public/Safety Facilities and Historic Preservation are deficient – Hillcrest is the only one of the six Uptown neighborhoods without a park or open space of any kind, yet no plan for either is proposed
- 4) Land value capture is nonexistent – the up-zoning would double existing land values with no requirement for new affordable housing or to preserve naturally occurring affordable housing

Chair recognized the Committee members for all the work that has been done on Plan Hillcrest.

Public Comments/Questions for Tom Mullaney, Uptown United

-Is it true that San Diego has by far the worst parking situation in USA?

A: Didn't say much about parking. New urbanist philosophy if take away enough parking people will use transit, I don't think that's true. I believe what happens is you attract some people who want to live without a car. Studies done show that circling while looking for parking contributes to air pollution. Hard to provide enough parking at your site, may need a parking structure in Uptown like N Park.

– Was told the requirements for amount of parking to be included in a new building was mandated by the state.

A: Not sure how much is coming from the state, sometimes the city adds on

-Every time I'm on Next Door there are comments about lack of parking, like pink bldg on Goldfinch/Washington. How come parking is not being addressed in these reports in conjunction with mobility?

A: When they took away parking on 30th, the residential side streets absorbed it. If take away pkg on University and Robinson, we're stuck, no place else to go. Not sure where people will go, depends on how far willing to walk. I'd like to have a survey done a year after projects go in re: how many people have a car? If developer puts in a big project without parking, in a 3-4 block area all parking will be used up.

-I thank Tom for his presentation, and urge Uptown Planners to reject this Plan

-Why didn't Tom talk about climate change? Do you think we have a housing shortage? Confusion about ministerial – if developer follows all the rules, then they can get ministerial approval.

A: Very concerned about climate change, previously served on Executive Committee of Sierra Club, the question is how to get there. See pg 6 item I. for list of organizations objecting to this plan. State Dept reports: SD County between 2015-2023 lost 5k people, but added 40k housing units and vacancies are normal at ~5-6%.

-No one seems to be talking about the massive "heat sinks" we're creating in San Diego. We're wiping out all the trees and little gardens around houses and building massive concrete buildings. That's a huge concern for people, what are they going to do run A/C all the time? That's not environmentally friendly.

-Important to mention the environmental costs of demolition, and of new construction, especially podium based concrete construction for these tall towers. Other cities doing a lot to maintain naturally occurring affordable housing like conversions of office space to residential space, with great success. Circling for parking harms the environment, having lived in San Fran, I know how much harder it can get. Hillcrest is the one place that does not have a park. Balboa Park belongs to everyone, it's a big difference. Tree canopy also very important and takes a long time to grow.

-Karen Ebner - I'm a Democrat and I marched with Todd Gloria years ago on climate action change. I am opposed to this Plan Hillcrest Amendment. I was asked to bring this comment from Bill Walton here tonight as he was unable to attend: "Plan Hillcrest is not based on fact but fiction. Our population is in decline, and we have already built enough housing to accommodate residents through 2050. Just say NO to Plan Hillcrest. Keep Hillcrest a community that will thrive and not

be in gridlock due to false promises.” I was in gridlock trying to get to this meeting. There were ambulances and police cars. I don’t see how the Planning Dept can justify what they propose to do.

Public Comments/Questions for Planning Department

-Roy Dahl – the real problem with this plan is the transportation element. You took away a trolley line down Park Blvd that would address global warming and get people to work without their cars and allow for density all along that trolley line where it’s supported. That’s been replaced by a tram that disrupts the current bus line and it doesn’t work. Where is MTS? SANDAG did this change during COVID, there were no hearings, no discussions. I made all this clear to the Planning Dept, I expected them to come back with answers. That didn’t happen because the Planning Dept not allowed to go outside the lines. A big piece of the problem here is SANDAG and we don’t have MTS response as to how that tram would work -- and then a tram isn’t going to be built for 25 years anyway. If you do not do transportation you are not addressing global warming and you are not providing additional housing elements. If you pass this plan as is, we will be grid-locked, and developers will stop building. You will get a Houston type plan, which is ‘just do what you want.’

-Bill Kelleher – I had a business downtown for a long time, historical travelers, sent people to Europe. I traveled to Europe a lot and got very excited about vibrant cities, San Diego was not one of them. I’m in favor of the growth of SD, increased density can happen here, but in cities where it works they have great public places: parks & plazas. This plan does not have that, we will only have a few extra feet of sidewalk. Here is a crazy idea I want you to consider, the block Rite Aid is in will get developed at some point, that should be a public park, that should be the heart of Hillcrest. That would be a great public space. This is moving down the tracks, it’s all about housing, it doesn’t have the public spaces element that should be included with this plan. Push, push, push the City for public spaces, this plan is very poor with public spaces.

Mary – everyone is talking about open space open space, but it seems no one is thinking about the sky when they are talking about open space, which it is and will be blocked. Who is doing the architectural review on these ugly boxes that are being built. If you’re going to build let’s have some style. I currently live in the heart of Hillcrest, and I’m considering taking my tax money and moving out of the city of SD, because I don’t want to live where Hillcrest is going.

–Add to the last two comments. Take that Rite Aid property through eminent domain, pay full price and make it an 8-story parking garage and the whole top of it a park with amazing views.

- I am concerned mostly with gridlock. I live near two major Trauma Centers. It’s already challenging for ambulances and fire trucks. If you add this density, what’s going to happen with the ambulances

Lu – Question about city policy. According to city policy, amendments to community plans will be made in “partnership” with CPGs. Why has there been such a lack of partnership on this entire plan. Instead of partnerships we got a lot of presentations and listening to specifics to be addressed, and few were adequately addressed, some were ignored and none in partnership. Why not? Why the lack of partnership, because there are so many good ideas here and so much expertise. No one is saying we don’t want anything to change. We would have been able to contribute so much collaboratively, but what we got were dog and pony shows and listening sessions.

A: Shannon met with a lot of different groups and not just this planning group. We went through comments trying to strike a balance. We plan to go to Planning Commission May 30.

Every single comment has been looked at, it’s a complicated network.

-Want to hear from Tom about the balancing of interests of residents, citizens and developers –

A: If the plan was cut in half it would still be grossly excessive.

-Can't wrap my mind around this reason for this big push for density when many people are leaving SD. Who is moving into all these apts, with rents so high. They build because we supposedly have a housing crisis, but really we don't.

Public Comments/Questions for Mat (some directed to Planning Dept)

Mat –I'd like to answer some of the questions already asked as it may address questions for me. First, I want to thank Roy Dahl. He is a professional Transportation Planner and was the Chair of the ad hoc Plan Hillcrest Committee from the start until last fall, he is a knowledgeable resource and I thank him for staying with it. Per Core Logic, CA is now at 35% institution purchased properties rental units and Air BnB. Parking - in 2019 city decided to eliminate parking for development, with no requirements. I thank Tom for mentioning the terms of the Grant, by taking that money the city accepted an obligation to increase the number of units already allowed by 10,000 – 15,000 units.

Roy Dahl – one thing I forgot to mention that's important is level of service vs vehicle miles traveled. Level of service is the way planning has been done forever and now it's gone because it didn't allow for things people thought would be meaningful. Fortunately, they did a level of service analysis and we flunked and if we build more, we will get more F's. SANDAG has a great simulation model for vehicle miles traveled and they entered all the things that are going to happen in the Plan and it tells us everyone who lives in Hillcrest is going to drive 60% less..

Sharon – we don't have enough housing in SD, we need more housing.

Lu – Mat addressed part of this. It's the idea of this trickle down economic supply, if you just have more supply, you will have more housing for the people who want it and prices will go down. But, if you have outside investors, institutional investors and foreign investors - when you convert to a renters market, rents are too high, but for people who want to do entry level housing and enter the real estate market as property owners this model disincentivizes and makes it harder and harder to do.

– is Plan Hillcrest being pushed through as a ministerial project

A: No, the Plan will go to City Council

-I live here in Uptown and the Plan falls apart because we won't have all those jobs in Uptown which means people will commute and they are not going to do it on bicycles. I encourage the board to reject the Plan, the community does not seem to be engaged yet. This needs to slow down

Ken Perilli – what exactly does this plan accomplish at the end of the day? What is the ultimate benefit of this plan

A: provide more housing, support LGBTQ community - sustainability and mobility

Let the public put pressure on the project for good design

-It seems like there's been project creep with this Plan. The 2016 Plan was for a significantly smaller area there seems to be no good explanation for the increase.

Geoff Heuter – Complete Communities should be suspended when you do a plan update, adding all this hidden density doesn't make any sense.

Board Comments/Questions

Mat W – I want to clarify for when we get there, in ‘Plan Hillcrest Requests’ the stricken sections were approved 12/2023 and no longer apply or may be modified and the ‘underlined’ sections are the suggested replacements.

Tami – Did you address the homeless in this plan? Do you know the average rents for units currently in Hillcrest? Any idea if developers will be required to build rental units vs condos for purchase? High density in Hillcrest will impact the surrounding areas and access to the stores in Hillcrest, it’s already hard to get into Hillcrest.

A: No plan for homeless beds

John – I used to live in NYC and any new building required 30% affordable housing. Is there any program like that here? I have a full-time job and I rent and can barely afford the rents here as it is. It’s ridiculous to pay ~\$3k for a ‘shoebox’. I think the housing exists here, but what we don’t have is the ‘affordable housing.’ The increase in homeless people is a response to the high rents. You have all these new places that are empty.

Susan – Where is the infrastructure to support all this increased density? I don’t see it and for me that’s #1.

Dylan – I thank everyone for coming out tonight to talk about this. I think it’s really clear that the entire Hillcrest community is really invested in what’s going on with this Hillcrest Plan like everyone on this Board and I hope the city will take the community’s input into account.

Juli - the proposed increase in density is huge, adding 35,000 people when all of Uptown is currently 50,000 according to SANDAG. Contrary to what is stated in the Guiding Principles about ‘preserving the qualities that make Uptown unique’, what the Plan proposes will destroy it. Huge high rises will block the sun and air, the required transportation is not addressed, there are no plans for parks, a infrastructure plan in general is missing. If those things are not in place, what is to prevent a developer from cherry-picking and building the tall high-rises allowed in the plan, at which they will make the most profit. The plan must include transportation, parks and infrastructure FIRST before it can proceed. This change is too big to rush through.

Dylan – Are there ways to implement a step system e.g. transit and infrastructure must go in first and then density could be addressed based on that.

Mat W – We need to get to recommendations and then a motion. It would show a real commitment if new residential bldgs. without parking had a deed restriction requiring their residents to agree that they do not and would not own a vehicle. It would solve many issues. What can we expect to see in the 3rd DRAFT in response to our comments tonight? The ‘Plan Hillcrest Requests’ were done by page number and in sequential order this time.

Stu – I was Chair of Plan Hillcrest sub-committee until recently. It was only in Oct 2023 when we began receiving substantive info. We’ve talked about meetings for years, but most of the time the meeting focused on things like “what kind of trees do you like, how about this paint on the crosswalk”? We were not talking about things like the changes in mobility. Then suddenly in less than a year we’re supposed to push this through. I respect the collaboration that went into this working with Shannon, Coby and Phil. We got into the issues, like what happens when you turn portions of Robinson and University into one-way streets....? Thankfully Roy was there to teach us something about mobility. I’m really concerned that this is being rushed through and can’t think of any good reason to do that, so I have a Motion.

Chair – will allow all Board Members to speak before motion presented

Mike – a lot of discussion tonight and it's jumped around. Some are very valid concerns people have brought up, but some of it in my opinion is based on faulty premises. There is some common agreement from a professional, political and planning standpoint. There are just a couple of items I want to mention. I'm not trying to counter anyone's disagreement with parts of the Plan, but there are some basic principles. First sprawl causes much greater environmental impact, heat island affects, greater greenhouse gas emissions than do miles traveled when compared to infill development, that's scientifically known. Climate change is more negatively affected by low density, infrastructure is more intensive in low density sprawl and resources for building is more intensive. There will be population growth, it will happen. Mostly the reason people leave places like SD is the cost of housing. Population based on natural ingrowth will happen and if enough housing is not provided your kids and grandkids won't be able to live here. We are currently the least affordable city in USA, even beat San Fran and that's really saying something. I don't disagree with a lot of the comments said tonight, but some of the things people are fighting against don't make sense. Best to focus on infrastructure, phased-in properly. Plan definitely missing in implementation section specially from a Park standpoint. DIFs generated here need to stay here, this is an area to focus on. We are already way behind on parks. Last year we got zero DIF money. We need to concentrate on growth that comes with the infrastructure needed to support it and is phased in appropriately.

Don – When it comes time, I'm going to support the motion.

Laura – I appreciate everyone being here and thank them for their passion. Parks, open green space and public facilities are essential. Important to have more open space, support a plan for higher density with the hope more affordable housing is available.

Mat B – I want something better than the current plan. Take care of the people who live here not the politicians who will be gone in 5 years.

Patty – Things are being built with no concern for the community. This is a prime opportunity to create something wonderful for Uptown, we have a chance to build something fabulous! This plan needs to be based on realistic population growth numbers, the population is going down according to SANDAG and the State Auditor. We must have parks. We can't function with mostly concrete and brick, SD will be affected by the heat factor. We need trees, grass, parks, landscaping. All the people who will be living here need quality of life. We are not doing balance, we're just building density right now. It's time to reign it in a do a better assessment. We can do better.

Jim – Will add to the records the multiple comments received from the community on this topic, most saying too much, too soon, not well thought out, lack of mobility, lack of infrastructure and too much density

MOTION to extend meeting by 30 minutes: Mat Wahlstrom, second Juli Hyde

Approved unanimously

Chair abstains

Stu – Who is not familiar with Off-Site Affordable Housing? It allows developers to put their affordable units somewhere else, in some other part of town. That should raise some alarms and it will lead to gentrification. If the reason we are in such a hurry to do this is to solve the affordable housing crisis this will not solve the problem. I am not necessarily against increased density, but we were elected by the public to sit on this Board. We talk to hundreds of people in our communities with questions like how this makes sense, with this lack of public transportation, lack of parks, lack of public facilities, no Recreation Centers in Uptown. This feels rushed and it is unfortunate. Feel like we have a good working relationship with the Planning Dept. If only we had another year, we could really iron this out. We hear you're

meeting with SANDAG and other activist groups, but why not have one big meeting so we can hear what SANDAG is telling you and we can say we live here, let me tell you how it is. It's unfortunate these conversations have been siloed. I certainly respect the city's climate goals, we all want to build a better world that's why we're here. But, since we don't have more time to talk about it, I move... See motion below

MOTION

The Chair of Uptown Planners should advise the Planning Department, the City Council, and the Mayor that our CPG cannot approve the current draft of the Planning Department's proposed "Plan Hillcrest Focused Amendment" to the Uptown Community Plan.

Uptown Planners favors responsible development and supports the ostensible goals of Plan Hillcrest, especially celebrating the legacy of our LGBTQ+ community. However, the board is withholding approval of the proposed amendment itself, which would affect all of Uptown, because of significant community concerns about major and potentially transformative elements of the proposal. Our CPG's concerns (summarized below) have been repeatedly raised to the Planning Department without adequate response. The document attached titled "Plan Hillcrest Requests" provides the history of our attempted constructive engagement and details our specific requests.

The board also directs its Operations & Outreach Committee to take steps to engage the community about the concerns summarized below and to work with the board Chair in preparing materials, if/as appropriate, for presentations of the board's position at meetings of the Planning Commission, City Council, and possibly other local groups.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CONCERNS

Mobility: The proposed one-way couplet on Robinson & University, along with the plan for a combined bus lane/emergency vehicle lane on Washington Street and reduced vehicle lanes and parking on these three sole east-west through streets, would increase congestion in an already congested area. The negative effects would extend beyond Hillcrest businesses and residents to businesses and residents throughout Uptown, as well as to traffic on Highway 163. Neither SANDAG public transportation plans nor the city's own Mobility Technical Report support the effectiveness of these radical changes in either the short-term or the long-term. In fact, the Mobility Technical Report shows that existing high traffic streets and intersections already earn failing grades, with no projected improvements.

Density: Adding to concerns about increased congestion is the proposed extended size of the area in which high-density building would be allowed. Changes in zoning would lead to buildings up to over twice the maximum height already allowed. This could result in tens of thousands more Uptown residents than our current community plan already provides for, growth which would far exceed what current SANDAG predictions justify.

Infrastructure: Added density, in turn, would require improvements to infrastructure for safety services, public utilities, recreation centers, green spaces, and other basic community needs that are not being proposed or adequately considered. Uptown already has a deficit of parks and other public facilities. The proposal also would not adequately protect historic resources, including those related to LGBTQ+ history. All of these problems would negatively affect the well-being of everyone in Uptown, especially its most vulnerable citizens.

Gentrification: The proposal's reduced mobility, increased permitted density, and failure to require sufficient infrastructure could gentrify Uptown into another (and less desirable) downtown. This not only would not materially address the city's housing affordability crisis but quite possibly might worsen it due to the loss of naturally occurring affordable housing and increased land values. Increased land values also could impact existing local businesses, with new, expensive mixed-use construction driving up rents. Finally, despite Uptown's sizeable population of the unhoused and housing insecure, the proposal includes no provisions to subsidize or even encourage substantial development of truly affordable housing.

MOTION as above Stu McGraw, second Tami Ratliffe

Discussion Public and Board

Lu – support motion, applaud Mat W for incredible amount of work in detailing ‘Plan Hillcrest Requests’ and believe it is important to attach to motion, I thank Tom for foundational info, Roy as has been mentioned, all members of Plan Hillcrest Committee over time and it’s been several years and I appreciate Planning Staff being here to answer questions. Stu’s motion puts on one page in simple language, no numbers, no jargon, why this plan is a big problem. It’s not unsolvable. There are real advantages and positive things that could be done to change the Uptown Community Plan and this is not doing it. Must say to the city we can’t accept it as is, work with us.

Mike – in the Attachment to the motion, some of the language is too inflammatory, request it be adjusted. Hillcrest core is urban

Don – support the motion

Laura – density by itself is not a problem for me, but density without infrastructure and affordable housing to support it is a problem. Hillcrest as a LGBTQ district is important.

Matt D – Support it whole heartedly and appreciate the work that’s been done. City needs to plan for water and sewer upgrades for expansion, you will be doubling the population. Support the motion.

Tami – support the motion and love how incredibly comprehensive it was.

Susan – support it and thank everyone who put in all this work

Juli – support it and appreciate everyone’s work

Mat W – how will the two documents work together?

Stu - it’s an attachment and if there’s one thing we’ve learned, we have to act quickly

Mike – have the ability to adjust the attachment

Jim – Chair will work with Mat W. to adjust the Attachment to motion

Abstain: Dylan Brynn (partial agreement with Motion), Laura Kuffner (partial agreement with Motion)

Oppose: Mike (support most of the Motion, just a few things I can’t support)

Approve: John Barney, Matthew Brown, Matt Driver, Patty Ducey-Brooks, Juli Hyde, Don Liddell, Stu McGraw, Tami Ratliffe, Mat Wahlstrom, Susan White

Chair Abstains

MOTION Passes

*Link to document submitted to City Planning Department regarding the Motion:

<https://uptownplannersd.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Uptown-Planners-Letter-of-Transmittal-to-Shannon-Cor-of-May-7-Motion-Regarding-Hillcrest-Focused-Plan-Amendment.pdf>

*Comments Uptown Planners received from the Public RE: Plan Hillcrest are recorded at the end of the minutes.

VII. Administrative Action Items

Chair reports and set dates for meetings.

1. **Election (Ad Hoc)** - currently inactive
2. **Operations & Outreach** – Tami to reach out to Chair
3. **Public Facilities** – no report
4. **Design Review** – no report
5. **Historic Resources** – no report
6. **Plan Hillcrest (Ad Hoc)** - met April 11 and 20.

VIII. Request for Agenda Suggestions and Confirmation of Next Regular Board Meeting, June 4, 2024, Joyce Beers Community Center.

IX. Adjournment at 9:16 pm

BELOW are comments Uptown Planners received from members of the Uptown Community RE: Plan Hillcrest

1). These are my comments on the Hillcrest Plan Update

1. The plan incorporates the SANDAG revision that replaces the Park Blvd trolley line with a tram that is diverted through Hillcrest. This lost trolley line was a key piece of how the community as a whole could deal with the need for more housing and reduce the vehicle miles traveled. It provided an important link between the largest area where housing could be accommodated and the potential new office complexes targeted for downtown. This change would increase the time to go between these two places. Additionally, the new line is a tram because a trolley would not be able to make the turns required. That would require a new fleet of vehicles at a high continuing maintenance cost. And probably most importantly, this tram line would not be able to be properly integrated with the existing bus lines without requiring excessive transferring. Finally, because this line is not providing an essential needed link, it has little priority and would not be built any time soon.
2. The plan documents the poor conditions that the vehicle road network is facing. It then uses the few resources available to address the bus network needs. That is, the current situation would cause the buses to average 8 MPH through the area during rush hour and that is unacceptable. But the vehicles get no relief facing the same driving network. We lose a lot of parking in front of businesses to create bus lanes that has a measurable impact on the businesses. While at the same time it provides no relief to the vehicles trying to visit the area. The plan to create a set of one-way streets on University and Robinson would have a big impact on the community. Apparently MTS who opposed this plan in the past is okay with the plan because they would get a special bus lane that does not change their routes. But this means we lose yet another option for fix the mess that the plan predict the vehicle network would become. But the biggest issue with the plan is that we lose 20% of the capacity of the vehicle network in order to accommodate the ill thought out tram discussed earlier.
3. The plan claims that their model predicts a 60% reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for current Hillcrest residents. This results comes for a simulation model that is suppose to use the actual and proposed transportation networks for public transportation, driving, biking and walking. This result is surprising and needs to be verified. Basic questions like which assumptions about the transportation network lead to these results. What new employment centers do these results require to be validated. This simulation supposedly incorporates all of the relevant changes to model the outcome. But simple questions like what happens if the public transportation option does not occur, are not answered. This modeling is very new and what is presented in the plans does not address many questions about how valid the model really is.

Roy Dahl
rdahl@cox.net

2). Hello,

I'm writing to ask that Uptown Planners and San Diego Planning Commission reject the community plan that so radically increases density and removes historic neighborhood

retention safeguards.

Hillcrest, North Park, Mission Hills, Kensington, Talmadge, and other older neighborhoods face cultural annihilation and character assassination. These neighborhoods are a big part of what makes San Diego a wonderful place to live. Throwing up high rises enriches no one but developers. There's a place for high rises downtown, not in historic neighborhoods.

Furthermore, plans do not include reasonable ways to deal with increased density, lack of parkland, nor water supply and sewage disposal for this increased population in the area. It's irresponsible to put forward such radical plans without realistic accounting for these and other issues. This proposal is unnecessarily dense even by the City's own population growth statistics.

Please reconsider and revise the plan to retain historic neighborhoods and create better resources to maintain quality of life for all San Diegans.

**Thank you,
Laurel Miller
laureldesign@mac.com**

3). RE: Hillcrest Plan Amendment May 7, 2024

To: Uptown Planners, City Planners, Traffic Planners

Agenda Item VI. Action Items #2

STOP

“The over-riding goal of the Uptown Community Plan is to conserve and accommodate growth in proper intensity at appropriate locations:

To preserve and enhance the various assets of the community; and

To prevent urban pressures from destroying the amenities that create the values that Uptown enjoys today.”

Appendix EE: Urban Design Case Study Uptown Community Plan, p. 99

The Hillcrest Plan Amendment, 2024, will suffocate neighborhoods.

Transportation corridors along University Place cut through Florence Canyon.

Adding enhanced roadway along Robinson Avenue, will encircle and entomb the 3800 block of Albatross Street.

You have made the neighborhood an island in the middle of your transportation system.

See pages 26-36 of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment
When a commuter rail line and/or #11 bus line is put through Florence Canyon and Robinson Avenue is “enhanced”

how many trees will be destroyed by asphalt assault and rail lines?

How much tree canopy will be replaced with sun?

What will the temperature be when the sun beats down on treeless city streets, concrete covered lots devoid of shade, adjacent to a concrete canyon?

How will carbon sequestration be affected?

How will the Climate Action Plan be affected?

Consider what you are doing to the neighborhoods

Please, STOP this overbearing destructive plan, please.

How about utilizing the Uptown Community Plan Update 2016???

Carol Emerick

4). I've been reading the paper and this housing is not needed. San diego has met its goals. Certainly not needed is this density, growing growing, growing, spreading over and upwards in Hillcrest. It's a boondoggle Todd Gloria Developer scam. Ask for Gloria's fantasy that people don't need parking. Well have fun with that as so many places built by developers who didn't want to build garage now can't rent them. Enough!!!

Jacque Lynn Foltyn

jfoltyn131@gmail.com

5)

Plan Hillcrest is based on a false narrative that we will build our way to affordability and magically will have corresponding infrastructure ready upon development completion. The past few years we have built more housing throughout the city than we have in decades yet purchase and rental prices are at record highs. But the Plan Hillcrest supporters are in a position that these current high prices for rents or purchase are affordable for them and few others. How can we expect infrastructure to be added when we have a multi-billion-dollar infrastructure deficit?

The OB Rag May 3rd article says it all, we have built enough housing the past few years to accommodate residents thru 2050:

San Diego County Has Already Met State's Housing Unit Mandate for Projected Population Growth Thru 2050 (obrag.org)

As for eliminated vehicles which is part of the 'demands' of the Plan Hillcrest supporters; has there been a poll showing that as people age, they get rid of their cars in exchange for a bike as their mode of transportation in a city like San Diego that covers 342.5 square miles and stretches nearly 40 miles from north to south? (In addition, there are 93 miles of shoreline including bays, lagoons and the Pacific Ocean.)

So, let's stop ruminating in a fantasy world and realize we live in a city that is in desperate need of affordable housing. Let's make affordability the fantasy that becomes our reality and let's put this ill-conceived Plan Hillcrest in the trash once and for all.

Let's save the community of Hillcrest and its businesses from fleeing this once vibrant neighborhood. "No on Plan Hillcrest"

Lisa Mortensen

mortensen@sqre.com

6).

Reject the revised plan: Scale-it-Back!

sandyburgamy@gmail.com

kirk.burgamy@alum.mit.edu

7).

Please, no on plan Hillcrest. We have added a lot of housing already and that's great but this proposed way forward is over reaching. Hillcrest has met the state's housing goals and will become too dense if we keep building and over taxing our infrastructure. My husband and I have lived and worked in Hillcrest for more than 38yrs and now as seniors we rely on our car so eliminating cars is a real problem for us. Please, no on plan Hillcrest.

Gary Burrows

grybrws@yahoo.com

8).

Subject: Hillcrest plan

The proposal for the density and high-rises in Hillcrest will be a negative drain on all of the infrastructure. It can already be gridlock, trying to get in and out at certain times. What I see being built in uptown is not affordable, it's market rate or luxury. We don't need any more of that. When NAVWAR and the Midway area is built out, will see even more impact on the 5 and in the exits from the 5 trying to come up to Hillcrest. Just because the mayors office (and of course the developers) think it would be a good thing doesn't mean it is.

Phyllis Daniel

pwd152@yahoo.com

