



**City of San Diego | Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment
Uptown Planners Subcommittee Meeting | January 21, 2021**

OVERVIEW

The January 21, 2021, Uptown Planners Subcommittee Meeting for the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment was held via Zoom. The meeting included a presentation and discussion on the Focused Plan Amendment Mobility Planning Approach including: Roadway Concept Visioning, Operational Treatments, and Alleyway Activation.

The meeting was conducted with the Zoom videoconference platform. Attendees typed comments and questions through the “chat” tool.

City staff has taken pertinent comments from the chat, which asked direct questions or clarifications, or facilitated helpful dialogue, and provided **responses** to the comments. The comments and responses, in part, have been used to develop the network options that will be presented on Thursday, June 17, 2021. Comments on similar topics have been grouped together. The comments and responses are shown below.

CHAT LOG

C Daniels: I had mentioned this during an earlier meeting. The LTS identifier for the west end of University seems optimistic. University west of 1st Av is scary particularly as it narrows and curves towards the Von's.

Response: LTS is largely a function of travel speed on the roadway. Likely, because the posted speed is 25 MPH in that section, the LTS shows well.

C Daniels: UCSD currently runs a private shuttle. This should be added to MTS's GTFS feed, so people can find it via Google maps. Admittedly its for students and faculty, but it should be for everyone.

Response: City staff has provided your comment to MTS.

S Stone: Also, rail is significantly better at moving large amounts of people through a city, better than car or buses. What San Diego needs is rail that is grade separated from cars and pedestrians

Response: SANDAG is currently working on their update to the Regional Plan. As part of their 5 Big Moves, commuter rail is identified throughout the region. The rail is currently assumed to be grade separated from vehicle lanes. The City will continue to work with its regional partners (MTS, and SANDAG) to identify feasible solutions for commuter rail within Hillcrest as well as the rest of the City.

B Kelly: Would light rail/trolley service down Park to University and university down 5th leave any lanes for autos?

Response: Ultimately, that is one of the main tasks involved in this Plan Amendment process, identifying a mobility network that is compatible with SANDAG's long-range vision. One alternative to be presented for University Avenue would restrict autos along University Avenue. Another allows for continued vehicular traffic on both University Avenue and Park Blvd. City staff will continue to work with the community and other stakeholders to determine the most suitable alternative for the mobility network.

C Daniels: Why not 4th / 5th?

Response: 4th, 5th, 6th, and other roadways are being presented in the network alternatives in June.

C Daniels: Understand the point about 4/5, but the mobility context maps miss connection to largest employer in Uptown (UCSD and Scripps)

Response: While the mass transit options won't be further north than Washington to reach these locations, the Plan will identify bicycle and pedestrian and urban design improvements to facilitate this connection.

C Daniels: Any consideration of a removal of an auto travel lane on University

K Keehan: Agree with Brer and Clint - please consider options with fewer car lanes

Response: Yes, alternatives to be presented for University Avenue propose this configuration.

B Kelly: removing parking would be detrimental to business unless you build parking structures along the commercial routes.

M Escobar-Eck: has there been any consideration to one central parking structure hub?

S McGraw: Central Parking Hub is a fantastic idea!

L Rehling: same cars, fewer parking could lead to more traffic congestion because of people searching for parking spots. in SF, this is a major traffic factor

M Escobar-Eck: Parking structure hub could be topped with a park or plaza. Thereby also adding some useable open space in a central location

K Keehan: agreed - should consider parking hub. I think people currently use the actual HUB parking at Ralphs/Trader Joes as an option

E Balsamo: Hillcrest is one of the few neighborhoods of San Diego that is already well-positioned for a more walk-centric, bike-centric lifestyle. Certain streets like 5th ave and University lend themselves perfectly to pedestrian-only or pedestrian-mostly approaches. But, let's be honest with ourselves. This is southern California. You need to have some paid, accessible parking near the future closed areas to allow commuters to come and frequent the Hillcrest businesses. Unrelated, but the push to make alleys more friendly is a great idea.

M Escobar-Eck: parking district has money that can also be leveraged for a paid parking hub. Consider approaching the Rite Aide folks.

Response: We will continue to evaluate and make policy recommendations in the Plan to encourage "Park Once" options.

Our mobility planning process will be aimed at increasing non-vehicular modes of travel and decreasing the reliance on single occupancy vehicles. There are several studies nationwide that have shown removing parking for implementation of bicycle facilities was not detrimental to businesses.

M Donovan: i think employment support is a major failing in the assumptions here. According to planning dept data hillcrest is primarily a bedroom community with workers commuting in or out. Any plan need to account for attracting new employers to reduce traffic flow

Response: This comment is noted and well received. Retaining current employment and attracting new employment will be a goal of the land use plan.

E Rey: Is option 1 assuming that the center lanes would eventually be light rail?

Response: Correct, in alternatives where light rail is shown, the assumption is that it will occupy the center of the roadway.

C Daniels: A shared bike lane like El Cajon doesn't slow down traffic. On El Cajon, you are still biking in mixed flow traffic with cars moving 40+ MPH.

R Ileszczyński: and clint its a reason why I don't bike on el cajon cause cars moving too fast

Response: Comment(s) noted. City staff has considered multiple options for dedicating space for cyclists along the corridor, this was one example that was mentioned to get input from community whether this is desired.

Brer Marsh: Seems like LOS is being used here as opposed to applying the newer VMT design requirements. Is this correct?

Response: At this stage neither LOS or VMT analysis has been completed. The arrows up and down show which modes are being improved or decreased. City staff will evaluate LOS for operational analysis at intersection and VMT for environmental purposes.

L Rehling: Robinson is walkable now. Add to that, and it might not be

M Donovan: bicycle lanes on robinson look unsafe

K Keehan: are you widening the Robinson crossing of 163?

Response: The June network alternatives presentation will show options for Robinson Ave. Bike lanes will only be recommended where they can be safely introduced. Widening Robinson Ave over the SR-163 is not a recommendation of this plan.

C Daniels: There has been some backlash to one-way couplets due to speeding and lack of driver vigilance for "abnormal" activity, but I do like smaller scale auto lanes.

M Escobar-Eck: clint: What are your concerns with the couplet again?

E Rey: one way streets traditionally are bad for businesses. I was hoping we could get rid of the 4th, & 5th ave one way streets

M Donovan: i guess from other cities im very comfortable with one way systems and they really dont seem to negatively impact business

C Daniels: One way traffic may lead to higher speeds due to less vigilance for contra flow activity. More complex interactions lead to slower speeds.

S Stone: I agree with Clint - one way streets lead to higher speeds. I am concerned about the families that live on Robinson

Response: The comments regarding one-way couplets are noted. In the June network alternatives presentation, in the single alternative where a couplet is still recommended for University and Robinson, the limits have been reduced. There are benefits associated with one-way travel, and they'll continue to be weighed against drawbacks.

One-way operations along 4th Ave and 5th Avenue will remain unchanged in this plan.

C Daniels: Minneapolis and Denver are good examples, but the counter is C Street in downtown San Diego. (In reference to the alternative that eliminated vehicular travel on University Ave)

C Daniels: If the City pursues a transit only corridor, similar to my open space concerns, how do we ensure we don't get another C Street (similar to how do we ensure we don't get another Horton Plaza and Fault Line Park)?

L Rehling: what would no cars do to University Ave businesses?

Isaac W: Lu, I moved here from Minneapolis recently and the conversion of Washington Ave to a transit/ped mall has been wildly successful and created numerous opportunities for increased business.

N Magnezi: give them more business! More people biking and walking by their storefronts instead of speeding by

M Donovan: need to provide access for trash and deliveries, can supplement transit with n EVs

r leszczynski: clint are you implying the homeless influx?

C Daniels: a lack of business or a dead zone and everything that comes with it.

r leszczynski: clint i think that is mainly from the homeless issue, not street design

C Daniels: I like the transit only scheme. It just needs to be times with measurable milestone, (e.g., real transit, density threshold, employment threshold)

C Daniels: I'm not sure why C street doesn't work. I don't think it is a homeless issue. There is something else about why it doesn't work. transiency is a symptom, but not the cause.

S Stone: I agree, the transit only scheme only makes sense with significant transit. I.E. in conjunction SANDAG's plan for a trolley line and commuter rail station in core hillcrest.

Response: City staff, both Mobility Planning and Land Use Planning, are taking many things into consideration with each alternative (including an alternative that would eliminate vehicular traffic on University Ave), economic impact is one consideration, as well as the safety and connectivity for people.

Isaac W: Question for city staff: is there a reason that angled parking continues to be evaluated? It doesn't feel like the best use of space and doesn't speak to reducing VMT at all. If we're looking to improve quality, it feels like angled parking is a non-starter.

Response: Angle parking was shown as an alternative to better understand the community's priorities along the corridor. Alternatives shown in the June network alternatives presentation no longer include angled parking.

L Rehling: what about the existing Hillcrest core jitney? is it making a difference? is it being factored in?

Response: Yes, jitneys, circulator shuttles and other first-mile-last-mile alternatives make a difference. The Plan will continue to make recommendations for these options and best set the overall mobility network to make them viable.

S Stone: With all the bicycle facilities that were presented, we should also make sure we include bicycle parking facilities

Response: Comment noted, the plan will include policy language to encourage ample suitable parking.

L Rehling: yes: that's the part of Robinson that is NOT pleasant or safe for both walking and cycling

G Friedt: Perhaps if there were more housing options in Uptown, there would be less people commuting in and out of the area. UCSD Medical Center is a huge employer that is actually putting housing in their long range plan. Scripps Mercy is also expanding.

Response: This comment is noted and well received. Increased housing options will be a goal of the land use plan.

S McGraw: (my internet is unstable) I would like to echo Clint's concerns about pedestrian and bike safety on East Washington St at 163.

C Daniels: At some point, not now, but it would be interesting to revisit the University / Washington study Roy referenced. That study had some issues, and may have had some pre-conceived outcomes baked in.

M Wahlstrom: Because of the "technical difficulties," did I miss seeing where anywhere in the presentation there were accommodations for the disabled?

S Schumer: No specific points for the disabled.

Response: ADA accommodations are at the forefront of many the plan recommendations. Both mobility and land use/urban design will be recommending increased sidewalk widths, increased safety at intersections, including improved signals and shortened crossing distances, plus many other treatments.