



Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment FAQ:

What is a Community Plan?

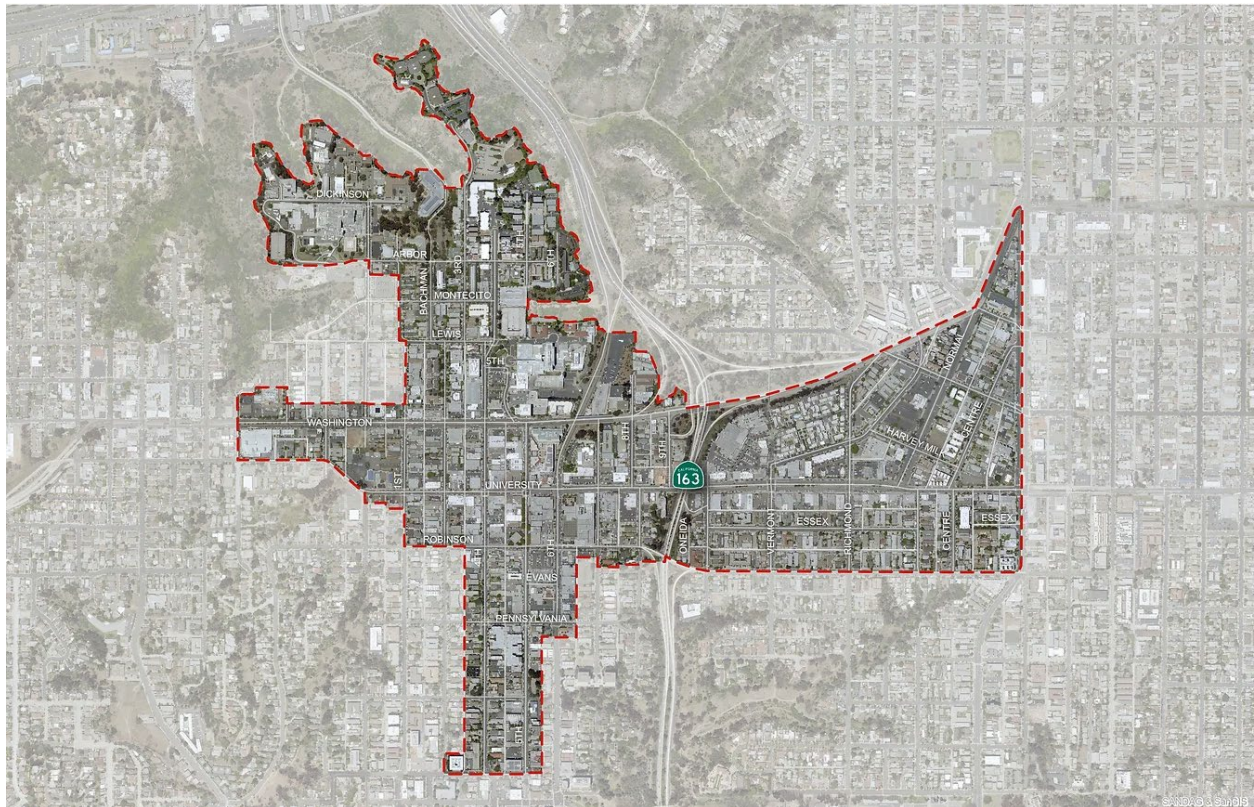
The City of San Diego has more than 50 planning areas. While the City's General Plan Land Use Element provides broad land use policies that apply to the City as a whole, community plans provide more detailed guidance for how the individual community will be planned over the next 20 plus years. This includes policies on land use, mobility, urban design, public facilities and services, natural resources, historic and cultural resources and economic development. Community plan updates, in coordination with the General Plan and its Land Use Element, achieve both citywide and community-level goals.

The City's community plans are long-range planning documents established as essential components of the General Plan. The community plan update process will develop the community-specific details, relevant policies and implementation strategies necessary to fulfill General Plan objectives. The General Plan sets out a long-range vision and policy framework to guide future development, provide public services and maintain the qualities that define San Diego over the next 20 years and beyond. The General Plan also has a focus on how to design infill development and reinvest in existing communities.

What is the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment?

The City is undertaking the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment to update and amend the Uptown Community Plan specifically for the Hillcrest neighborhood. It aims to address the changing needs and aspirations of the community by incorporating community input and addressing existing challenges. While the amendment will primarily cover approximately 350 acres of the Hillcrest neighborhood, it also includes the Medical Complex neighborhoods. The draft Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment allows for the development of more homes, stores, and businesses to support vibrant and active public spaces and small businesses. New homes would support and enhance current local businesses, health care facilities, residential areas, public spaces, and bus rapid and rail transit.

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment also seeks to further celebrate the LGBTQ+ history and culture of Hillcrest. The Uptown Community Plan serves as the long-range vision for the land use, mobility, urban design, public facilities and services, natural resources, historic and cultural resources and economic development for the entire community planning area.



What is a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report?

A Programmatic Environmental Impact Report analyzes the environmental impacts that could occur if the plan is implemented and identifies any feasible mitigation measures or alternatives that could reduce any environmental impacts. The public can provide input during the draft Environmental Impact Report public review period when comments about the Environmental Impact Report itself are welcome.

The City is releasing one comprehensive draft Environmental Impact Report, which includes an analysis on the Blueprint SD update to the General Plan, the University Community Plan Update, and the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment. Blueprint SD



(General Plan Refresh) will guide future community plan updates by showing where smart growth may occur. The City is committed to meaningful community engagement and welcomes all productive feedback. Comments on the draft Environmental Impact Report will be accepted 45-day comment period via email to planningCEQA@sandiego.gov until April 29, 2024. It is important to note that Environmental Impact Reports do not need city council approval and are finalized after staff incorporates public input into them.

Why is the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment happening?

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment, which amends the Uptown Community Plan, is being updated to address the evolving needs and aspirations of the community, specifically focusing on the Hillcrest community. It aims to ensure that Hillcrest continues to thrive and meet the community's housing, transportation, public spaces and economic development goals. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment seeks to address the need for housing while simultaneously enhancing the vibrant community that Hillcrest is known for.

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment builds upon the 2016 Uptown Community Plan Update and the 2016 Citywide LGBTQ Historic Context Statement by documenting LGBTQ+ history and current cultural heritage in Hillcrest, as well as the buildings, structures and sites important to that history with the intent of designating a historic district and identifying a wider cultural district.

How does the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment relate to the Climate Action Plan?

The City's Climate Action Plan was updated in 2015 and requires a 50 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment is closely aligned with the Climate Action Plan which sets ambitious goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and transitioning to a more sustainable and resilient future. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment aims to incorporate these goals by promoting smart growth, encouraging transit-oriented development and enhancing active transportation options. It includes provisions for sustainable building practices, energy-efficient infrastructure, and the



preservation of open space and natural resources. By aligning with the Climate Action Plan, the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment contributes to the City's efforts to combat climate change and create a more environmentally friendly community.

What are the key planning priorities being considered as part of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment?

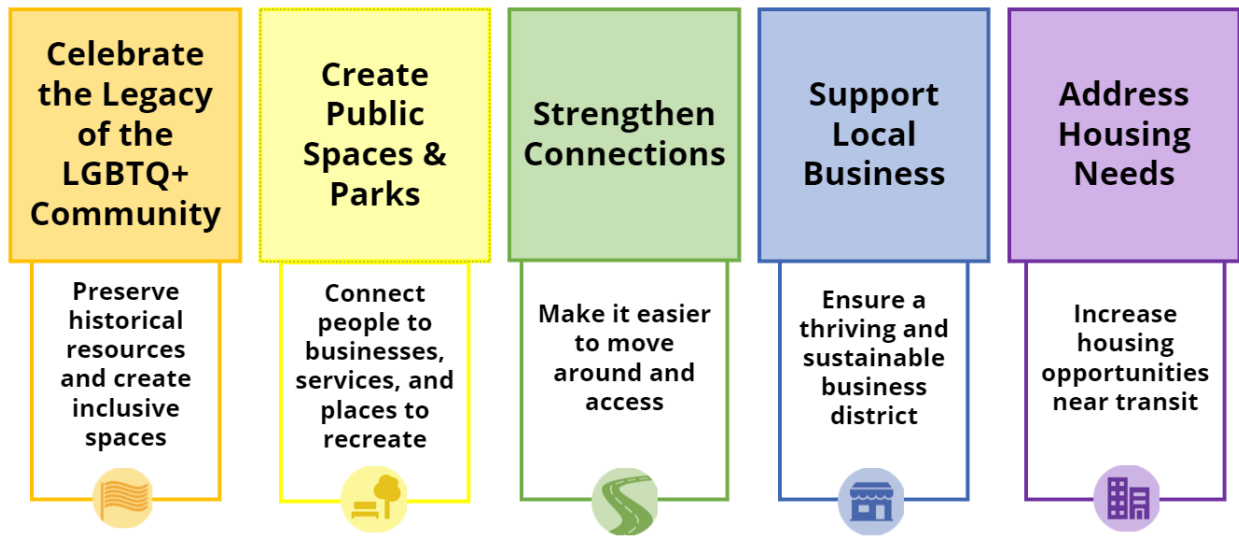
The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment envisions a complete neighborhood that celebrates its unique identity and honors the legacy of a place that welcomes everyone. It focuses on the following topics:

- Focuses opportunities for new homes within mixed-use and residential areas.
- Identifies opportunities for new public spaces
- Provides guidance for the identification and preservation of historical resources and districts that symbolize the architectural and cultural history important to the Hillcrest community.
- Celebrates the cultural diversity and history of the LGBTQ+ community and recommends new policies and regulations to support the unique community in Hillcrest.
- Identifies a new cultural district in Hillcrest, which is formally recognized for its history, people, events and culture. Cultural districts can be recognized locally by City Council resolution.
- Identifies opportunities for mobility infrastructure that improve walking, rolling, biking and transit connections.
- Promotes opportunities for urban greening and street trees to address stormwater runoff and climate change.
- Focuses on growth that supports local businesses.
- Identifies a new Hillcrest Historic District, which will be brought forward for historic designation.
- Promotes local hospitals and employment uses as economic drivers connected to regional transit.

What are the Primary Objectives of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment?



There are five primary objectives set forth for the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment which have been prepared in collaboration with the community and have been used to help shape the Plan Amendment. These include:



What is the process for finalizing the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment?

The process for finalizing the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment involves several key stages to ensure community input and compliance with necessary regulations:

1. **Community Discussion Draft:** The Community Discussion Draft was released in the fall of 2023 and was the initial draft of the Uptown Community Plan with the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment. Its primary purpose is to present a comprehensive draft for the community to review and provide valuable feedback.
2. **Draft Community Plan (WE ARE HERE):** Following the Community Discussion Draft, the draft Uptown Community Plan with the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment will be prepared. This version incorporates revisions based on the feedback received from the community on the Community Discussion Draft. Additionally, the Draft Community Plan amendment will undergo a thorough environmental analysis in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act. This draft and the accompanying draft Environmental Impact Report are available for community review until April 29, 2024. While the Draft Community Plan



amendment becomes more formalized at this stage, it's essential to emphasize that the City is not making any final decisions, and feedback remains welcome and integral to the process.

3. Final Plan: The conclusion of the process occurs when the City Council adopts an updated plan, resulting in the final Uptown Community Plan with the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment. This final version includes implementing resolutions and ordinances to bring the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment into action, ensuring that it aligns with the community's vision and adheres to all necessary regulations. Your active engagement at each stage of this process is vital to creating a plan that reflects the community's needs and aspirations. Thank you for your participation and input as we work together to shape the future of Hillcrest.

How does the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment relate to estimates of regional population growth?

The regional population and housing forecast is prepared by the San Diego Association of Governments. The San Diego Association of Governments forecast uses existing City community plans to determine the future capacity for homes in the city and the region. The forecast does not account for additional homes constructed beyond the number of homes that could be reasonably built under a community plan.

How much will the population grow in Hillcrest over the Plan period?

The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determines the total number of new homes the City is required to build and how affordable those homes need to be to meet the housing needs of people at all income levels. This state mandate is called the Housing Element and "Regional Housing Needs Allocation" which addresses existing housing shortages and housing needs. The City of San Diego's portion of the Regional Housing Needs Allocation target for the 2021-2029 period is 108,036 homes. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment and other community plans are some of the ways in which we can help to address our long-term state mandates and provide housing in locations that are sustainable since the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment extends beyond



the eight-year Regional Housing Needs Allocation timeframe. The City updates and amends community plans to help address both our current and future housing goals.

The existing population of the Uptown Community Planning Area, which includes Hillcrest, University Heights, Mission Hills, and Bankers Hill, stands at 39,000. For the purposes of analyzing the proposed community plan amendment, it is estimated that the population could increase to 109,800 over the next 30 years and beyond, assuming that all buildings are rebuilt to their maximum capacity. However, it's essential to understand that the City cannot mandate development; it can only update zoning and establish policies in the community plan to encourage and guide new development. Properties with existing buildings are likely to undergo incremental redevelopment after the community plan is updated or amended. Furthermore, not all properties will change during the community plan's lifespan. The decision to develop a property ultimately rests with individual property owners. Given the high demand for housing and extremely low vacancy rates, it is also possible that existing people within the community who are living with multiple people may be able to live in their own home.

How will new homes in my neighborhood affect my property?

New homes in any neighborhood bring opportunities to welcome new neighbors into a community. Beyond that, new homes and businesses bring along new community investments, which can include new public spaces and enhanced places for people to enjoyably and safely walk, bike and interact with their neighbors. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment initiative considers the regional population and housing forecast and needs. It emphasizes enhancing walking and access and transit use, preserving historical resources and supporting local businesses. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment aims to create a sustainable and livable neighborhood by promoting a more vibrant and diverse community.

How tall are new buildings likely to be in my neighborhood?

Building heights in the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment area are determined by multiple development regulations. Floor area ratio is the measurement of a



building's floor area in relation to the size of the lot/parcel that the building is located on. Floor area ratio is expressed as a decimal number and is derived by dividing the total area of the building by the total area of the parcel (building area ÷ lot area). Floor area ratio is a method to calculate the bulk or mass of building volume on a development site and is used in conjunction with other development regulations such as the maximum allowed setbacks, and lot area to encourage a desired arrangement and form of development. In this context, higher floor area ratios indicate greater building volume. The maximum floor area ratio being proposed is 8.0. For example, a 30,000 square foot lot could have a total of 240,000 square feet of building floor space. If each floor of a building had a range between 20,000 to 16,000 square feet, then the building could be 12 to 15 stories. This accounts for ground floor public spaces, upper story step backs, and other design requirements addressed in the community plan and the zone. On average, each floor is about 12 feet in height, so using this example of a building 12 to 15 stories, the building height could be between 145 to 180 feet.

How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment address affordable housing?

A goal for the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment is to increase opportunities for homes for people of all incomes. Citywide regulations require developments to provide a portion of the new homes to be rented or sold at affordable levels or pay a fee to support the construction of future affordable homes.

How does the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment become reality?

The City cannot mandate development to occur, but through a Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment, it can update the zoning and create policies in the community plan that encourages and guides new development. Since it takes time for new homes to occur, the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment provides a vision and guidance for development that may occur for the next several decades. It is important to note that added home capacity in the community plan does not always equate to the number of new homes that could be constructed because it is up to the individual property owner if they wish to develop their property or not.



How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment address infrastructure and public facilities in the long term?

As part of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment process, public facilities, including mobility improvements needed to serve the community, are addressed in the Uptown Community Plan. It also focuses on addressing housing and development strategies while preserving historical resources and promoting inclusivity. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment addresses land use, mobility, and public and recreational space needs within the Hillcrest core, and the City welcomes community input and feedback to help identify these needs.

How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment address future public school needs?

The City works with San Diego Unified School District to help the district manage resources and plan for new or expanded facilities in places that may have increases in the student population. New development is required to pay fees for new school facilities.

How is the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment related to traffic study data and estimates of future traffic?

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment includes a proposed mobility network as laid out in the mobility chapter. A [draft mobility technical report](#) is available for review.

How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment address additional mobility needs?

The updated Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment will address future infrastructure needs so community members can move easily and safely to work, home and their other daily needs. It will identify opportunities for mobility infrastructure that improve walking/rolling, biking and transit connections while reducing impacts on the environment. A major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions is vehicle emissions, so reducing the need to use a vehicle and increasing the options for how to get around is fundamental for reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions. The



Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment proposes specific active mobility improvements along University Avenue, Washington Street and Robinson Avenue to activate the street and encourage active transportation. A one-way classification along portions of University Avenue and Robinson Avenue will work together to maintain vehicle capacity while allowing for more roadway space to support a dedicated transit lane and improved bicycle facilities.

How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment meet future needs for safe bicycle and pedestrian transportation?

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment identifies pedestrian improvements in areas that promote access to activities and safe and enjoyable connections while increasing walking/rolling/biking as a means of transportation and recreation. The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment looks to improve connections within the community, as well as to neighboring communities. Several pedestrian/mobility infrastructure improvements will strengthen the existing pedestrian network and encourage more trips to be made sustainably within the community. Hillcrest's Focused Plan Amendment also strengthens connections to make it easier to get to surrounding communities and places, including Balboa Park, Downtown and North Park.

How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment preserve and enhance the local businesses?

The amendment is proposed to promote and enhance local businesses, and cultural initiatives and enhance the history and story of the LGBTQ+ community in Hillcrest. The amendment proposes a range of policy initiatives and recommendations, such as:

- Considering a formal program that recognizes anchor institutions and businesses within the community.
- Evaluation of the need for anti-displacement regulations to protect small and local businesses, ensuring their continued presence in the neighborhood.



- Work with the State to support the potential creation of an LGBTQ+ Arts and Culture Campus as part of any future reuse of the Department of Motor Vehicles property on Normal Street.

It is important to note that the Uptown Community Plan serves as a platform for identifying the vision for the community and provides guidance for the coming decades. Therefore, it is imperative that there is a collaborative approach between organizations, business groups, property owners, and the City's various departments to help future initiatives come to life.

How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment help inform new residents about the vibrant atmosphere in Hillcrest?

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment will help to inform potential new residents about Hillcrest's vibrant atmosphere by including a requirement for new residential development to provide up-front disclosure of potential noise from nearby restaurants, bars and entertainment businesses within the LGBTQ+ Cultural District before renting or purchasing a home. This information can help prospective residents make informed decisions about living near Hillcrest's vibrant restaurants, bars and entertainment activities. The guidelines in the General Plan Noise Element as well as the requirements in the state building code identify measures and building techniques to insulate homes from higher levels of exterior noise.

How does the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment link with the Historic District Designation?

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment includes a community history that supports future historic resource nominations and proposes a new historic district in Hillcrest. The Historic District designation follows a separate but parallel process, outlined [here](#). It requires its own recommendation and adoption, independent of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment. Engagement on the Historic District designation is expected to occur in Spring of this year. The district is anticipated to go to the Historic Resources Board for designation in late Summer 2024.

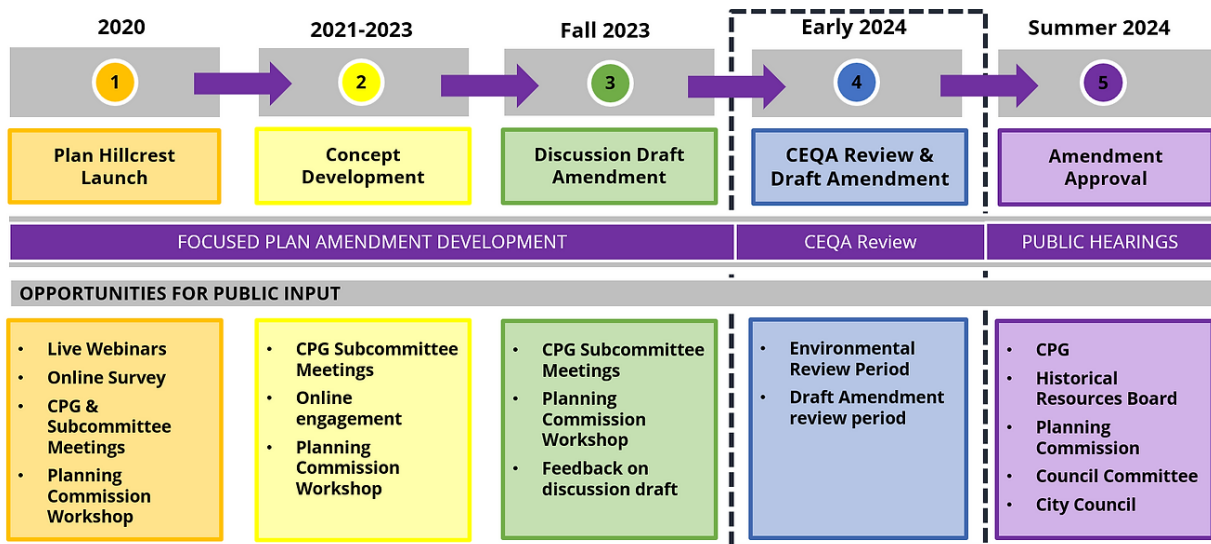
How will the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment address additional recreational and public space needs?



The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment identifies opportunities for new development to provide public spaces, which include promenades and plazas, based on the location of the new development and the size of the property. Public space can be achieved through promenades which include setting back buildings to allow for additional pedestrian space landscaping, trees and other pedestrian amenities as individual development sites come forward in the future. The public space requirements are addressed in the Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone section of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment Community Discussion Draft. Please refer to Chapter 12, Implementation.

What are the next steps for the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment?

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment Draft Community Plan will be available for feedback until April 29, 2024. This feedback will be considered for the final draft. The final draft will then be available for further feedback opportunities during the public hearing process, before its final presentation to City Council for adoption by the Summer of 2024. The city is committed to meaningful community engagement and welcomes all productive feedback. Comments will be accepted via email to planhillcrest@sandiego.gov until April 29, 2024.



How can I learn more about the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment?



Visit the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment webpage at www.planhillcrest.org where you can learn more about the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment and sign up for email updates to stay informed.