

October 10, 2022

City of San Diego Planning Commission  
City of San Diego  
1222 First Ave, 5th floor  
San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Chair Hofman and Commission Members:

On behalf of the community of Hillcrest, the undersigned coalition of organizations and individuals are voicing their support for the proposed LGBTQ+ Cultural District described below. Plan Hillcrest offers one chance to appropriately “...celebrate the legacy of the LGBTQ+ community by preserving historical resources and creating new places that honor and promote inclusivity”. The City’s current proposals do not do this.

The LGBT community is defined by its people and their struggles and celebrations. If we spend too much energy on the preservation of buildings we repeat the biased and patriarchal storytelling methods of the past and run the real risk of making the community unattractive and unaffordable to the very people who breathe life into the community. The Hillcrest neighborhood and its rich LGBT history requires a more creative solution to preserve the history of the neighborhood and community *and* ensure its longevity as a hub for LGBT culture and business in San Diego.

We propose an LGBTQ+ Cultural District with the following elements:

- Preservation of the historical uses of our neighborhood rather than simply historical buildings. Use zoning and other planning tools to create protections for a diversity of housing options and make recommendations for how diverse income and lifestyle populations can be encouraged to move to the neighborhood.
- Abandon plans for the contiguous “historic district” as currently proposed and instead state which buildings will be included on the multi property listing and how they relate to the history of the LGBT community.
- Ensure that history is described beyond a cisgender and patriarchal narrative by creating guidelines for future interpretive devices.
- Create a comprehensive plan for an LGBTQ+ Hillcrest historical interpretive program including highlighting important locations, buildings, and social events. Describe how the interpretive program will tell stories from multiple voices and describe important events such as the AIDS epidemic, DADT, Marriage and Prop 8, the evolution of Pride celebrations.



Hillcrest Community Foundation

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- Create protections for business types that have been an integral part of the community and implement the Hillcrest Entertainment District. This district would include:
  - Permissive sidewalk cafe rules that provide for standardized and permissive guidelines for sidewalk patios including four feet of clearance for pedestrians and virtual patio barriers for businesses who serve alcohol.
  - Permissive entertainment license allowances that allow Hillcrest restaurants to apply for entertainment licenses regardless of proximity to other licenses for indoor or outdoor performance.
  - Extended patio hours that allow the Spaces as Places program and private patios to be used until close of business rather than the arbitrary 10pm time that is currently allowed.
  - A disclosure statement for new residents that highlights that they're moving into an Entertainment District.
  - Permissive rules and fees for Special Events that encourage and protect special events such as festivals, street fairs, and parades.

A plan that preserves buildings while the residential and business uses that created our neighborhood are left to struggle or fail is no plan at all. While Historic Districts are well-intentioned and aim to preserve the history of a neighborhood, they often end up exacerbating existing issues of gentrification and “pricing out” marginalized communities - including the very community this Historic District purports to protect.

Yours sincerely,



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Kyle Matthews  
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Flicks Nightclub

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Rich's Nightclub

Copy: San Diego Mayor Todd Gloria, San Diego City Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, Nancy Graham, Tait Galloway, Sameera Rao, Elizabeth Studebaker, Javier Gomez, & Stephen Hill



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