

# Southeastern San Diego



## Community Plan Update

### *Southeastern - Community Planning Group Meeting #1*

*March 11, 2013 – 6:00-8:00pm*

*Sherman Heights Community Center*

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#### **Meeting Objectives**

- Review the Community Plan update process and purpose
- Discuss planning group members' vision for the Plan and key concerns
- Solicit input from community members on their priorities for the Plan

#### **Meeting Summary**

##### **1. Welcome and Introduction of Consulting Team and Staff**

Karen Bucey (City of San Diego) welcomed participants to the meeting and thanked members of the Southeastern Community Planning Group. Karen introduced herself, Lara Gates, the planning consulting team and other city staff that will be involved in the Community Plan Update (CPU) process.

##### **2. Introduction of Community Planning Group**

Rajeev Bhatia (Dyett & Bhatia) explained the role of the working group to provide leadership and input in the planning process. He described that decision making during meetings will be conducted through a consensus process, wherein the group will decide to agree on recommendations collectively. He defined ground rules for discussions, which include listening, respecting others' opinions, and allowing everyone a chance to speak.

##### **3. Overview of the Community Plan Process**

Mr. Bhatia and Jean Eisberg (Dyett & Bhatia) provided an overview of the community planning process, scope and schedule. They discussed the relationship of the Community Plan to past and current planning efforts in the community, specifically the Commercial/ Imperial Corridor Master Plan and the National Avenue Master Plan among others. The public outreach program for the Plan Update was also described.

##### **4. Review of Existing Conditions Analysis**

Members of the Planning Consulting Team provided a summary of key findings of the Existing Conditions Analysis performed for the plan area. This included an overview of maps of the existing land use patterns, circulation and mobility, parks and open space, and the area's tree canopy, as well as a summary of the Market Demand Study. Rick Barrett (MIG) described the National Avenue corridor and its surrounding areas. A Draft Areas of Stability and Areas of Change Map was presented, showing the commercial corridors (Market, Imperial, Commercial, National) as well as underutilized industrial areas and the freeway entrance ramps in the former 252 corridor as key areas of change that will be the focus of the Community Plan Update.

## 5. Discussion of Plan Vision and Key Issues

Community Planning Group members and members of the public provided their vision for the future of the Southeastern community, as well as their concerns, questions and considerations. We first heard from Planning Group members before opening up the floor to other members of the community. These ideas are summarized in the following categories (in no particular order of preference):

### A. Identity and Character

Several community members expressed a desire to celebrate the Hispanic community and suggested the area could have a theme and be turned into a "Little Mexico." Others pointed to the need to create a sense of destination with a distinct character that draws people from all over the city and inspires people to stay, live and enjoy Southeastern. One person pointed to the significance of spreading culture and preservation throughout the community and not only along the main commercial corridors. A participant mentioned the Victory Theater should be recognized as a historic site of the Civil Rights Movement and several members expressed a concern about transitions in height, density and scale in the community and between East Village and Sherman Heights.

### B. Infrastructure

Planning group members and the public were in general agreement that the community has infrastructure deficiencies and deferred maintenance of existing water and sewer facilities is a priority. Park maintenance was also mentioned, as well as the sense that the plan should consider what is needed in the community before looking at how to accommodate citywide housing needs.

### C. Transportation and Mobility

Community members pointed to the heavy use of the trolley and the trolley stations as important community assets but felt that better connections to transit and for biking and walking could be made throughout the community, especially to connect with other communities, such as City Heights. One person suggested the idea to add a trolley station at 28<sup>th</sup> and Commercial and move the 32<sup>nd</sup> Street station closer to I-15 to connect with the planned Bus Rapid Transit Station (BRT) on I-15. One participant noted that as densities increase in the community, households without cars should be rewarded. Another idea was to reduce the parking requirements to ½ a car per residential unit. Community members also expressed concerns about traffic controls and signals, recommending that signals be installed at key intersection pop-outs, stop signs at 39<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 43<sup>rd</sup> and National, and clear parking signs.

#### D. Land Use and Mix

Community members appeared to agree that the mix of land uses in the community adds to the diversity and richness of the area, but that thoughtful consideration must be given to the location of uses that may conflict with each other or have the potential to create a nuisance, such as industrial uses, recycling facilities and junkyards, metal scrap facilities and commercial uses, especially where they adjoin the residential areas.

One participant suggested that the community reconnect with Project First Class and promote high-tech uses along Commercial, and fill the gaps in development there. Another reminded the group that Southeastern is a predominantly low-scale community and that proposed land uses should reflect that. A request for a flexible, mixed-use zone was made to accommodate day care centers and small businesses along with residential, and one member recommended the plan minimize or discourage lot consolidations so as to preclude the development of large building complexes.

#### E. Environment

Community members expressed a need for better regulations to control noise, recycling facilities, graffiti and cell phone towers. Several members also wish to promote storm water management practices, such as permeable paving, rainwater collection in streets and alleys, and landscaping. One member pointed to downtown's Clean and Safe program as a good example of a way to promote maintenance and safety. There was a sense from participants that the community gets a disproportionate number of code violations and enforcement. One member mentioned that environmental justice issues should be considered in the plan.

#### F. Economics

Several community members expressed a concern that affordability be maintained so that community members are not discriminated against, pushed out or displaced from the community. At the same time, a few members worry that homeless individuals will migrate to Southeastern as they are pushed out of downtown. One property owner questioned the feasibility of Transit-Oriented Development at 44 dwelling units per acre, suggesting that densities may need to be higher in order to make financial sense.

Planning group members spoke about the need to attract and provide access to more jobs in the area and to promote education, entrepreneurship and vocational training programs. There was discussion about how to help businesses open and stay and whether the community will lose people with new development. Small and micro-businesses were of particular interest.

#### G. Parks and Public Facilities

Community members said there is a need for more conveniently located gathering places for kids and older people, including plazas, gardens, amphitheaters, and active use parks. One resident mentioned that the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Park is not well used and should be redesigned. The need for better maintenance and amenities in parks was also mentioned.

#### H. Streetscapes

Community members would like the plan to address pedestrian safety and streetscape design. One member suggested widening Imperial Avenue by 10 feet to redesign it with roundabouts, reversed angle parking and bicycle facilities. One participant asked if the roundabouts installed on La Jolla Blvd. at Bird Rock could work in Southeastern. More street trees and landscaping are also desired.

I. Planning Process

Some participants were concerned that working class people and African American residents will not be heard. One member would like to see more market analysis performed for the area, and there was a desire to make documents available in Spanish. One participant suggested the City and planning consultants tap into the work of other community groups and organizations, and that the National Avenue Master Plan be folded into the Community Plan.

6. **Conclusion and Next Steps**

Planning Group members and members of the public were asked to contact Karen Bucey (City of San Diego) for additional comments and information about the upcoming workshop #1, to take April 25.

7. **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8pm.