

Southeastern San Diego



Community Plan Update

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1 SUMMARY

MAY 2013

Prepared for

City of San Diego

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1 Introduction

This report describes the results of the community workshop for the Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update held Thursday, April 25 at the Sherman Heights Community Center. The workshop was designed to engage the attention, interest, and active involvement of a broad spectrum of community members, and provide opportunities for discussion of and input into the community's vision of the community's future. Approximately 30 participants discussed what they see as the future vision of Southeastern San Diego and what land use and mobility choices they would like to see made in their community. Input from this meeting will be used to inform land use and mobility improvements and subsequent phases of the Community Plan process.



Photos from the Community Workshop

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

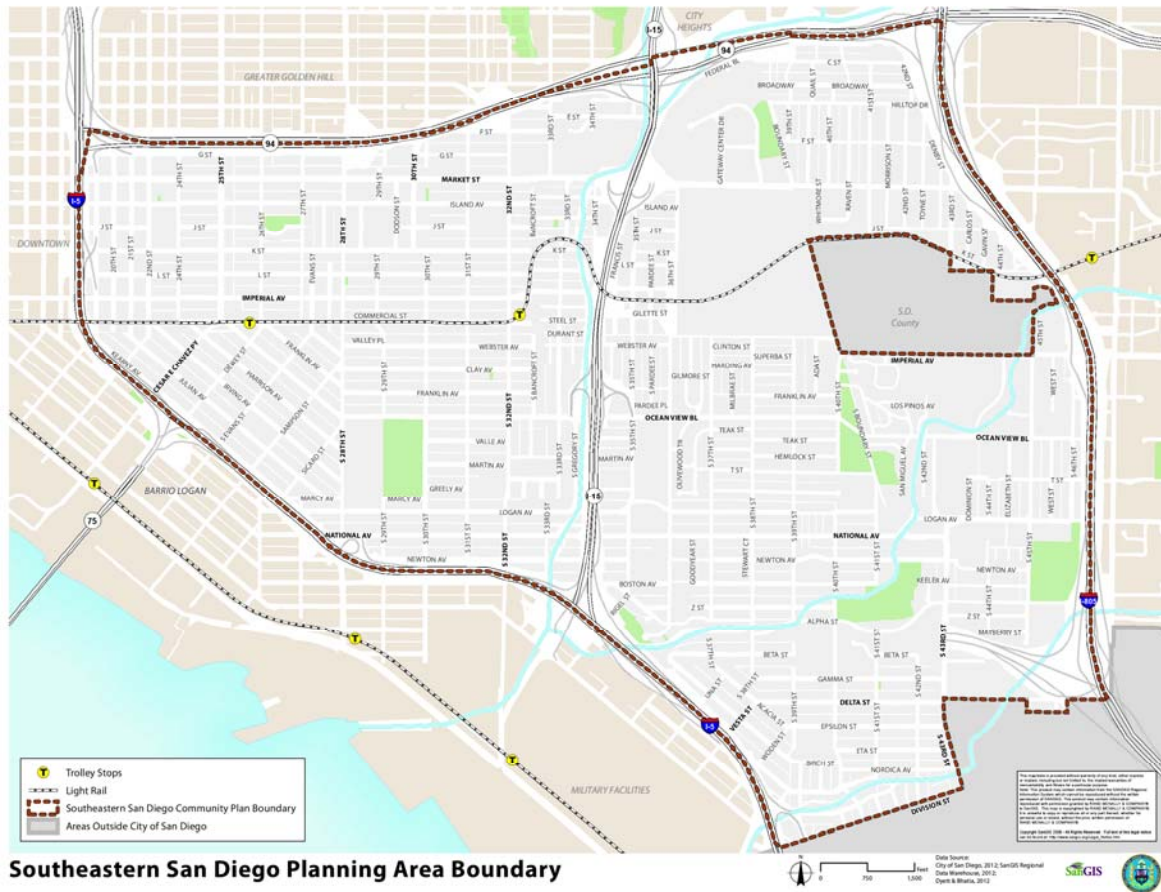
The City of San Diego General Plan, adopted in 2008, is a comprehensive “blueprint” for San Diego’s growth over the next 20 years. The General Plan identifies over 50 community planning areas in the city – including Southeastern San Diego – for which community plans are to be developed or updated to provide more localized policies.

The current Southeastern San Diego Community Plan provides a framework to guide development in the Southeastern Community. Originally adopted in 1969, it was comprehensively updated in 1987 and has undergone several amendments in the intervening years.

Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update

This Community Plan Update seeks to bring the plan up-to-date by building upon what has been constructed and implemented already, analyzing changes in demographics that may affect land use needs, identifying needs for housing and commercial uses and ensuring that policies and recommendations remain consistent with the General Plan and citywide policies. All of this can only be accomplished by working closely with community members and stakeholders to determine issues of concern, desires, and preferences and to establish a vision and objectives for the plan update. This first workshop is one step in a larger program for community participation in the Plan Update.

SOUTHEASTERN SAN DIEGO COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE



PUBLIC OUTREACH PROGRAM

Preparation of the Southeastern Community Plan Update is proceeding with an integrated community outreach and technical process. Through the planning process, community members are being offered a variety of opportunities to help develop a vision and plan for the community that reflects community's most important values and priorities. Outreach activities include regular meetings with the Community Planning Group, stakeholder interviews, community workshops (the subject of this report), an interactive "Pop-Up Outreach" Program and self-guided walking tour, meetings with multi-jurisdiction agencies and community organizations, community surveys, and ongoing updates to the project website: <http://www.sandiego.gov/planning/community/cpu/southeastern/index.shtml>

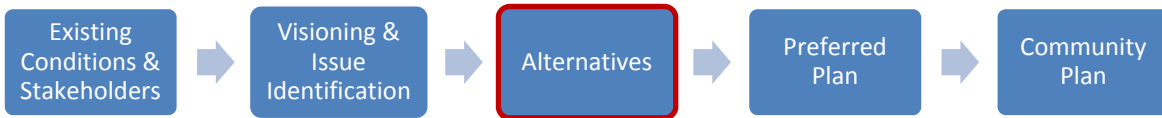
PROJECT SCHEDULE AND PHASES

This project is arranged in four phases as shown in the graphic schedule below. Community outreach activities are an integral part of the process, with workshops and Community Planning Group Meetings held in each phase.

The Existing Conditions phase has been completed, providing a foundation for the rest of the process. Currently, the project team is working to develop a draft land use alternatives for the Community Plan along with urban design principles, synthesizing concepts and objectives expressed during this workshop and other community outreach activities.

The planning team will then prepare a Scenario Evaluation Report, analyzing up to three future land use, mobility, and urban design possibilities based on the opportunities and challenges identified in this report and direction from community outreach activities. Based on feedback about the alternatives and their relative impacts, a Preferred Scenario will be prepared, which will outline the preferred vision, land use, mobility, and urban design direction for the corridor. This Preferred Scenario may be one of the alternative concepts or some combination of two or more concepts.

Finally, the project team will prepare the Southeastern Community Plan, which will provide (among other items) land use, urban design, mobility, and economic strategies for the community.



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2 Workshop Structure

The first workshop was held on Thursday April 25, 2013 at the Sherman Heights Community Center. Approximately 30 participants attended. Flyers publicizing the workshop were mailed to the residential, commercial, and industrial addresses within the Planning Area. Attendees included residents, employees, business owners, and other concerned persons. All workshop materials were translated into Spanish and simultaneous Spanish translation was offered at the workshop.

OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this first workshop was to give interested members of the public an opportunity to brainstorm about their visions for the future of the Southeastern San Diego Community. The workshop agenda articulated the following objectives: initiate a community dialogue about the vision for the community; review the project and planning process; and provide an opportunity for all attendees to provide input about project objectives and issues.

FORMAT

The workshop agenda is provided in Appendix A. As participants registered, they were asked to orient themselves to the Planning Area by placing sticker dots on a large map depicting where they live or work in or around the community. Staff/consultants presented information about the project, planning process, and format of the workshop. The presentation is provided in Appendix B.

As informed representatives of the community, participants were asked to identify key issues, opportunities, and challenges facing the community through two activities:

- **Activity #1:** Headline and Visioning Exercise: Participants were organized into four small groups by table. They were provided an individual headline worksheet on which to record their headline vision of the community in 2035. Each participant then shared their headline with the rest of the participants seated at their table. Next, as a small group and with a facilitator, each table determined their collective vision statement for the community in the next 20 years.
- **Activity #2:** Issues and Concepts for Southeastern: Continuing with the same group of activity 1, participants were asked to document in both an individual worksheet and/or maps what their thoughts were about land uses and development and mobility and streetscape. The worksheet asked questions about where new homes should be located, what types of new commercial uses are needed, and other land use issues that are important to stakeholders. Participants were also asked to consider how transportation in Southeastern San Diego could be improved, making it easier to get around. Special focus was devoted to National Avenue.

Southeastern San Diego Community Plan Update

A representative from each of the table groups shared the results of the group’s work (vision statement and priorities for land use and mobility/streetscape) with the audience at large.



Table Maps depict land use and mobility recommendations

3 Workshop Results

The following is a summary of feedback from the workshop exercises.

ACTIVITY #1: HEADLINE AND VISIONING EXERCISE

The following are the headlines produced by table group. For individual headlines, refer to the scanned worksheets in the Appendix C.

Table 1 - Southeastern San Diego Has Achieved its Community Renaissance

- Physical and spiritual improvements have been made
- There are more parks, green areas
- The low density character is maintained along with mixed-use, shop-keeper units
- There are no more predatory businesses

Table 2 – A Beacon of Hope, a Model for Humanity

- Disparate elements are all connected
- It is the first “car-less” community
- Improving on what we already have
- Sustainable living and a self-sustaining community
- A diverse group of people
- A strong cottage industry

Table 3 – Historic = Eco-Friendly: Southeastern Revived

- A distinctive, historic and diverse community
- A place with delightful livability
- A place where you can live and work because you want to

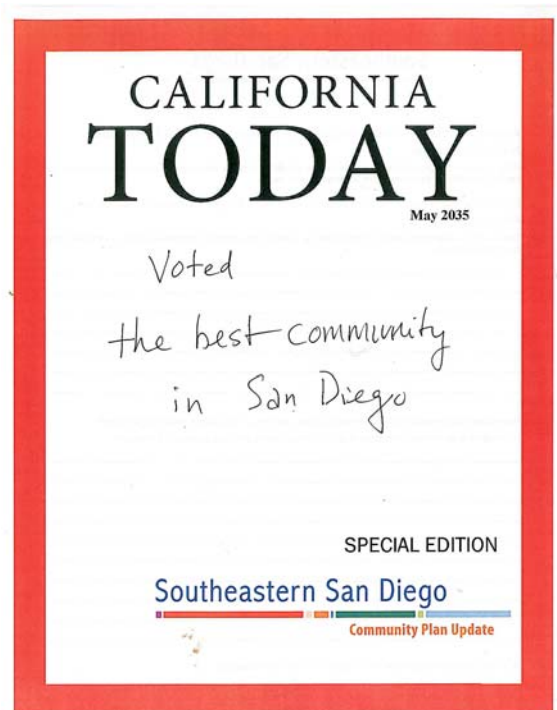


Table 4 – Jobs! Satellite Campuses of UCSD and SDSU in Southeastern Near Completion

- Industrial and manufacturing thrive because of a 2-way connection with universities and colleges
- Job training and education of local residents

ACTIVITY #2: ISSUES AND CONCEPTS FOR SOUTHEASTERN

Participants demonstrated some significant agreement on their preferences concerning land use types and conditions in the community. The following summarizes themes and common threads in the feedback. For more detailed comments, refer to the scanned notes and worksheets in Appendix D.

Jobs and Education

Participants expressed an interest and focus on promoting jobs and job training, by linking employment to education and research institutions, such as UCSD and San Diego State University. A concern over the preservation of industrial manufacturing jobs and the type of new industrial and office uses was voiced. One table would like to see much of the industrial zones maintained as maintain industrial uses industrial, while others want to see more office uses in the community.

Trolley and BRT Connections

Transit was an issue that all participants discussed, particularly about the lack of transit connections on north-south corridors and the need to connect disparate elements of the transit network. One suggestion was to add bus routes on both 36th street and 32nd street to fill the north-south transit gap as well as to have transit options on both sides of the I-15. There was consensus within the participants that the trolley is a great asset, yet more could be done in terms of accessibility. One table suggested adding another trolley stop at 35th and Imperial Ave as well as creating ‘park and ride’ locations with charging stations for electric cars located near trolley stops. However another table had a different approach and proposed a new station at 30th and Commercial Street and moving the trolley stop that is currently at 32nd street to a location adjacent to the new BRT stop that will be located at Imperial Ave and I-15. A further suggestion was to establish better transit connections to existing retail and commercial development in an effort to increase accessibility of these existing uses.

Rehabilitation, Historic Preservation and Maintenance

Several participants expressed their concern with maintaining historical preservation since it is such a distinctive part of the community. Participants demonstrated that the community has a need for ongoing investment in order to continue to both preserve existing uses and rehabilitate underutilized spaces in a long term manner. One table advocated the need for strong political support while another suggested establishing financing programs to help rehabilitate existing buildings as well as rebuild entire areas.

Sustainability

A strong focus for participants in terms of sustainability was urban agriculture and community gardens. Many tables recommended allowing for more community gardens and urban farms as a method to

increase local food production and encourage healthy eating habits. Participants also suggested adding solar powered street lights in an effort to save electricity and were excited about the idea of a community that could be self-sustaining.

Bike and Pedestrian Environment

Participants almost universally expressed a desire for a more walkable and pedestrian friendly environment in the community. One chief concern was the lack of adequate street lighting for cyclists and pedestrians, which lessens the safety of sidewalks at night. Participants suggested new and better sidewalks, family friendly bike paths, separated bike lanes, and bicycle connections that not only connect the community itself, but also connect to adjacent communities. One table would like to consider the possibility of losing the center turn lane on National Ave in order to add bike lanes. An alternative suggestion was to use secondary roads that are one block parallel to main roads for bike lanes so they could be safer for both automobiles and cyclists. The example given was that perhaps bike lanes would be better suited for Logan Ave instead of National Ave.

Housing, Mixed-Use, and Development Character

Participants were very vocal on the types of development that should be present in the community and many were concerned with housing issues. Participants expressed a desire for plenty of opportunities for both the sale and rental of affordable housing within the community and one table suggested pre-fabricated or manufactured housing to be introduced to the community as a way to keep housing costs low. Other concerns include adding more mixed-use development to the community (such as shop-keeper units), creating more neighborhood oriented restaurants and cafes, mixing big and small development together, revitalizing industrial sites, and decreasing the amount of 'predatory commercial establishments', such as liquor stores, checking cashing stores, and pawn shops. One idea was to find ways to facilitate small-scale home based businesses. One table was strongly against creating any high-rise developments and wished to maintain a low density while others thought that we must build up since the neighborhood is built out, advocating for 4 to 6 story buildings along Commercial Ave, Imperial Ave, Market Street, and National Avenue. Some suggested allowing for clusters of high density development around transit stations as well as more freedom and flexibility in developmental regulations.

Parks and Open Space

Almost all participants expressed a need for more parks and open space access within the community including adding more lighting in open spaces, adding better park amenities, providing better access to parks and increasing park safety so that parks may be used at nighttime. One table suggested a park be built between 25th and 30th streets, while others see an opportunity for a skateboard park at the old hospital site. Some see rooftops and the freeways as opportunities for gardens and freeway lids. There was also an interest expressed in using vacant/underutilized land for open space plazas and eating areas. As a detail, participants also pointed to the need for drought tolerant and appropriate planting that can live in the arid and semi-arid landscape of the area.

Community Facilities

Several community members suggested a need for community-serving facilities, such as more banks, pharmacies and medical facilities. One table would like to see a high school in the community, possibly

located at Memorial or at Commercial/Imperial. Another grocery store is strongly desired in the community, as well as a new library at 20th and Ocean View. Beyond buildings, participants also noted the need for trash cans in the community to help keep neighborhoods clean.

Streetscape

Participants voiced strong support for streetscape improvements, especially where they contribute to creating a safer and more enjoyable street experience for pedestrians and cyclists. There is a sense that the hills enable speeding and that traffic calming measures, additional stop signs and medians are needed to facilitate pedestrian movement. One table highlighted Ocean View Blvd. as a particularly challenging street that has a high rate of accidents and needs a design solution and more street trees. Two groups mentioned the need for more street trees throughout and suggested traffic circles and roundabouts be considered. With the goal of creating a carless environment, one table encouraged connections be made across canyons and hills, asking why the pedestrian connection across Imperial on 35th street was lost and whether it could be restored.

Music, Arts and Culture

Participants expressed an interest in bolstering the music, arts and culture of Southeastern, pointing to demographic changes that have made the area more diverse and rich over the years as a reason to support community events, a farmers market, a theater or other arts and culture related activities. One group mentioned the “Palm 22” book depository on commercial and 22nd could be a community center.

Appendices

APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP AGENDA

APPENDIX B: WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

APPENDIX C: ACTIVITY #1 – HEADLINE AND VISION, BY INDIVIDUAL

APPENDIX D: ACTIVITY #2 – ISSUES AND CONCEPTS MAPS AND NOTES, BY TABLE

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