

Golden Hill Community Plan Update

CPUAC Meeting #2, 1/6/10

Meeting Summary (DRAFT)

Overview

On Wednesday, January 6, 2009, the Community Plan Update Advisory Committee (CPUAC) held its second meeting. The following information summarizes the:

1. Meeting process
2. Meeting agenda
3. Meeting comments

1. Meeting Process

Per the Brown Act (open meetings), the meeting was publicly noticed and open to public attendance and comment. Twelve of the fourteen CPUAC members attended. Ten people attended from the community at-large. The room was arranged so that the CPUAC members were seated at rows of tables. The community at-large was seated in rows of chairs. The room arrangement recognized the formal role of the CPUAC to sustain the public discussion throughout the community plan update process.

Opening remarks were given by Bill Anderson, Director of the City Planning & Community Investment Department: The City's General Plan has been awarded the Daniel Burnham Award for Comprehensive Planning by the American Planning Association; and the importance of good overarching policies with the understanding that the community level is where specific issues are addressed to accommodate the City's diverse communities. The department work program currently has an emphasis on community plan updates with updates to 11 community plans in progress.

City staff facilitated the meeting and gave a presentation that included a recap of CPUAC Meeting # 1, a slideshow of pictures taken by the community, a summary of key points from the slideshow and next steps. The presentation was followed by a debrief process for the CPUAC members to comment on: what they liked about the process; what they would suggest to improve the process; what they learned; and, what they would like to know more about.

2. Meeting Agenda:

The meeting was organized into four parts:

- Welcome and Introduction
- Slideshow of Community Concerns & Issues
- Summary of Key Points from Slideshow and Next Steps
- A Debrief for the CPUAC

A large part of the meeting was dedicated to the slideshow of images sent by community members to the City in response to the request at CPUAC meeting #1 to document existing conditions through photos categorized into likes and dislikes. All photos submitted were presented at the meeting (apx. 200). The slideshow and the discussion that followed will serve as part of the basis for discussing future conditions that the community would like to be included in the Community Plan Update.

3. Meeting Comments:

Throughout the meeting, participants were able to comment on the meeting's agenda topics. Their comments were charted by two outreach team members. The following pages provide a record of the comments in abbreviated and detailed versions.

- a. Summary of comments (abbreviated)
- b. Slideshow comments & debrief (detailed)
- c. Additional Public Comment (abbreviated)

3.a. Summary of comments received during the slide presentation and the debrief:

PHOTO SLIDESHOW

A question from the audience was asked about how the photos were divided between Golden Hill and South Park. Response provided that photos were not divided by location, but by common issues and themes.

Comments were provided during the slide show about how certain signs that were shown are illegal under the Golden Hill Planned District Ordinance ("PDO").

A comment was offered that an article was done on "green alleys" in the Reader.

The issue of compatibility was raised and whether the PDO would be able to ensure that older buildings retain their older characteristics.

30th/North of Juniper was brought up in regards to this area being included in South Park to enable consistency of development, despite this portion of 30th Street being in Greater North Park.

It was noted that the Station Tavern & Burgers building received a 2009 Orchid Award and that the Einstein (Brooklyn) Academy Charter School would be updating a mural in the community.

Regarding sidewalks with proper historic scoring and preservation of contractor date stamps, discussion was raised about how people felt about the color of truncated domes which are yellow in the City, but are different in color or materials in other cities.

Within the Public Right-of-Way, it was raised that some landscaping has been left to overgrow and encroach over sidewalks. Plants like Bougainvillea getting in the way of pedestrians could be dangerous.

A discussion was raised regarding the comparison of the tower elements on the Station Tavern with the wooden tower with solar panels vs. the Bridge Housing Mixed-use Project which serves as a 'lit beacon' at night. Although, several people in the audience did not approve of Bridge Housing's tower element, some thought that it was an element that brought a positive sense of surprise in the community.

A comment was brought up that although there are design criteria in the PDO, it is hard to imagine what type of affect it would eventually have on the physical reality of a built

development. It was also noted that maintenance of a property could be more of an issue than its design.

Regarding slides of undesirable architecture and urban design, individuals in the audience commented on the older multi-family structures with no articulation, and that one of the examples shown did have significant articulation, but had a huge staircase for the entrance. It was mentioned that landscaping in the form of trees and landscaped parkways would go a long way at enhancing these properties.

Regarding a dislike slide on the Gala Foods site, a discussion was raised as to how revitalization can be implemented by the PDO, since it could not make an undesirable use be removed.

A comment was made about how façade rehab programs can encourage public art.

A question was made about whether the underlying zoning can be changed through this process. Response from City is that a rezoning program would be undertaken with the update process to implement the policies in the community plan.

A comment was made that in Sherman Heights, densities were reduced to a point that actually encouraged redevelopment.

A comment was raised that this update process should provide an opportunity to look at everything and see where opportunities were.

During a discussion on the revitalization of the Gala Foods site, it was noted that people use the asphalt parking lot at Gala Foods to patronize other businesses in the surrounding area and that the inclusion of tree wells with trees could serve to enhance the parking lot without loss of parking. It was also mentioned that there was a proposal to construct 80 dwelling units at the Gala Foods site that did not go through.

A comment was raised that certain aspects of modern/contemporary architectural which are appreciated today are similar to those of older buildings that are currently identified as undesirable.

Questions were asked about fence heights in setback areas.

A comment was made that pop-outs are the “flavor of the month” and are not as effective as they seem; that older communities were designed to encourage and retain traffic calming characteristics; that new pedestrian improvements are not compatible with these neighborhoods because they encourage engineering dimensions that favor the automobile; and that pop-outs and other decorative paving patterns are difficult to maintain.

Regarding a slide expressing that 50’s style architecture is no longer desirable, it was commented that the house pictured in slide, located on Russ Street, actually has a nice art-deco style façade on the opposite side of the building, but that the Russ Street side should be improved.

A comment was raised that the Southeastern PDO does not allow chain-link fences.

DEBRIEF: THOUGHTS ON THE PROCESS

Slideshow of photos were appreciated, but that more folks should provide their feedback and participate more. This exercise allows folks to provide feedback, but not have to be present at the meeting.

Need more outreach and representation from folks beyond 32nd Street to SR-15.

It would be good to see where those who participate are from, to see where our neighbors are from who are driving this process.

It would be good to use the local papers to notify others about this process.

The walking tour would be a benefit.

Practical solutions would be good to have/know for the existing problems and issues.

Concern expressed about whether priorities developed in this process go to the Mayor. City Response: Director Bill Anderson explained the Public Facilities Financing Plan Update process to establish priorities.

Question asked by the Urban Design Consultant about whether the photos that were shown here capture a good spectrum of the issues in the community. Audience response: Yes.

DEBRIEF: NEED FOR MORE INFO?

Better understanding of what is Open Space. How much of it is public control.

How can we coordinate more with the public utility companies and other agencies?

Know more about solutions for parking.

Know more about how is parking handled. How would rezoning redevelop older structures. Provide more education on how this is done.

Learn more about stormwater issues.

2693 C Street was torn down. How can the process for other blighted/boarded up structures be speeded up?

Review and update street circulations maps to remove/identify all vacated streets.

Know more about connections/walking routes to Balboa Park.

Know more about getting a public branch library and what public/private services we want to maintain in the community.

Continue discussion of opportunities in the community. Understand the issue that community wants to maintain low-scale nature, but wants revitalizations at the same time which relies on additional residential density.

DEBRIEF: ANYTHING NEW LEARNED?

How the radius of the street corners maintain walkability of streets. What can be done to keep streets in older neighborhoods walkable?

How many folks were involved in the PDO?

3.b Slideshow comments & debrief (detailed)

A question from the audience was asked about how the photos were divided between Golden Hill and South Park. City response (Bernie Turgeon): photos were not divided by location, but by common issues and themes.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Certain signs that were shown are illegal under the Golden Hill Planned District Ordinance (“PDO”). E.g., slide 10: Rigel sign. How does code enforcement fit in?
 - City response (Bernie Turgeon): There may be the ability to reconfigure signage to bring into conformance.
- Slide 21: A good article about ‘green alleys’ & alley living appeared in the San Diego Reader a few weeks ago. It was the lead article.

LIKES

Historical/Cultural

- Slide 32: Any other overlay to use b/c the PDO covers a small area? Can we expand PDO to encourage keeping older design elements and structures?
 - City response (Bernie Turgeon): Yes, we can look at expanding the PDO or other alternatives such as using CPIOZ (Community Plan Implementation Overlay Zone) or looking at conservation areas as part of urban design work. In the photo example, the house on the right is something we may want to pick up in the character of the neighborhood, but not sure about the newer retaining wall.
- Slide 37: Is there any way that the existing commercial district on 30th St., north of Juniper, up to the canyon, can be incorporated into South Park without the residential part north of Juniper? The commercial businesses do not have a connection with North Park, but are linked with South Park.
 - City response (Turgeon): We can look at boundary issues and make adjustments through the community plan updates of both the North Park and Golden Hill plans. I don’t think the boundaries in the middle of major commercial streets serve the communities very well. It is not uncommon to use land use as delineator, and would be possible between the commercial and residential areas.
- Commercial building in slide should be listed as part of South Park.

Desirable Architecture/Design

- Slide 39: North of Piedmont, example of edgy architecture.
- Slide 40/41: The Station Tavern & Burgers won an Orchid award
 - City response (Turgeon): Yes, it has sustainability features; incorporated a design theme of the old trolley alignment as part of patio.

- Was power element added? Yes.
- On the other side of 30th – there is less desirable building with a box on it (have photo)
- Slide 53: Note home is 2 separate lots.
 - Contemporary architecture should be welcomed.
- Slide 63: Brooklyn Elementary School at Fern and Ash – community is trying to raise money to get the same artist to restore the mural
- Slide 64: Location is at Fern and Date
- Slide 65: Note that the historical concrete sidewalk (cast mark from original contractors) was cut out and replaced within the new pavement.
- That's City policy, but not always followed.
- Some curbs and sidewalks still have the street names on them. Does that extend to Golden Hill too?
- There are still tie down rings for horses on B Street and on 30th Street.
- City comment (Bill Anderson): How do you feel about the yellow tactile pads for ADA compliance? Although one can see yellow better, some cities do not pick yellow but use more natural materials with high contrast.
 - Audience response: Dislike them.
- Slide 67: Date St., east looking at 30th - Bougainvillea plant, while beautiful, is not trimmed and extends over the wall into the sidewalk.
- Slide 71: 30th and Ivy – Removing the box-like tower box would improve design
 - As a hidden design element, creates a sense of surprise when lighted at night
 - It's polarizing, that's for sure.
 - Great example of the manifestation of design criteria of the PDO. I don't think anyone imagined that this type of building would actually fit in.
 - I may or may not agree with everything, but this is an overview. This is a stew of everyone contributing to the elements.
 - City comment: In this instance, these 2 buildings both have towers. Don't answer now, but something to think about it, you like one tower rather than the other...why is that? What makes the other tower acceptable than the other...the height...the angle...the materials? Think about those things and distinguish between those differences.

Transportation and Mobility – no comments

Open Space – no comments

DISLIKES

Undesirable Architecture and Design

- Slide 96: Photo on left is more of a maintenance issue rather than design issue.
- Slide 98: Building on the right has details to make it slightly visually attractive.
- The photo on the right also has stairs to walk up to the building rather than at street level.
- Slide 99 on left: Tudor = “no door” style
- Slide 99 on right: Moose Lodge
 - Need to add street trees
 - Could be painted soon
 - Maybe put a mural up

- Slide 101: How much of this is a dream fantasy? What is the power of PDO to legislate?
 - 20 years ago, we had artist renderings of 25th and C with pedestrians walking around, but unless we change the underlying zoning to make it economically profitable for someone to assemble land or change the zoning to make it worthwhile, nothing happens. Can't tell pawnshop it's ugly and they have to move. What are the limits?
 - City response (Turgeon): There is the power to legislate with the Plan update and any changes to the PDO, but as pointed out, this applies to new development or revitalization. However, we can also identify strategies and look at incentives for redevelopment.
 - Unless the underlying zoning made it lucrative for them to do it.
 - City response (Turgeon): There is a grandfather clause to new zoning standards which ends when a site is significantly altered. When proposing to do something, the new design requirements must be met. There are other revitalization mechanisms too. But these tend to support the point that there needs to be an economic benefit to redevelop a site.
 - Of course, for someone to buy it too.
 - City (Anderson): There's also a program that provides matching money to improve facades for merchants. Sometimes organized through business improvements districts, a merchant association to encourage merchants to do that.
 - In past, the program had more interest in public art or historical preservation elements.
 - City: We have this condition of 1960s/1970s apartment buildings that have parking in front. Not just Golden Hill, but throughout mid-city and North Park. Question: there are measures to beautify that surface parking lots, but challenge is to also park cars there too. Is offsite parking to service these buildings acceptable to improve the façade or set-back areas?
 - 25th/C: Is it in the power within municipal laws to change underlying zoning?
 - City: Yes.
 - And then, let nature or the economy take its course and change the height restrictions to build condos higher?
 - City: That is always the question when you see a building underutilized or dilapidated, but the current zoning doesn't provide incentive for property owner to do it and that's one thing to consider is should the land use policy and zoning change to provide an incentive?
 - My previous community in Sherman Heights reduced residential density by 2/3s and that re-incentivized reinvestment. The previous underlying zoning was such that nobody would invest and no lender would participate. And when it was brought down to what a real estate approximation to the built environment, it encouraged reinvestment. Not always make it denser and money will follow.
 - City (Anderson): Property owners often think they have more value to land than actual market conditions would permit.
 - Answer is that zoning could be changed.
 - City (Anderson): Yes. But there has to be some flexibility and is a main reason for the Community Plan Update process.
 - Isn't part of the redo (update) to look at every available solution. To step back and look at possibilities. This parking (lot) has been talked about being a

center of South Park, as an area to establish a park. How to do that is not the issue. It is open and the store is kind of in flux in terms of ownership. This is an important piece of this redo to see where there are opportunities.

- Good to have a grocery store in community where people live and eat.
- City (Turgeon): This is maybe a site where we can look at existing zoning, explore incentives and tailor uses to see what works.
- This parking lot, for example, everyone is saying they want to have a park there or do something else there, but there are several businesses there and that's where people park. Just getting rid of a parking lot, may look better, but may not solve every problem.
- But there may be other options to parking.
- Could landscape, add tree walls, or move building closer to lot to close off corner area.
- This is an area that can be an area of focused discussion.
- Major area with the most possibilities.
- If owners decided to propose to fill in that entire lot or build something before the zoning changes or before Master Plan is through, does this Master Plan specifically say that they can not build on that lot so we can keep it as a possible open space...can that happen? Or if the owner builds on the lot, or we'll lose it forever?
- You can't build large retail without provide parking.
- You can move the building to that parking lot and you lose the potential for a green zone or open landscape.
- City (Turgeon): And that could likely happen under existing zoning.
- Be careful what you wish for. There was an elaborate proposal for a large condo development with 80 units (zoning does not allow this) -- it didn't happen and now the community is better off.
- Slide 102: It's interesting. Contemporary and retro buildings disliked now are also the same ones that are liked in the previous categories.
- Slide 105: Fern St. – This is the same building on the same block, but U-shape. Same owner of whole building.
- 7-11 is different owner.
- Backside of Rigel.
- That's a Laundromat and the yellow post is the start of gas pumps and that's the 7-11.
- Photo on right is the same owner.
- Slide 109: What are the rules of side fences? It's your property.
- City: Is the rear portion of the side yard, yes. Not on the front portion of the street side yard.
- At the corner house, you can't come up right into the corner. There has to be a distance back from the side.
- You have to be setback a certain distance.
- Set back at front property line, but on the side can come up to line.
- Is that fence legal?
- This is the front of the house on Grape/31st – Near canyon
- Lattice work?
- Open, a fourth has been cut.
- So that must be legal then?
- There are a lot of houses like that that have fences that are close to the sidewalk if near the canyons.

- Slide 109: Ash/Fern – Pop outs are the flavor of the month. I think they abrogate the character of older communities. These neighborhoods were walkable when they were built. And often maintain their walkability when things speed up traffic. Stick things in sidewalks, it decreases parking. One of things you see in older neighborhoods, when put in new sidewalks and try to avoid, they put wide radius, which is engineered to increase traffic speed. To keep tight radius like our neighborhood had historically, you also have decreased street width and enhanced pedestrian. When put in new ramps, we re-designed and re-engineered them in a manner that added not only a new design element that is not compatible, but also decreased the pedestrian in a way that retaining the historical character is effective, aesthetic, economical, and continues to function. There are some things that are great to have new, but other things where just because you don't understand them, doesn't mean they won't work. Some of the decorative pavings and pop-outs start to look really nasty after a short time because it's a hard thing to maintain and keep leveled.
- City (Turgeon): Yes we have to be mindful of curve radiuses and materials.
- Slide 115: Nice art deco on 'A' street is attractive, but the photo is the alley side of it. Not alley, it's actually Russ St.
- Slide 116: Parking in back only for tenants.
- Used to have VW (Volkswagen) on the roof.
- No room for community parking.
- Slide 122: Sidewalk not completed, other side is complete.
- Left photo is pointing to the golf course.
- Right photo is Date Street looking east at same corner.
- No sidewalk for this corner house.
- It's a little odd. Most of these properties are 50s construction like lots next to 28th/Date = beautiful homes, the original construction in the area.
- City: need to look at areas where sidewalks are missing.
- Slide 127: The Southeast San Diego Community Plan does not allow chain link fences.
- Neither does existing GH PDO.
- Slide 133: Treat St – 6 foot fence at property line? Illegal? Rolling gate?

Transportation/Mobility

- Slide 136: That's Russ – Unpaved and cracked street.
- Slide 142: The City has also been recently trimming back the tree canopies to facilitate the automated trash pick up, which meets the urban forestry goals.

Poorly Maintained Properties

- Slide 151: Now vacant lot → demolished in the last week.
- Slide: 153: Untrimmed

Public Uses – no comments

Open Space – no comments

Inappropriate/Incompatible Uses – no comments

No Captions – no comments

3.b. Debrief

- What I liked about the process?
 - Liked to see the community photos.
 - Commentary helped with understanding intent and what we were seeing.

- What I would suggest?
 - More outreach to the community to get more feedback.
 - Encourage more people to provide feedback and photos
 - City: This is an ongoing process, we can accept more input.
 - Walking tour will be public and available on the website.
 - You can take more photos of things you think are missing.
 - South Park goes all the way down to 15th. Not much presented here beyond ways of 32nd Street. There's a whole section there that consider themselves South Park and included in the boundaries. I'd like to check that out. There are some great vistas and interesting canyons. South Park goes from Balboa Park, 28th Street to 15.
 - By Pentucket Park?
 - Way over there. Really stops at 32nd Street. Most streets dead end, but picks up again several times.
 - Could mark on map where participants were from or not from in the community to determine where outreach is needed.
 - 2 newspapers (Participant provided after the meeting: Uptown News and North Park News).
 - Identify community sectors for neighborhoods in walking tour because there are different zoning and lot sizes. And I think some issue would be different. Walking tour would benefit with descriptions or highlighting certain challenges of different of different commercial zones, so we are more informed at what we are looking at.
 - Look at problems and also see some probable and possible solutions.
 - What can we do?
 - I.e. Chain link fence up after last PDO and add-ons without permitting → any follow-ups on this?
 - City: Code violations are mainly done by private complaints given to Development Services Department
 - Also proactive items supported by council offices that have been effective and can tell in Sherman Heights or Grant Hill there wasn't the same zoning.
 - CBGO funds sponsors some of these projects.
 - Code violations listings are online and are prioritized, look at this first, but keep in mind there are cutbacks in Citying and budget and may not look at certain things.
 - City: Can do some research and identify issues, but can not call people out as City City.
 - In some instances, they may not be violations, but may represent as non-conforming uses, like parking issues. For walking tour, may be helpful to have analysis of how it conforms to existing PDO and how we might alter PDO to address these issues.
 - I like the photos because they show overall themes. The theme I like is vegetation/canopy of trees/greening.

- Do the priorities from meetings make it to planning and also towards the Mayor's offices? Example: Streets have announced that no more urban forestry program. Drew has been marooned to SDGE and undergrounding.
 - City: These are 15 year plan, and not all issues will be fixed immediately. What the plan does is that it establishes land use policy, urban design policy, provide capital improvements plan, and provide zoning to implement; provided financing strategies for implementation. All part of the process. Some implementation is private and public.
 - 50% of issues of these slides are landscape, but this is an add-on, but here it's not an option. It's about walkability and energy conservation.
 - City: There is a phase that focuses on implementation and possibilities.
 - Urban Design Team: Good to listen to everyone talk in the last few meetings.
 - Begin to see patterns of issues.
 - Most about paving in fronts of buildings.
 - Do you feel what you saw tonight covers most of the issues? What was not here tonight?
- Would like to know more about?
 - What is open space?
 - There are 3 canyons that have encroachment – what is in public domain if develop public trails?
 - How to coordinate more with MTS, SDG&E, Caltrans, and utilities?
 - Have solutions of parking? If remove street parking, then what's the other solutions.
 - Developing commercial property is complicated and expensive, tied to parking – how should we handle it? Is it reasonable to think that zoning the way it is today can facilitate redevelopment of some of these commercial structures given the strengths? Try to educate the people and say that you can do this, in general terms. If there is a disjoint in zoning, how can we change a strip center in an L-shape parcel into something beautiful if it's complete financially unreasonable.
 - Drainages and opportunities to improving blighted canyons and mesas → contribute to storm water issues.
 - Some issues not addressed: Urban design and scale (lot consolidation, lot size, setbacks).
 - Can be positive: building on 25th/F violates setbacks and scale. I think it is an urban design mistake.
 - Sensitive placement in community.
 - Zone in PDO should encourage that sort of sensitivity.
 - Boarded up property: 2693 C Street got torn down.
 - It's been a 20-year process until now to do this.
 - How could be repeated to get other boarded up properties into some reusable fashion?
 - Hole in community is more of a problem. The incentive should be to rehabilitate a property. You'll never replace a building in that quality and character.

- Good point.
 - In this case, look good outside, but not structurally rehabilitated in the inside.
 - City should review existing maps and remove paper streets off of map.
 - Parking: Commercial property development should be able to let them know how much parking is allotted.
 - If you have a use (such as a supermarket) must provide the parking for customers.
 - Would like to know more about connecting with park, bikes, pedestrian, and the roads that connect through Balboa Park.
 - Need of grocery store, but also a public library branch.
 - What supporting services do we want to maintain and make pedestrian accessible?
 - Would like to continue discussion about opportunities. On one hand to preserve lower scale residential appeal and at same time want commercial revitalization and don't see how can this be viable without talking about density.
- What I learn?
 - Radius of street corners and how that maintains historical feel of community.
 - What did they do 100 years ago and what can we put back into the Community Plan Update?
 - There's a lot to the community plan and it covers a large area. We need to get more familiar of the rest of the area we are talking about.
 - How many involved in PDO the last time?
 - 1 to 2 people raised their hands.
 - Be careful on wording and intentions.

3.c. Additional Public Comment/ Comments received outside the meeting

- Comment received via email regarding issues with the Grape Street dog park (Balboa Park) that impact the surrounding neighborhood: accessibility to community should favor multiple users, not exclusive use for dog owners; intensity of use not evaluated properly; parking/traffic impacts; animal waste deteriorates parkways & private landscaping; maintenance costs not being recaptured; an alternative location near Pershing Drive would not impact neighborhood
- Comment received via email from a resident who can't attend the February 3rd meeting but would like to provide the following comments (overall concerns about neighborhood safety and providing playground facilities for children).

The tot lot at Cedar and 28th Street is for younger children only and needs to be updated. A fence is needed around the entire playground and a gate at the entryway. In addition, there are constantly golf balls being hit into the playground—that could really injure a child.

There is not an adequate amount of play equipment in our neighborhood and no playground for older children. Safety concerns: Many sidewalks are not safe

either because of broken concrete, steep cross slopes or because cars are always parked in the sidewalks. In addition, there are LOTS of dogs in our neighborhood and many are not leashed properly and are unleashed in our parks! I have two small children and I don't feel comfortable around unleashed dogs period. The dog park at Grape Street is a perfect example as I can't use that area at all because there is unrestricted dog use and nothing is fenced -- not fair to the non-dog owners.

DRAFT