



November 20, 2023

Subject: Project Number 1057682 'Houghton-Berry replacement home'

Dear Mr. William Hofman, Chair, and Members of the Planning Commission

My name is Jeff Brown, and I am the owner of Jeff Brown Yachts and The Old Boatyard located on Shelter Island. I am writing to express my support for Mr. and Mrs. Houghton-Berry and request that you deny the Appeal and offer affirmation of the Hearing Officer's approval.

Since arriving in San Diego in the 1970s, I have lived and owned multiple homes in the Point Loma and Sunset Cliffs communities. Two of our homes were historical, including our current residence which was the first historical house built in the community in 1928. Therefore, it goes without saying I have a great appreciation for the need for zoning and respect for building and community guidelines.

As a personal acquaintance of the Houghton-Berry's, I am simply appalled by the treatment inflicted on them by neighbors and "concerned citizens" in the construction of their home along the La Playa path. The arbitrary attacks by just a few individuals regarding the building are nothing less than public smearing and shameful for our community. These are down-to-earth, caring individuals with the utmost integrity, and they are diligently following the letter of the law in its construction.

I attended the community planning meeting in June 2023, expecting to encounter a crowd of dissenters and picketers but found that only a few individuals even bothered to show. If this is such a horrendous situation for the locals, one must consider why they didn't choose to purchase the home or gather collectively to purchase. Putting deed restrictions on it and selling it was an option prior to Houghton-Berry's purchase.

The plans for the Houghton-Berry home are well-conceived; it is a thoughtfully designed initiative that reflects a spirit of progress and community enhancement. I am familiar with the neighborhood and their plans and know the design will not only complement the existing character of the area but enhance the property values as well.

It must also be specifically noted that the home will not block views along the shoreline, will have bigger setbacks than the previous structure and be well articulated as well as within the height and scale guidelines. Since day one, they have consistently complied with city and community plan guidelines which is validated by the fact that the plans have been approved by the local Community Planning Board and the City.

This home, and your decision to allow them to move forward, are testaments to the positive change it can bring to the Point Loma community.

Best


Jeff Brown

Subject: Project Number 1057682 'Houghton-Berry Replacement Home'

Dear Mr. Hofman, Mr. Boomhower, Ms. Mahzari, Mr. Miyahara, Mr. Malbrough, Mr. Otsuji, and Ms. Moden,

I am writing to reaffirm my support for the issuance of a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the project at 821 San Antonio Place, known as the Houghton-Berry Replacement Home, Project No. 1057682.

My family and I are residents of the neighborhood, and this area holds special significance for us—my wife and I were engaged a stone's throw from this project on the La Playa trail. We are eager to see thoughtful development that aligns with community standards and enriches the neighborhood. We I have closely followed the development of this project, and having reviewed the plans and renderings, it's clear that the proposed house will significantly enhance our community, fitting well with the neighborhood's character. The design shows respect for local aesthetics, promising an improvement over the structure it replaces.

Notably, the home will feature larger setbacks than the previous building, showcasing thoughtful articulation. Importantly, it will not obstruct any public views to or along the shoreline, maintaining the cherished scenic vista our community enjoys. The home's scale and character, as viewed from the bay, align well with surrounding properties.

Furthermore, the project complies with our community plan guidelines and has already received approval from the local Community Planning Board. It adheres strictly to all regulations regarding height and scale, reflecting a conscientious approach to community standards.

The City staff's findings in favor of approval are comprehensive and well-founded. Therefore, I respectfully request the denial of the Appeal and the affirmation of the Hearing Officer's approval for this project. It represents a thoughtful and beneficial development for our neighborhood.

Should you need further information or insights from a community member's perspective, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your attention to this crucial matter.

Sincerely,

Michael & Kellin Nicoletti
+1.858.257.7787

Christopher W. Cramer
777 Armada Terrace
San Diego, CA 92106
619-222-3142

Date: November 26, 2023

To: William Hofman, Chair of the San Diego Planning Commission

CC: Members of the San Diego Planning Commission: Matthew Boomhower, Farah Mahzari, Ted Miyahara, Kenneth Malbrough, Dennis Otsuji, Kelly Moden

RE: Supporting letter - Project Number 1057682 'Houghton-Berry replacement home'

Dear Chair Hofman and Planning Commission Members:

I am Chris Cramer, and I have lived at 777 Armada Terrace, 92106, above the property in question since 1999. I write to emphatically SUPPORT the project submitted by Patrick McInemey on behalf of the Houghton-Berrys for 821 San Antonio Place, and to urge you to DENY the Appeal and AFFIRM the Hearing Officer's approval at your hearing on 11/30/2023.

Beginning in 1961 I grew up in La Playa living at 727 Armada Terrace (four houses to the south of my current home), a property which is still owned by my family members as is the adjacent property at 717 Armada Terrace. All three of these Cramer-owned and occupied Armada Terrace houses are directly above the Houghton-Berry property and have views looking down on it.

Homes in La Playa have always throughout my lifetime featured a vast variety of architectural styles, and there is clearly no prevailing architectural style in this neighborhood – and there never has been any! As an old Stanford History Major and as a member of a family that has lived in San Diego since 1886 and in La Playa since 1929, I can tell you that we are blessed to live in a community that has continuously improved with better and more substantial dwellings during the 137 years the Cramer family has resided here, rather than live in a neighborhood that has stagnated or fallen into an arc of degradation. Home improvement in a neighborhood is a POSITIVE occurrence, and it INCREASES the property values in our community creating wealth for the families that live here.

The Houghton-Berrys have invested millions of dollars to purchase what for decades many of us living above this formerly dilapidated property on the water considered to be the single ugliest house in the neighborhood with its faux French Chateau styling and obnoxious patina copper roof, and they are converting it into what will likely be one of the most attractive, signature homes in La Playa that will enhance the neighborhood and its property values once the construction is completed.

The Houghton-Berrys have extraordinary taste in design. I have been to their beautiful prior home in London and I have seen firsthand the tremendous thought and care they put into creating world-class architecture and design, and I know their history of having won design awards.

I have also seen the project under consideration almost daily as well as its plans, and I think it is exceptionally well done and sensitive to the surrounding neighborhood of mostly 2-3 story houses. Despite the complaints of certain self-interested neighbors to the contrary, this project is NOT out of scale, and it is WELL within the 30' height limit and allowable development area.

Specifically, the new house:

- will have bigger setbacks than the previous structure and will be well articulated;
- will not block any public views to or along the shoreline;
- as viewed from the bay is within the scale and character of the surrounding area;
- complies with community plan guidelines and has been approved by the local Community Planning Board; and
- is well within all the guidelines regarding height/scale.

The City staff findings of approval are comprehensive and supported by facts, and frankly it seems to me as if a few neighbors have stirred things up with their misrepresentations. I encourage you to end this nonsense and accordingly request denial of the Appeal and affirmation of the Hearing Officer's approval at your hearing on 11/30/2023.

Thank you for your consideration and please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Christopher W. Cramer

Christopher W. Cramer
Chris.cramer@karlstrauss.com
619-602-6477

Letter of support for project number 1057682

Address: 821 San Antonia Place

Dear Mr. William Hofman, Chair

I am writing to express my full support for the proposed project at 821 San Antonio Place, Project Number 1057682. As a long-term resident of the area, I am intimately familiar with the natural beauty and unique charm of the neighborhood, particularly its proximity to the bay. I firmly believe that the proposed project will be a significant improvement to the area and will seamlessly integrate with the surrounding natural environment.

The new design of the house is a substantial enhancement to the neighborhood and the stone façade will harmoniously blend with the natural habitat. The increase in setbacks from the previous structure demonstrates a conscientious effort to ensure that the new home does not obstruct any public views along the shoreline. From the perspective of the bay, the new house is in perfect harmony with the scale and character of the surrounding area, complementing its aesthetic appeal.

Furthermore, I am confident that the proposed home aligns with the community guidelines that have been ratified by the community planning board, particularly in terms of height and scale. The thoroughness and comprehensiveness of the city findings in approving this project reflect substantial quantity of supporting facts, and I am fully convinced the project satisfies all the necessary requirements.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly endorse the approval of this project without any reservations. I am looking forward to witnessing the complete home and anticipate enjoying walks by the home once the project is finished.

Thank you for your attention to the matter, and I trust that you will consider my support for the project as you deliberate on this important decision.

Sincerely,

Chris Perkins, M.D.



Urban Council Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment Recommendations

TO: City of San Diego Planning Department

DATE: November 29, 2023

RE: Comments for Plan Hillcrest – Proposed Focused Plan Amendment

Dear Members of the City of San Diego Planning Department:

The Building Industry Association’s Urban Council has reviewed the draft Plan Hillcrest proposed Focused Plan Amendment. Given the City’s focus of expanding availability of affordable homes in the Hillcrest area, we feel like the intent of this plan amendment is very positive, but there are several core issues that must be considered and ultimately resolved to allow this plan to achieve what it aims to do.

The Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment includes several Supplemental Development Regulations that counter the objectives of increasing housing in the Focused Plan Area. In order to truly understand the impacts of this policy, the City must study and evaluate the site-level and project-level impact of the proposed regulations. We recommend the City prepare site-specific studies to understand the impact of the Supplemental Development Regulations in conjunction with the height and setback requirements on the developable area of sites. Additionally, the City should analyze the impact on a variety of product types; for example, a Type I building versus a Type III building in collaboration with the development industry to understand the feasibility and reality of specific types of projects. In short, higher density doesn’t always equal greater feasibility.

In preparation of this letter, a high-level analysis of a ~30,000 sf site on Washington Avenue was prepared. The impact of the SDR’s alone was a reduction in over 17% of the developable lot. The upzoning of parcels for additional density is negated by the reduction in the developable area. Increasing density alone does not increase the production of units. Furthermore, increasing density alongside reducing developable area can result in less units being produced than would have been produced if nothing had changed at all. It does not appear that the City has sufficiently analyzed the impact of its proposed policies on the feasibility of projects. Alternatively, the City should review projects that are under construction currently in Hillcrest and review the impact of these proposed policies on those projects if they had been implemented.

In addition to the impact of the proposed SDR’s, there is a lack of clarity in the definitions of terms used in this section. For example, *Tower* is defined as “the structural envelope located



from the building base to the top of the building.” However, the image shown on IM-218 suggests that the tower is the portion of building above the step back requirement. This is further confirmed on IM-228 which says the *Tower Coverage* may be max 75% of *Building Base*. However, *Building Base* has an almost identical definition to *Tower* and is defined as “the structural envelope above existing grade, proposed grade, or a basement.” The terms and requirements used in this SDR must be combined with the Height and Massing requirements in the Urban Design section, but it is not currently possible to analyze the impacts or intent of these policies together.

Additionally, the impact on new developments based on the proposed historical resources and regulations should be examined, as it still isn’t clear whether this would promote or prevent development in the Focused Plan Area. We support limitations on historic designations within the Focused Plan Area in order to promote density in this study area. There are certain policies being proposed that need clarification. For example, LU-2.4 and LU-2.5: are these policies meant to exclude single family homes from designation in the Focused Plan Area?

The proposed focus plan amendment requires the inclusion of Public Spaces that are privately owned and maintained at the property owner’s expense via SDR B.2. Staff has suggested that the inclusion of this SDR is to further the public parks space within the Hillcrest FPA. However, it is unclear whether these additional Public Spaces are consistent with the Parks Master Plan and how these new spaces will be counted towards the Parks Master Plan. Additionally, although the private property owner is providing public park space they are still being required to pay the Citywide Park DIF. This discrepancy is alluded to in section A.i.1 of the SDR. Any public spaces constructed under this SDR should be subject to a DIF Waiver for the Citywide Park Impact Fee. Otherwise, private property owners are being charged twice. Staff should also evaluate whether a nexus study needs to be completed for this SDR given its relationship to providing public park space and the Citywide Park Impact Fee.

The City should be applauded for working to increase density in a walkable, bikeable neighborhood such as Hillcrest, and the Urban Council is supportive of this concept. However, on initial review it appears the proposed changes may result in less developable units rather than more despite a significant upzoning. The City should consider taking the opportunity it currently has to spend more time completing a thorough analysis of the impact of these policies on real sites, with technical input from those that will be implementing these policies. We wouldn’t want the significant efforts made in putting this together to result in a sub-optimal end result.



The Urban Council is willing to provide assistance in these analyses, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide further input as this plan continues to evolve and look forward to meeting with you later this month to discuss the plan and our concerns in greater detail.

Best regards,

John Allen, Chair

San Diego LGBTQ Historic Sites Project

November 17, 2023

City of San Diego
City Planning Department

**RE: Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment
Chapter 5: LGBTQ+ Cultural
October 2023**

The San Diego LGBTQ Historic Sites Project (The Project) welcomes this opportunity to offer its initial comments regarding the LGBTQ+ Cultural component added to the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment to the Uptown Community Plan. At this time The Project views this chapter as a work in progress and anticipates additional comments from The Project as well as from the Hillcrest and broader LGBTQ+ community.

The idea of an LGBTQ+ cultural district is a welcome component to the Uptown Plan. However a cultural component should not overshadow specifically designated LGBTQ+ historic sites and potential LGBTQ+ historic sites in the Uptown Plan area. Designated and potential designated historic sites can be the linkages and the glue that ties past to present to future and form the anchors and threads of interpretive elements that link memory and progress as a cultural district develops overtime.

5.0 LGBTQ+ Cultural Districts

This section should specifically state that designated historic LGBTQ+ sites should be preserved and incorporated in any new development. Additionally this section should specifically state that identifying potential LGBTQ+ historic sites will add additional LGBTQ+ history and memory as the cultural district ages and develops.

The “Key Objectives of the LGBTQ+ Cultural District” should acknowledge, in addition to entertainment and commercial business establishments, the importance of social service agencies and community based organizations as a significant part of LGBTQ+ culture and history.

5.1 History + Culture

The San Diego Citywide LGBTQ Historic Context Statement (2016) is an important document of spaces, places, sites, organizations, activities and individuals that inform the LGBTQ+ history of Hillcrest and Uptown. On page LC-111, the image picture used above the text and the text “The Hillcrest Youth Center opens its doors and becomes a critical resource for LGBTQ youth in San Diego in 1973” are both incorrect. The picture is the first gay center, the Center for Social Services at 2250 B Street (Golden Hill), which did open in 1973. The text is similar to the text above which states “...in 2000.” The Youth Center did not open in 1973.

San Diego LGBTQ Historic Sites Project

The 1975 text implies the Pride parade and rally occurred in Hillcrest. The parade started in downtown San Diego and ended in Balboa Park. The image of Jess Jessop on the phone is typically used for demonstrating the “hot line” telephone that was the precursor to the Center. (The Project will gladly engage with staff to discuss the images and text).

5.2 Outreach + Stories

“Community Identified Issues” should include and should specifically state that designated historic LGBTQ+ sites should be preserved and incorporated in any new development. Adaptive reuse, rehabilitation, repurposing are options that can integrate old and new. A cultural district is a creative district. Additionally these sections should specifically state that identifying potential LGBTQ+ historic sites can add additional history and memory as the cultural district ages and develops.

This section should be revised to include an LGBTQ+ Multiple Property Listing District (MPL) that underlays a complete MPL for the Focused Plan Amendment area. A full list and table of LGBTQ+ resources should be included and listed in full.

“Why is Pride Important for Hillcrest?” The Project agrees and understands the importance of the Pride Parade and Festival and supports it continuing to occur in Hillcrest. (The festival occurs in Balboa Park in the Bankers Hill area of Uptown.)

5.3 Interpretive Elements

The Project supports the incorporation of interpretive elements and recommends the avoidance of standard plaques and landmarks. The cultural district is an opportunity to integrate the talents of unique designs and elements to separate an LGBTQ+ cultural district from the “ordinary”. At the same time, The Project stresses the avoidance of “rainbow washing” in artwork, buildings, streetscapes, signage, etc. These elements should be cohesive, durable, educational and fun. The District should have a strong financial backed maintenance program to avoid these elements from becoming worn, deteriorated, and graffitified.

These interpretive elements should utilize a family of components that truly links the district and provides the excitement of the pedestrian and visitor to move from history to entertainment to just celebrating culture of LGBTQ+ Hillcrest. Designated LGBTQ+ historic sites and potential LGBTQ+ historic sites can be used as landmarks that truly tell the story of the community.

San Diego LGBTQ Historic Sites Project

5.4 Walking Corridor + Site

The legend currently identified approximately 17 locations and possible draft opportunity sites. The Project offers the following:

- # 9 Albert Bell's Residence at 3780-3786 Fifth Avenue should use the official historic designated name: The Center/Gayzette/Albert Bell Building.
- The San Diego AIDS Project was located at 3777 Fourth Avenue (across the alley from # 9 and should be identified.
- The AIDS epidemic in the 1980s established AIDS services at Vauclain Point at the north edge of Front Street (the former site of a SD County facility and later the SD Hospice). That area along with #16 UCSD Owen Clinic has a long history related to AIDS and Hillcrest.
- The Obelisk Bookstore at 1037 University was a landmark bookstore for the LGBTQ+ community.
- The SAGE of California Center at 3138 Fifth Avenue was an important location and drop-in center for lesbians and gay men when it opened in 1999.

The Project will gladly work with city staff to refine and provide additional sites for consideration and inclusion

5.5 POLICY

As discussed in the comments previously, this section should include and specifically state that designated historic LGBTQ+ sites should be preserved and incorporated in any new development. Additionally these sections should specifically state that identifying potential LGBTQ+ historic sites can add additional history and memory as the cultural district ages and develops. The importance of an LGBTQ+ Multiple Property Listing is needed.

In conclusion, Chapter 5 LGBTQ+ Cultural should be just that "cultural" with entertainment, commercial, historic resources, etc. as key subsets. By acknowledging, preserving and incorporating the LGBTQ+ history of Hillcrest past, only then can Hillcrest truly engage with the LGBTQ+ present and future. The San Diego Historic Site Projects looks forward to working with City Planning in its evolution of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment.

Charles S. Kaminski

Charles Kaminski, Historian
San Diego LGBTQ Historic Sites Project
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UPTOWN UNITED

November 17, 2023

Planning Department
City of San Diego
via email

Re: Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment Comments on Discussion Draft

Introduction:

These comments represent a preliminary analysis of the proposed Hillcrest Community Plan Amendments. A comment period of six weeks is grossly inadequate for a major plan update.

The city staff is proposing plan amendments which would go beyond the Hillcrest neighborhood, and apply to the entire Uptown community.

Recommendations:

1. The Plan Hillcrest project should be put on-hold until the new forecasts are taken into account.

The circumstances have changed dramatically since the Hillcrest plan was conceived. The new California Dept of Finance forecast and SANDAG preliminary forecast show slow population growth until 2041, then a decline.

The County's population is expected to grow by only 40,000 people from 2020 to 2060, an average of just 1000 per year. New housing targets for the city are needed.

2. Plan for a "fair share" of the city's forecast growth.

Uptown has about 3% of the city's population. So a "fair share" would be 3% of the city's forecast growth. If the city staff believes that Hillcrest is an ideal location for above average growth, they should make a case for Hillcrest absorbing more than a "fair share", perhaps 50% more or even double the "fair share", but not 10 or 20 times!

3. Reject the target of adding 19,000 housing units to the capacity for Uptown.

19,000 more housing units would add about 50,000 more residents. That's more than the forecast population increase for the entire county by 2060 (40,000). Why would the city staff want to focus all of the county's growth into one city (San Diego) and one community (Uptown)?

The existing Uptown Community Plan has capacity for 50% growth. If the city's population grew at 0.5% average per year, which is much faster than forecast, the current 50% growth capacity in Uptown would accommodate 100 years of growth. No valid case has been made for any increase in development capacity, above the current community plan.

Viewed another way, the proposed increase in Uptown population of 50,000 is equivalent to 2-1/2 times the population of the City of Coronado (20,000).

4. Reject an increase in the maximum density from 109 to 218 dwelling units per acre.

A density of 109 du/ac is enough. This was classified as “Very High Density” in the current community plan. This would result in a height of about 10-12 stories, which is a major increase over the many 2 story buildings in Hillcrest.

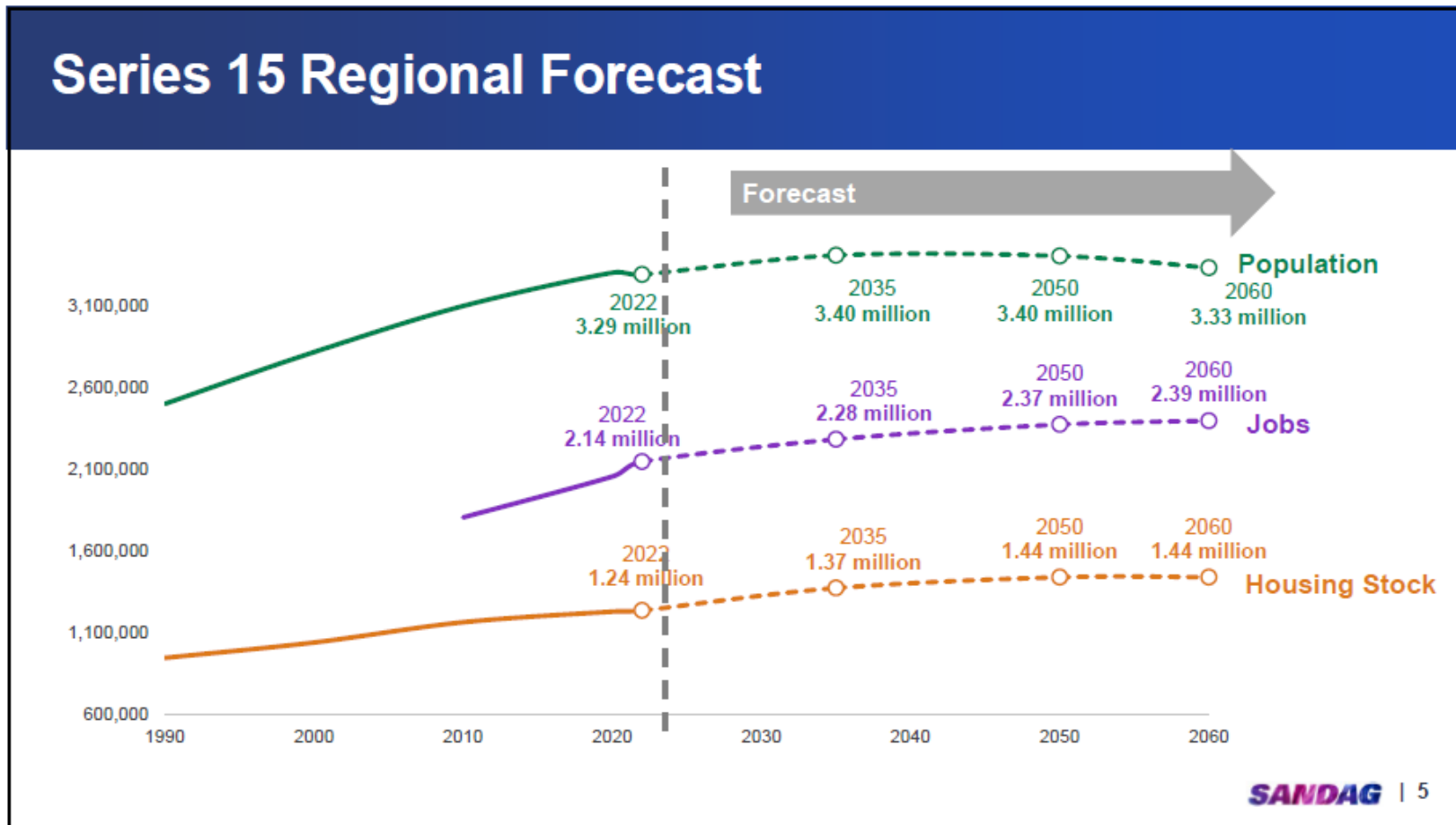
5. Require that park space and recreation centers be added which are adequate to serve the planned increase in population.

Parks are essential to the residents’ quality of life in Uptown, for sports fields, picnic areas, outdoor concerts and more. A recreation center and aquatic center are also needed.

It would be immoral to continue on the course proposed by Mayor Todd Gloria’s Planning Department, to propose a massive increase in the population of Hillcrest, without the parks and recreation facilities needed for the residents.

Conclusion: The proposed plan should be put on-hold, pending a complete reevaluation of the approach and the new forecasts from the state and SANDAG.

Thomas Mullaney
Executive Director
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COUNTY OF SD FORECAST RELATED to the UPTOWN COMMUNITY

The chart shows the SD region's population:

* increasing from 3.29 to 3.40 million between 2020 and 2035. (+110,000)

*decreasing from 3.4 million to 3.33 million between 2035 and 2060. (-70,000)

The result is that the population of the region is forecast to be about the same in 2060 as in 2020. (increase of 40,000 people).

The current efforts by the Planning Dept to drastically upzone several communities is not justified, & can't be supported.

UPTOWN COMMUNITY. The city staff is proposing an increase in allowable housing units of 19,000 units. That would accommodate 50,000 more residents. That's in addition to the 50% growth allowable in the current Community Plan.

The figure of 50,000 more residents in the Uptown community is about equal to the forecast number of additional residents for the entire San Diego region, between 2020 and 2060.

It can't be seriously proposed that all the growth in San Diego County over the next 37 years should be channeled into one city (San Diego) and one community (Uptown).

That ignores that our region has development opportunities in 18 cities and the unincorporated area of the County.

The Uptown community currently has about 3% of the city's population. That can be regarded as a "fair share" of the growth forecast for the City of San Diego. The city's share needs to be determined, now that a preliminary forecast is available from SANDAG, for the San Diego region.