



Downtown Community Planning Council San Diego
Planning a Vibrant Downtown for All

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2023, 5:30 PM

12th Floor Committee Room, City Hall, 202 C Street, San Diego, CA, 92101

I. Call to Order 5:34 pm

- A. Roll Call completed, quorum established (12 of 13 (6 vacancies)) established.
- B. In attendance: Rodriguez, Lauer, Link, Eddy, Gu, Helmer, Randolph, Saldana, Schwarz, Villarina, Werve; (Virtual) Bargmann, Absent (1) Winslow
- C. SEP Minutes: Bergman, Schwarz abstained(absent). Approved unanimously (10)
- D. Board Vacancies:
 - 1. Nancy Wilson-Ramon, Cortez Hill, Resigned
 - 2. Nima Bahrami, Little Italy, Resident, 4 absences 2003
 - 3. Edward Kaen, Horton Gaslamp Core, Business
 - 4. Ongoing vacancies (3): Columbia Biz, Marina Biz, Little Italy, Biz

II. Non-Agenda Public Comment

- A. Public Comment heard promoting wayfinding

III. Community Reports Representatives from Elected Officials and Agencies:

- A. Mayor's Office (Virtual):
 - 1. Email Report provided issues.
 - 2. Crime Stoppers Street Light monitor, approved, operational JAN 2024
 - 3. Brief Comments regarding operational status of Safe Sleeping Lot O
 - 4. In response to board question – Lot O waiting Environmental Approval, efficient use of services
- B. Councilmember Whitburn's Office (District 3) (Bridget Naso, Sr. Policy Advisor, attending in Emily absence):
 - 1. Children's Park opened 11/14/23. Several families, some with dogs, present
 - 2. Housing 2.0 did not pass the City Council. Whitburn working amendments
 - 3. Pedicab regulations on Port Property regarding motorized, noise, operator helmet being written. D3 Whitburn is pursuing similar objectives
 - 4. Budget Survey review and input encouraged
<https://www.sandiego.gov/citycouncil/cd3/fy25-budget-survey>
 - 5. Lot O is operational. 150 tents occupied, DSDP is partner administering 1/3 of Lot O. Staffing is increasing to support more tent occupancy



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6. Street Light Maintenance concerns should be reported to CD3 (Get It Done report, cc Emily). This item had significant member interest.
- C. Supervisor Nora Vargas (Paola Aguirre):
 1. Highlighted County side Homelessness and Strategies Event (RTFH)
 2. Provided update to Micro Homes Program
 3. Supervisor remains responsive to commercial concerns
- D. Planning (Brian Schoenfisch):
 1. Children's Park Open
 2. Use of Public Spaces was important in COVID recovery
 3. Reviewed Parks and Open Spaces Planning Map (Story Mp)
 4. Highlighted new housing on Beech
 5. Project Development log updated for JULY – JAN
 6. JAN/FEB 2023 :Land Development Code Update focus on Pedestrians, Parking lot, updates
 7. 2024 Land Development Update is open on on-line portal
<https://www.sandiego.gov/planning/programs/land-development-code/ldc-update-request>
 8. In response to member questions (Rodriguez) – FAR consideration provided for Commercial Units on Ground Floor – Brian not sure of final results but encouraged to be persistent; (Saladana) Workshops are available to review 2023 updates

IV. Teleconferencing / Virtual Meeting Participation Policy

- A. Handout re proposed rules re official teleconference location **Action Item**
 1. Brief Board Discussion following introduction at October Board meeting. Recognized that there are conflict guidelines and poorly documented conclusions. Agreement across the board that policy should be forwarded to City Attorney for consideration and feedback.
 2. Chloe Motioned to Forward to City Attny, JP 2nd. Unanimous board approval

V. City & Airport Authority Adding More Traffic Lances to Grape Street

- A. DCPC to make a Recommendation **Action Item**
 1. Introduction by Manny with reference to OCT SANDAG presentation, KPBS article and Community Feedback provided with agenda and reference to LIA negative feedback.
 2. Board Discussion highlights included cars speeding on neighborhood Grape Street to get from Harbor to Route 5 N/S entrances, loss of parking



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spaces, loss of pedestrian safety, degradation of bike safety, failure of mass transit planning, missed opportunity to consider Laurel Street, short sighted urban community degradation, detriment to commerce and movement within neighborhood.

3. Manny motioned to oppose the 4th travel lane and amend the Downtown Mobility Plan to remove the 4th lane from Grape; Chloé seconded. Motion passed 10-2. Eddy and Schwarz voted no.

VI. Neighborhood Use Permits

- A. Juniper & Ivy Outdoor Dining (Dan) **Action Item**
 1. NUP requested for outdoor dining.
 2. Features include Neighborhood Enhancements including Outdoor dining structure, use of outdoors, used to be valet. Responded to board that structure would not block traffic flow (more commercial and casual) or cause increase in accidents or reduce safety.
 3. Schwarz motion to approve; Randolph second. Passed Unanimously.
- B. Radian Map Extension (Target Bldg) (Jason Wood, Cisterra) **Action Item**
 1. Request is to develop tax savings advantaged commercial condo project. Map update is to convert Residential Common area in single condominium project. Will not detract from commercial development.
 2. Eddy move to approve; Schwarz second. Unanimous board approval.
- C. Market Street Gas Station Expansion & Drive Through **Action Item**
 1. No presenter. Public objection as not pedestrian friendly.
 2. Manny intro and board comments focused on inconsistencies with downtown community plan, Ordinance, detriment to vehicles traveling West, Drive Through is not beautifying the area, densley populated area should be pedestrian friendly. Positive comments favored improvement to area commerce.
 3. Lauer motion to oppose; Werve second. Motion in Opposition Passed 7-4-1. Bargmann, Eddy, Helmer, Schwarz voting in opposition to the Motion. Villarina abstained.

VII. Committee Reports

- A. Committee Appointments
 1. Open invitation for committee appointments **Action Item**
 2. **New Committee Appointments:**
 - a) Design Review: Randolph, Villarina
 - b) Communications: Helmer, Werve



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- c) Public Spaces: Saladana
- d) Entrepreneurs: Villarina
- 3. Public (M. Soriano) expressed concerns that missing committees included Ordinance, Transportation, Permit Development, New Issues (would help build knowledge base)

B. *CPG Application Task Force – Bob Link*

Action Item

- 1. Bob presented overview of draft CPG application provided with agenda. Highlighted issues include community oriented, Inclusiveness, Connection with other communities, connect with transportation, Youth opportunities in nonvoting positions (concern expressed re liability)
- 2. Randolph, others expressed confidence in the Task Force and Officers to complete the application based on current strengths.
- 3. Bargmann motioned to continue to conclusion with confidence in board, Villarina seconded. Passed Unanimously.

C. *Public Spaces Committee – Manny Rodriguez*

- 1. Manny shared anticipation of Padres feedback.

D. Communications

- 1. Website Update – Manny shared the website was starting to look acceptable and many of its functions were back. Still has a few more important pieces missing but hopeful they will be online soon..

E. Chair's Report - Manny Rodriguez

- 1. Little Italy Historical Designations – Manny shared - review is in process
- 2. Vacant Seat Announcements – Introduced Adam Wilson as applicant for Cortez Resident seat for remainder of term expiring MAR 2024. Continuing outreach for other 5 vacancies.

VIII. **Adjournment 8:05 pm** Next meeting on December 20th 5:30pm. Committee Room



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Electronic Public Comments for November 2023 Board Meeting

Comments on Grape Street Additional Traffic Lane:

Jeremy Fancher

Jeremy Fancher
 to me ▾

Thu, Nov 9, 7:19AM (6 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

The decision to widen Grape Street is negligent and counter to stated city goals including improving mobility for all road users and reducing VMTs. How in the world are we expanding vehicle lanes in 2023?? One more lane is not going to solve congestion meaningfully. The real solution is traffic calming and reducing car dependency. This invites more cars and makes walking in Little Italy worse and more polluted.

Jeremy Fancher
 South Park resident

Brer Marsh

Brer Marsh
 to me, Ryan ▾

Thu, Nov 9, 8:30AM (6 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

To DCPC Chair and board members,

I am writing to express my dismay and opposition to the current plan brought forward by the San Diego Airport Authority. In all cases the traffic changes being proposed will have a significant negative impact on pedestrian and bicyclist safety, as well as pedestrian access and general health of the Little Italy Neighborhood, Pacific Highway, and Harbor Drive.

As a car-free individual who works and rides these roads/intersections regularly on my bicycle I can testify to the fact that each of the locations in this proposal currently suffers from low quality to non-existent pedestrian and bicycle safety features. These locations all suffer from high levels of traffic and pollution, and truly can be considered hostile environments from the point of view of anyone not inside a car.

Grape Street: The proposal removes parking and adds an additional travel lane to an already hostile one-way street. This section passes through one of San Diego's best and most walkable tourist destinations and serves to cut the neighborhood in half. Grape and Hawthorne currently present a psychological and safety barrier that suppresses business activity in NoLi (North Little Italy) and expanding traffic width on Grape will make this dynamic worse. The addition of the already planned bike lane is welcome but its execution in this instance is clearly compromised by the proposed new travel lane competing for R.O.W. width. A more neighborhood and pedestrian sensitive use of this additional R.O.W. width would include safety features like bulb outs at intersections and greater protection for the new bike lane. Making Grape Street safer and less stressful for pedestrians is essential for the success of business and health of Little Italy residents/patrons.

Laurel and Pac Hwy: Pacific Highway remains one of the worst environments for pedestrians and cyclists and acts as a barrier between Little Italy and the bay. The intersection at Laurel has already been problematic for me on my bicycle and I would suggest a more appropriate approach to this intersection, instead of a double right turn, would be to upgrade each corner to provide a fully protected intersection for the Pac Hwy bikeway. This would decrease the crossing width for pedestrians and add needed protections for this bicycle commuter route. Making Pac Hwy less hostile will improve access to the bay for people in the community.

W. Laurel and Harbor Dr: Harbor Drive is an extremely popular route for cyclists and this intersection provides no additional protection for those people heading west on Harbor and only a 2' buffer for those heading North on Laurel. An intersection redesign of this size should make every effort to increase access and safety for everyone, not just vehicle traffic. Laurel is shown going from two lanes heading east to three with no improvement to the unprotected bike lane that runs in the gutter. This bike lane has been in need of additional width/protection for many years and this proposal completely ignores this need in favor of more lane access for airport traffic.

Overall, my opinion of these proposed changes is that they skew heavily in favor of airport traffic at the expense of local neighborhoods, pedestrians, and other vulnerable road users. It is a self-serving proposal that focuses only on the desires of the Airport Authority and its business interests while failing to consider, or even slightly improve, the already terrible experience for people outside of cars.

I urge your committee to work with the authority to develop a solution that serves all community stakeholders fairly, or to oppose the proposal completely.

Sincerely,

Brer Marsh, AIA



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Maxwell

Maxwell

Thu, Nov 9, 9:23AM (6 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

to me ▼

Grape street

I believe the proposal to widen Grape street in the heart of Little Italy is absurd. This project will only have only marginal changes in traffic yet cause tons of disruptions to trips and will not cause the root issue of airport traffic. That being no good ways to get to the airport via public transit. Money being given to a road widening project when the biggest problem with airport traffic isn't being considered doesn't make sense to me.

Regards,
 Maxwell G

“SD Commenter”

sd_commenter

Thu, Nov 9, 9:41AM (6 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

to me ▼

Dear Downtown Community Planning Council,

Thank you for including a bike lane to the proposed modifications to Grape St. Protected bike infrastructure is key to meeting our climate goals.

I urge you to consider moving the location of the bike lane from the north side of Grape St to the south side. I have several safety concerns with the placement of the bike lane on the left side of the street.

The most popular way to ride into downtown is via the Embarcadero path along Harbor Dr. Having the Grape St bike lane on the north side would require bicyclists to cross in front of the 4 left turn lanes on south bound Harbor Dr. The intersection of Harbor and Grape is routinely gridlocked. Forcing bicyclists to cross several lanes of gridlocked traffic is extremely dangerous. Instead, a bike lane on the south side of the street completely avoids this problem.

Second, a bike lane on Grape St fills a key gap in our downtown bike network by providing an east/west link between the protected north/south lane on Pacific Highway and the Embarcadero. However, if the bike lane is placed on the north side, cyclists using the lane to commute downtown will again need to cross 4 lanes of traffic on Grape to turn south on to Pacific Highway. The intersection of Grape and Pac Hwy is also routinely gridlocked creating a safety issue for cyclists. Again, placing the bike lane instead on the south side of Grape solves this problem and would better serve cyclists commuting to downtown or visiting the core of Little Italy.

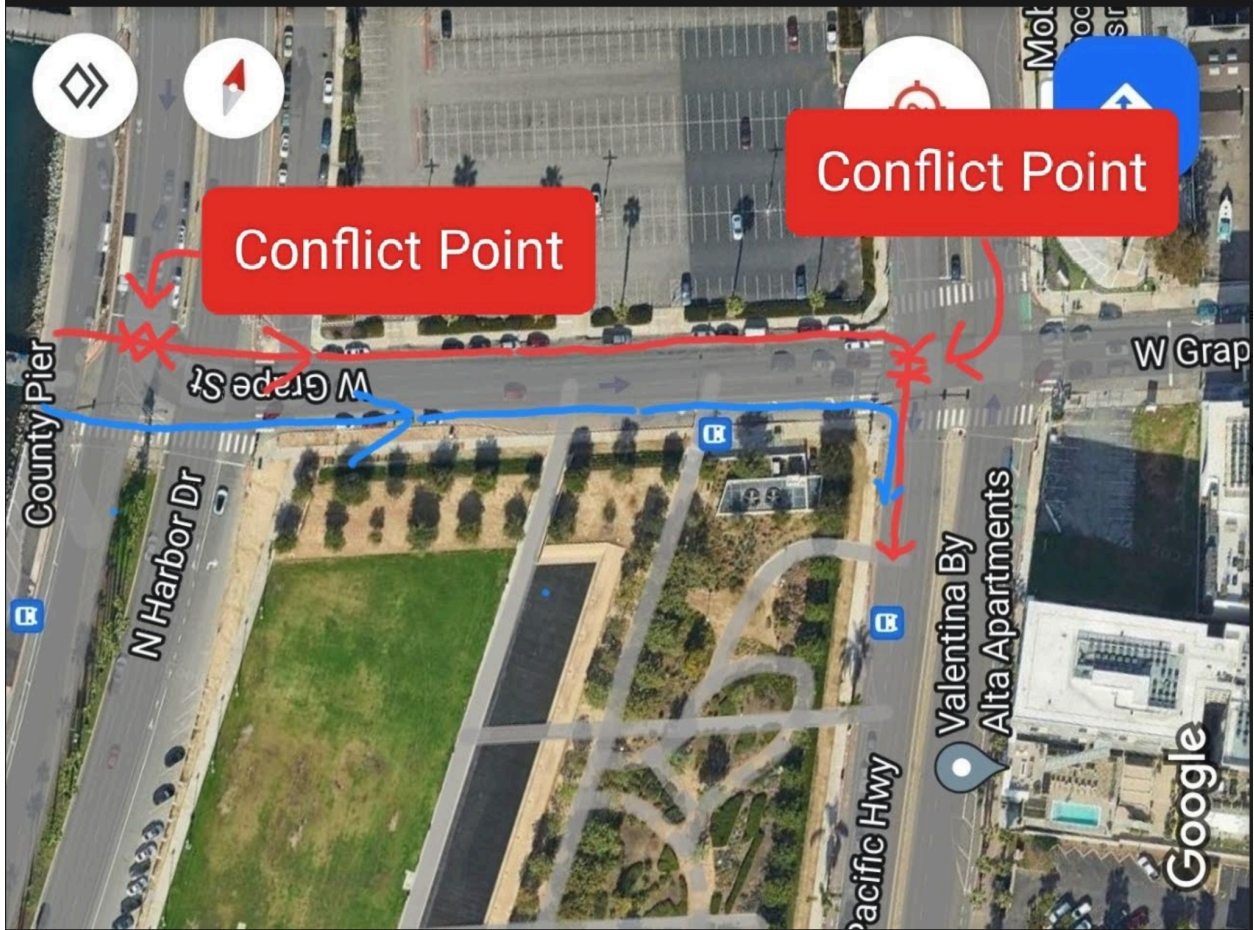
Additionally, biking along the left side of a multi lane one way street feels unnatural for bicyclists and drivers who are not expecting bikes on their left.

I have attached an image of the area to further clarify. I show the path for bike commuters along the north side bike lane in red and what it would look like in blue if the lane was on the south side.

Thank you!



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Raymond Lindeman II

Raymond Lindeman II
 to me ▾

Thu, Nov 9, 10:06 AM (6 days ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

I am writing to oppose this project. As a professional in the transportation industry, it is far to common that a project is labeled a "Complete Street" project whilst simultaneously encouraging and facilitating greater movement of vehicles at higher speeds through a given corridor. This is one of those projects.

The sole purpose of this project is to provide an additional travel lane down Grape St to "ease" — rather encourage more — cars to drive to the airport. This will increase VMT and is in direct conflict with the City's own Climate Action Plan goals. The stripped bike lane and pedestrian improvements are simply the excuse being leveraged to rationalize "one more lane", as if it is not scientifically proven that one more car lane will further encourage more cars, traffic and pollution.

Instead of stripping a dedicated bus lane, installing transit signal prioritization, and using funds to increase MTS' airport busses; our tax dollars will be used to yet again seek to disprove years of traffic analysis data to make driving the only fast and efficient means to access the airport at the expense of our climate and air quality. Shame.

Ray Lindeman

Marisa



Marisa



I'm on Grape Street a lot, and the thought of even more cars cutting through Little Italy is frightening.



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Harry Bubbins (Chair, La Jolla Planning Group)

Harry

to me ▾

6:07 PM (3 hours ago)



Dear Downtown Community Planning Council,

I am writing in regards to the City & Airport Authority's plan to add another traffic lane to Grape Street in Little Italy.

I bike every weekday to and from work through Little Italy and sometimes on weekends to see family.
I often walk around after visiting the weekly farmer's markets and eat and shop and spend money and bring friends.

I do not see compelling arguments or data that "one more lane" will accomplish any sensible goals without detrimental impacts to local residents, businesses and visitor experience.

Please prioritize pedestrian and bike experiences that make the neighborhood so special.

As a fellow community planning association member I appreciate and thank you for your volunteer time.

Harry Bubbins



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Zach Thompson

Zach Thompson ·

to me ▾

Hi,

My name is Zach Thompson, and I'm a resident of Bankers Hill and a regular visitor of Little Italy. I'm writing in respect of agenda Item V to request that the DCPC disapprove of the City & Airport Authority's plan to add another traffic lane to Grape Street in Little Italy.

Adding more lanes to a busy street just makes it more busy. We have heard so many times how adding more lanes to roads and highways doesn't ultimately help traffic jams - what helps alleviate traffic is to give people alternative options to reach their destinations beyond driving a personal vehicle. Otherwise it's only a matter of time before more folks decide to drive due to the temporary traffic alleviation caused by additional lanes, and then we're back in the same place as we were before.

However, we wouldn't be back in the same position. Because adding a lane to grape and increasing the number and speed of cars blowing through that part of Little Italy makes that area more dangerous and less welcoming to pedestrians and bicyclists, the very modes of transportation we want to encourage in a bustling business and restaurant district like Little Italy. Only recently I was at Kettner Exchange for a friend's birthday and noted while walking along Grape to the nearby 7-11 how scary the amount of cars and huge trucks speeding up the hill were. Please don't agree to make that street in Little Italy any more dangerous.

Thank you for your time and attention,
Zach

Zach Thompson



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Sanjay Stone

sanjay [redacted]
to me ▾

9:19 PM (41 minutes ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Good evening,

I wanted to voice my support against adding a traffic lane on Grape street. As a homeowner in mission hills i frequent little Italy. Grape street is already a busy arterial road from the highway to the airport widening it would make the road less safe for pedestrians and those walking to business in little Italy. I think a widening while helpful for the airport would be detrimental to the surrounding neighborhood and the shops in little Italy.

Also that the walk signals will have to be lengthened to allow for crossing since it s a heavy pedestrian area. This increase in pedestrian walk time was unlikely accounted for in the traffic study since most streets that wide would not have the pedestrian numbers you see in little Italy. Which may mean that the throughput gains calculated could be incorrect.

Instead of a wider grape street. I would suggest for the airport to take the money set aside for grape and invest the money in speeding up the people mover which will have a more significant impact on reducing congestion then adding one more lane to an already wide street.

Thank you for your time
Sanjay Stone

Connor Proctor

Connor [redacted]
to me ▾

10:28 PM (17 minutes ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Hello Chair,

I'm a resident against the plan to add more car lanes to Grape street by removing parking. Little Italy has limited parking, it already feels divided by Grape street traffic, and there are plans to add rail to the airport. We don't need more cars to be driving to the airport and should instead put resources on improving public transportation to the airport.

Thanks.

booksbikesandbeer

booksbikesandbeer Recommend not to approve the Grape Street portion of the expansion plan and recommend not to allow the drive thru.



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Nicole Burgess

Nicole Burgess <
to me ▾

10:51AM (3 minutes ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Good evening Board Members

My name is Nicole Burgess and I am very much opposed to adding another travel lane to Grape St. It is truly disappointing the City and Airport Authority are even discussing adding more vehicle lanes when we all know there is a climate crisis

knocking on our front door



More vehicle lanes = More cars = More pollution

I love to ride my bike and Grape St is an awful corridor to navigate, but is the most direct from Embarcadero to Uptown.

Little Italy has been highlighted as a better place with density, parks, public spaces and I enjoy the changes and visit often.

With regional efforts to connect transit to the airport, preferably with a People Mover, this Board should recommend City of SD and Airport Authority to redesign this corridor for people; to reallocate space for more people, more people walking and biking, more transit, shuttles, and even pedicabs to embrace healthy lifestyles, green jobs, fresh air, and SD sunshine.

Less vehicle lanes = Less cars = Less pollution = Safer Streets and a more vibrant people centric community for Little Italy and Downtown.

Your opposition to this project is appreciated.

Safe travels for all.

Nicole Burgess



Downtown Community Planning Council San Diego
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Zaccary Bradt

Zaccary Bradt

to me ▾

11:22 AM (6 minutes ago) ☆ ↶ ⋮

Good morning,

I am writing to express my opposition to Items V.A and VI.C. I am an employee of a downtown business and frequent visitor to downtown.

Regarding item V.A., the Airport Authority's plan to add new traffic lanes to Grape Street is inconsistent with downtown and Little Italy's walkability and does not align with San Diego or California's climate plans. Increasing the number of available traffic lanes will not ultimately relieve traffic on the way to or from the airport, but will simply induce more automobiles to travel through Little Italy at higher speeds. This will degrade the pedestrian experience and have a negative effect on businesses, especially those north of Grape Street, which already feel cut off from the rest of Little Italy by the high-speed, high-traffic Grape and Hawthorne Streets. Instead of increasing the capacity for the street, the City and the Airport Authority should look to improve the experience for those not in a vehicle by implementing true Class IV cycle tracks and widening sidewalks with bulb-outs and enhanced crossings. Traffic calming for vehicles will also help reduce the impact of these streets as drivers speed to and from the freeway. The Airport Authority has committed to working with SANDAG on a transit connection to the airport, rendering additional automobile capacity unnecessary, even when considering the airport's new Terminal 1 expansion.

Regarding item VI.C., new drive-thru facilities should not be approved or built in downtown. Downtown is one of the few truly walkable neighborhoods in San Diego, and it is that way because of the density of pedestrian-friendly land uses. Adding a drive-thru and expanded gas station goes in the opposite direction, inviting more automobiles into downtown and creating an unpleasant, unsafe experience for people walking through the neighborhood. It also is in conflict with San Diego and California's climate goals and will induce more driving and emissions, both regionwide and in the East Village neighborhood. In 2023, we should be working to reduce auto-dependency by removing gas stations and redeveloping land with denser pedestrian- and bike-friendly uses, not lock in years of future automobile activity with new infrastructure.

Please vote no on both of these items.

Thank you,
 Zaccary Bradt

Jimmy K



Jimmy K @Jkl957 · 1h

Replying to @DowntownPlanSD

Don't expand the number of lanes on grape street. The added bike lane does not make up for the fact that it is dangerous and unpleasant to walk near, let alone ride a bike on. Invest in alternative transit to and from the airport. More lanes doesn't work.





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Connor Proctor

Connor Proctor @ConnorProctor · 1h
The Airport made \$57 million on parking last year.

Their profits shouldn't hamper our city's progress. Build rail to the airport, not more car lanes.

Comments on Market Street Gas Station:

Mat

Mat
What a great idea. Totally in alignment with the city's broader climate and land use policies.

booksbikesandbeer

booksbikesandbeer Recommend not to approve the Grape Street portion of the expansion plan and recommend not to allow the drive thru.