



The City of San Diego

Staff Report

DATE ISSUED: March 12, 2024
TO: City Council
FROM: City Planning
SUBJECT: Planning Group Recognition and Amendments to Council Policy 600-24

Primary Contact: Marlon I. Pangilinan Phone: (619) 235-5293
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Council District(s): Citywide

OVERVIEW:

In Sept. 2022, the City Council approved amendments to Council Policy 600-24 *Standard Operating Procedures and Responsibilities for Recognized Community Planning Groups* along with amendments to the City's Municipal Code to better reflect the independent legal status of planning groups and bring their role into compliance with the City Charter. The amendments to the council policy included changes to planning group operations including:

- Proactively applying for City Council recognition.
- Updating governing bylaws/operating procedures and create new advisory documents such as Ethical Standards and a Community Participation and Representation Plan.
- Taking ownership of their own official documents and records.
- Prohibiting attendance requirements for annual election voting or candidacy.
- Collecting demographic data of existing and new planning group voting members to measure inclusion and diversity on the planning group.

Under amended Council Policy 600-24, currently recognized planning groups and any other newly-formed, potential planning groups were required to apply for new City Council recognition by Dec. 31, 2023. City staff has received applications from all 42 active planning groups in the City along with two applications from newly-formed groups, each of which were submitted by Jan. 31, 2024, after City Planning staff allowed for an additional one month extension.

PROPOSED ACTIONS:

1. Adopt a resolution to adopt clarifying and procedural amendments to Council Policy 600-24.

2. Adopt a resolution to waive the Dec. 31, 2023 submittal deadline for planning group applications and allow an extension to Jan. 31, 2024.

3. Adopt a resolution:
 - a. Recognizing that the following planning groups have met all requirements of Council Policy 600-24, have agreed to all requirements of the Terms and Conditions, and are recognized as the official planning group for their respective communities: Barrio Logan Community Planning Group, Carmel Mountain Ranch/Sabre Springs Community Council, Carmel Valley Community Planning Board, Chollas Valley Community Planning Group, City Heights Area Community Planning Committee, Clairemont Community Planning Group, College Community Planning Board, Del Mar Mesa Community Planning Group, Downtown Community Planning Council, Eastern Area Community Planning Committee, Greater Golden Hill Planning Committee, Kearny Mesa Planning Group, Kensington-Talmadge Planning Group, Linda Vista Planning Group, Midway-Pacific Highway Community Planning Group, Mira Mesa Community Planning Group, Mission Beach Precise Planning Board, Mission Valley Planning Group, Navajo Community Planners, Inc., Normal Heights Community Planning Group, North Park Community Planning Committee, Ocean Beach Planning Board, Old San Diego Community Planning Group, Otay Mesa Planning Group, Otay Mesa-Nestor Community Planning Group, Pacific Beach Planning Group, Peninsula Community Planning Board, Rancho Bernardo Community Planning Board, Rancho de los Penasquitos Planning Board, San Pasqual-Lake Hodges Community Planning Group, San Ysidro Community Planning Group, Scripps Ranch Planning Group, Serra Mesa Planning Group, Skyline-Paradise Hills Community Planning Committee, Southeastern San Diego Community Planning Group, Tierrasanta Community Council and Planning Group, Torrey Hills Community Planning Board, Torrey Pines Community Planning Board, and University Community Planning Group.

 - b. Allowing the University Community Planning Group and Scripps Ranch Planning Group to have more than 20 voting members on their respective planning groups.

4. Recognizing that each of the applications for planning groups received in Uptown and La Jolla met all requirements of Council Policy 600-24 and have agreed to all requirements of the Terms and Conditions, and recognizing the following as the official planning group for their respective communities:
 - a. Either the La Jolla Community Planning Association **or** the La Jolla Community Planning Group, and

 - b. Either the Uptown Planners **or** the Uptown Community Planning Group - Vibrant Uptown.

DISCUSSION OF ITEM:

What has the recognition process involved?

In June 2023, City Planning Staff presented before the Community Planners Committee (CPC) to initiate the process for planning groups to apply for City Council recognition. Partnering with a local non-profit firm, The Institute for Public Strategies, City staff conducted a public outreach program

involving a series of information sessions focused on promoting awareness of planning groups as well as workshops that provided detailed information and advice on the application process. All information sessions and workshops were open to the public and to both existing and potential new planning groups. Individualized assistance was also provided to groups to provide an opportunity for one-on-one support, questions and review of draft application materials. The outreach program was also supplemented by a City webpage that housed all resources related to the recognition process including templates, the online application portal and instructions on how to request individualized assistance.

As part of the application process, each applicant group was required to apply online, provide new bylaws/operating procedures complying with Council Policy 600-24 and the Terms & Conditions, a set of ethical standards and a Community Participation and Representation Plan that communicates an individual planning group's goals, guiding principles for outreach and communication, and a strategy for meaningful, ongoing engagement. In addition, applicant groups were required to provide demographic data anonymously on their voting members. Since the application process was open to both existing and new groups, the demographic information was to be used to evaluate competing applications since no evaluative criteria was identified with the adoption of the amendments to Council Policy 600-24 in 2022, only that per City Council Resolution No. R-314337 "CPGs that apply for City Council recognition that demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion shall be given priority for recognition."

What clarifying amendments are proposed for Council Policy 600-24?

Four amendments are proposed for Council Policy 600-24 (Attachment 1):

Amendment #1

City Planning Department staff is proposing an amendment to Council Policy 600-24 to address the potential recognition of a new, unelected planning group by City Council. According to Council Policy section II.D "Recognized CPG voting members must be elected by and elected from members of the community within that CPG's boundaries." There is currently no written requirement for a newly-formed planning group to hold an election prior to Council recognition. In the case that Council decides to recognize a new planning group over an existing group, staff is proposing to amend Council Policy section II.D to allow City Council to recognize a new group contingent upon the completion of elections for new voting members within 90 days after City Council action and establish an independent election committee consisting of members appointed by the newly formed CPG and affiliated with the community in accordance with Section D of Council Policy 600-24, none of whom would be candidates for election. Staff does not recommend requiring that a not-yet-recognized group conduct elections prior to being recognized. Staff believes that these clarifying amendments implement the intention of the Council Policy 600-24 amendments since they allow for additional planning groups to apply for recognition without having to go through an election process that may not be necessary in the event the group is not ultimately recognized.

Amendment #2

An additional amendment to Council Policy 600-24 proposes to amend to Section II.A and Section 2.4 of the Terms and Conditions to allow planning group members to attend virtual planning group meetings without providing their teleconference location per the Brown Act and posting agendas at all teleconference locations. Prior to the termination of the COVID-19 state of emergency in Feb. 2023, a number of planning groups reported that virtual meetings

increased attendance and participation from members of their respective communities at their virtual meetings compared to their traditional meetings prior to the pandemic. The convenience of having virtual meetings allowed planning groups to provide broad access to their meetings as well as facilitate their meetings without the need to secure physical meeting facilities that were constrained by time limits or required user fees. Under the Brown Act, planning groups have been required to publicly list and allow public access to each teleconference location of any voting member attending remotely. This was expressed as a major safety concern for planning group members, who are all volunteers, whereas this requirement was intended to promote transparency with elected officials. Staff believes that these clarifying amendments implement the intention of the Council Policy 600-24 amendments since they would allow for increased participation in planning groups, where listing home addresses for remote attendance at a meeting could act a barrier to greater participation in the planning group context.

Amendment #3

Council Policy 600-24, Section C and the Terms and Conditions, Section 2.5 is also being amended to include the requirement that Annual Reports shall be submitted to the City within 14 days of the approval of the March minutes and include a summary list of accomplishments, and major actions on large projects and policy matters covering a calendar year from April through the following month of March.

Amendment #4

Council Policy 600-24, Section II and Terms and Conditions, Section 10 is also being amended to include a procedure for planning groups to amend their operating procedures. This will require that proposed amendments are submitted to the Mayor and City Attorney for review and approval. Any proposed amendments that are inconsistent with Council Policy 600-24 shall not be approved by the Mayor and City Attorney and shall be forwarded to the City Council President who shall docket the proposed amendments for Council consideration and approval.

Why is a waiver being requested to the Dec. 31, 2023 submittal deadline for planning group applications and an extension to Jan. 31, 2024 being requested?

The City Council resolution adopting the amendments to Council Policy 600-24 in 2022, states that “[c]urrently recognized CPGs or any other newly formed potential CPG must apply for new City Council recognition under this revised policy by December 31, 2023.” The resolution did not identify any extensions. However, staff is aware of the challenges that volunteer planning groups face and has allowed flexibility for groups that have experienced board member turnover, capacity issues and internal review and approval processes that prevented submittal by the Dec. 31 deadline. As of the Dec. 31 deadline, 7 existing planning groups were not able to meet the deadline. These groups represent the communities of: Carmel Valley, Chollas Valley/Encanto, La Jolla, Midway-Pacific Highway, Old Town San Diego, Otay Mesa and Skyline-Paradise Hills. As of the Jan. 31, all active planning groups have submitted applications for recognition. Therefore, staff recommends that the administrative extension granted by the Planning Director be approved by the City Council.

Which existing planning groups have met all requirements of Council Policy 600-24 and the Terms and Conditions?

The existing planning groups that meet all Council Policy 600-24 and Terms and Conditions requirements are the existing planning groups representing the following communities where

no competing applications were received: Barrio Logan, Carmel Mountain Ranch/Sabre Springs, City Heights, Clairemont, College Area, Del Mar Mesa, Downtown, Eastern Area, Golden Hill, Kearny Mesa, Kensington-Talmadge, Linda Vista, Mira Mesa, Mission Beach, Mission Valley, Navajo, Normal Heights, North Park, Ocean Beach, Otay Mesa-Nestor, Pacific Beach, Peninsula, Rancho Bernardo, Rancho Del Los Penasquitos, San Pascual/Lake Hodges, San Ysidro, Scripps Ranch, Serra Mesa, Southeastern, Tierrasanta, Torrey Hills, Torrey Pines and University (Attachment 2).

Which planning groups are proposing 20 or more voting members, but otherwise meet all requirements?

Per Council Policy 600-24, Section D, 2nd paragraph “[t]he City will only recognize a CPG with a minimum of 10 voting members. The City recommends no more than 20 voting members to allow for effective operations. However, the Council may recognize a CPG with more than 20 voting members if the larger membership is necessary to give better representation to a community,” and under Terms and Conditions, Section 4.1, “[t]he CPG will have no fewer than 10 and no more than 20 voting members, respectively, representing the various community interests set forth in these Terms and Conditions. The Council may recognize a CPG with more than 20 voting members if the larger membership is necessary to give better representation to a community.”

Two planning groups are proposing 20 or more voting members. Applications submitted for the University Community Planning Group propose 21 voting members to include additional residents from UC San Diego. The Scripps Ranch Planning Group application proposes the merger of their group with the Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee. The existing Scripps Ranch Planning Group already represents the Rancho Encantada planning area. Combined with the Miramar Ranch North Planning Committee, the Scripps Ranch Planning Group will consist of 25 voting members. Staff recommends allowing additional voting members in these two planning groups because doing so is consistent with the Council Policy 600-24 intent to allow better representation to their respective communities. The two planning groups additionally meet all other Council Policy 600-24 and Terms and Conditions requirements.

Which community planning areas have received competing applications for planning group recognition?

Competing applications were received for the communities of La Jolla and Uptown. Because no set criteria for recognition was established when the amendments to council policy were adopted, other than prioritizing groups that demonstrate a commitment to diversity and inclusion, City staff established evaluative criteria as part of the planning group recognition application process in the event that 2 or more competing applications were received for a single community. The evaluative criteria consist of the following: 1) how a group’s proposed voting member composition meets the community affiliations for eligibility in council policy and 2) how representative the proposed group’s voting member composition is compared to the community’s demographics with regard to race/ethnicity, household income and age. This data was anonymously gathered and aggregated by each planning group and then was compared to similar demographic data obtained from the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) 2021 estimates for the entire community to understand how representative each group is to their own community.

While City staff does not recommend any individual groups for recognition over the other, objective information is provided regarding the competing applications for the City Council to make

an informed decision in deciding which group to recognize.

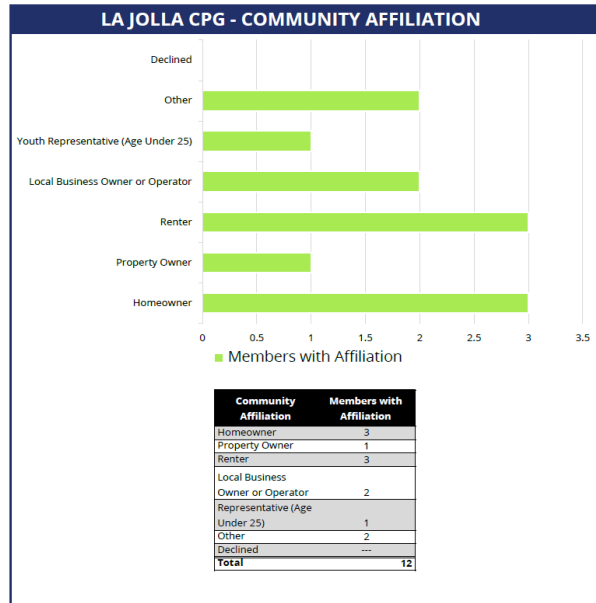
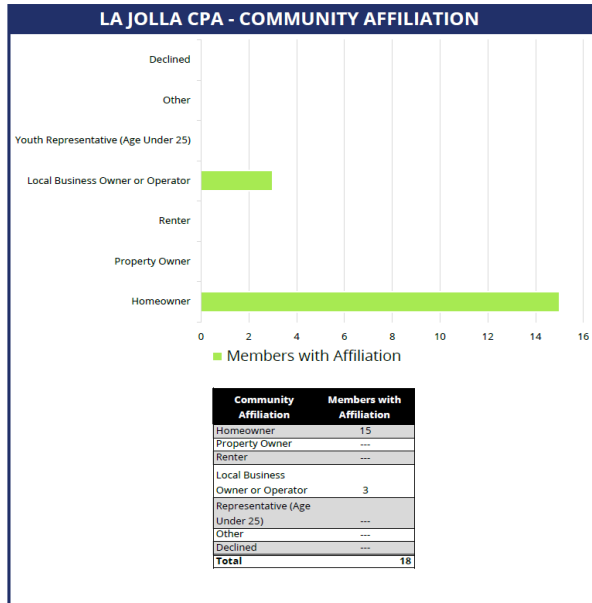
La Jolla Community : Comparison of Competing Applications

The following provides a summary comparison between the applications submitted by the existing planning group - La Jolla Community Planning Association (LJCPA) (Attachment 3) and the newly-formed group – La Jolla Community Planning Group (LJCPG) (Attachment 4):

Community Affiliation of Voting Members

Both applications ensure that all voting members are affiliated with the community according to Council Policy 600-24. Of the 18 members of the LJCPA, 15 members identify as resident/homeowner and 3 members identify local business owner/operator. The LJCPG has members that represent multiple community affiliations. Of the 12 proposed total members, 3 identify as resident/homeowner, 1 as a local business owner/operator, 3 as renters, 1 as a property owner and 1 as a youth representative.

Exhibit 4: La Jolla – Community Affiliation of Voting Members



Race and Ethnicity

The population of La Jolla is predominantly White making up approximately 73 percent of the community’s population. Hispanics make up approximately 13.5 percent of the population followed by Asians making up 7.6 percent and Blacks making up 1 percent. American Indian and Pacific Islander groups combined make up less than 1 percent of the population and mixed racial and ethnic groups make just under 3.5 percent.

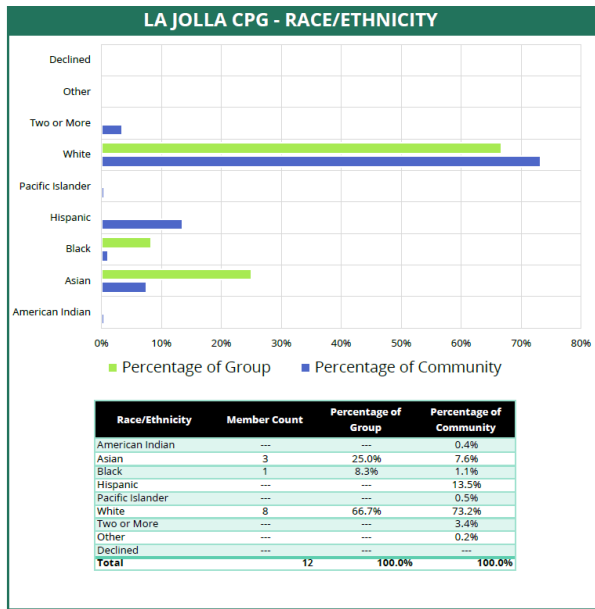
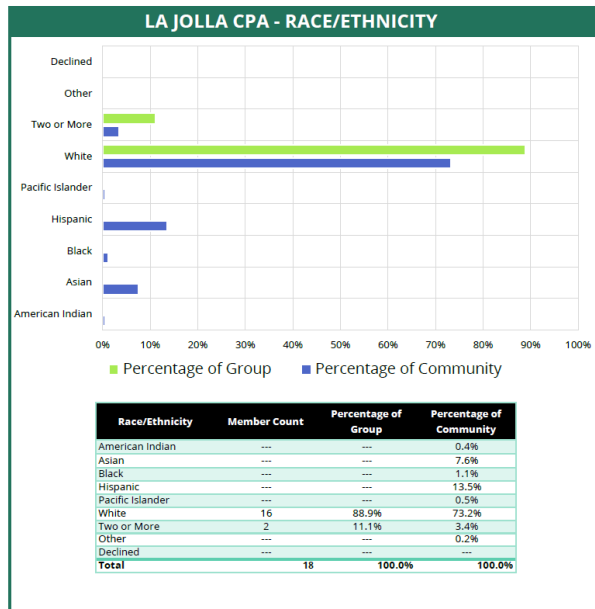
Similar to the community's demographics for race/ethnicity, both the majority of LJCPA and LJCPG voting members are white. However, the LJCPA exceeds the community-wide percentage for White residents by approximately 16 percent and the LJCPG is less than the community-wide percentage by approximately 7 percent.

Both the applications report no members within the Pacific Islander, Hispanic and American Indian racial and ethnic groups, which together make up just under 15 percent of the community.

The LJCPG reports voting members in the Asian and Black racial and ethnic groups which exceed representation in those groups by 17 percent and 7 percent respectively. The LJCPA does not report any of its voting members in these racial and ethnic groups.

With regard to members of two or more ethnic and racial backgrounds, the LJCPA exceeds the community-wide percentage by approximately 8 percent, whereas the LJCPG does not report any members in this racial and ethnic group.

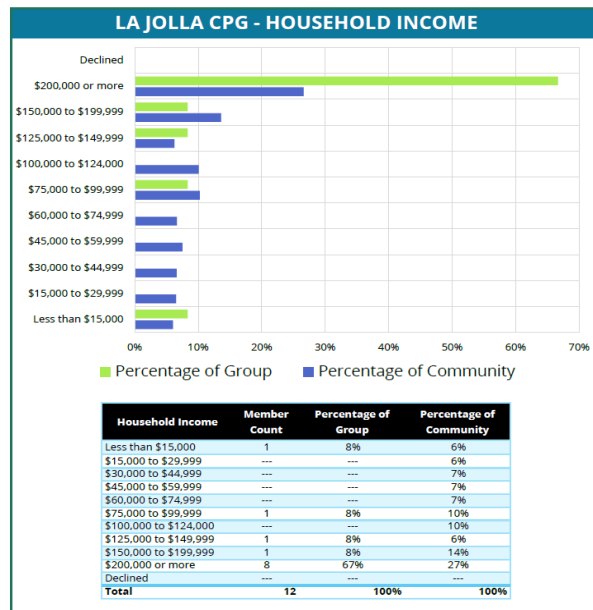
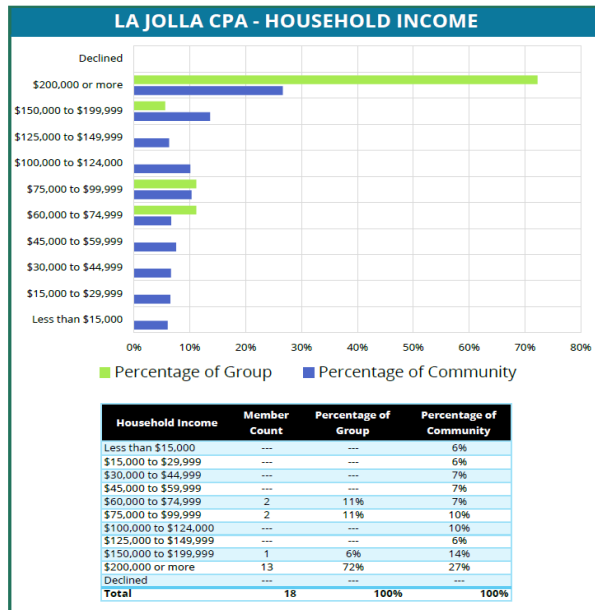
Exhibit 1: La Jolla - Race/Ethnicity



Household Income

Approximately 27 percent of La Jolla’s residents have a household income of \$200,000 or more which makes up the majority income range for the community. Both the majority of LJCPA (72 percent) and LJCPG (67 percent) planning group members fall primarily into this income range. For LJCPA, the remaining 28 percent of its members fall between an overall income range \$66,000 to \$199,999. For the LJCPG, 24 percent of their members fall into this range and 8 percent fall into the less than \$15,000 income range.

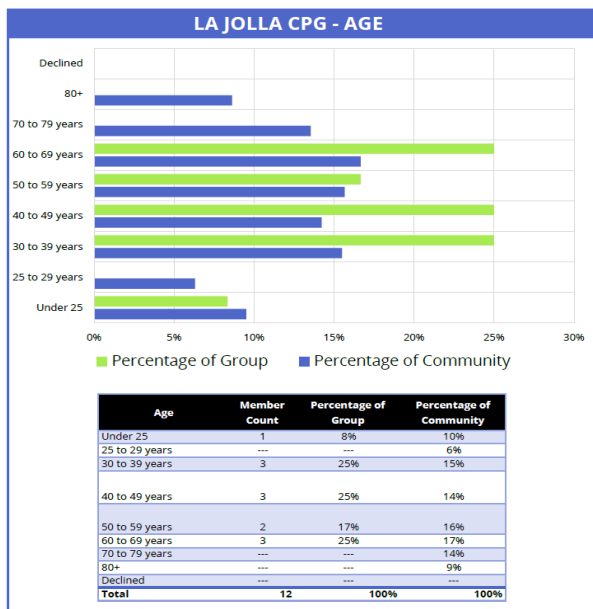
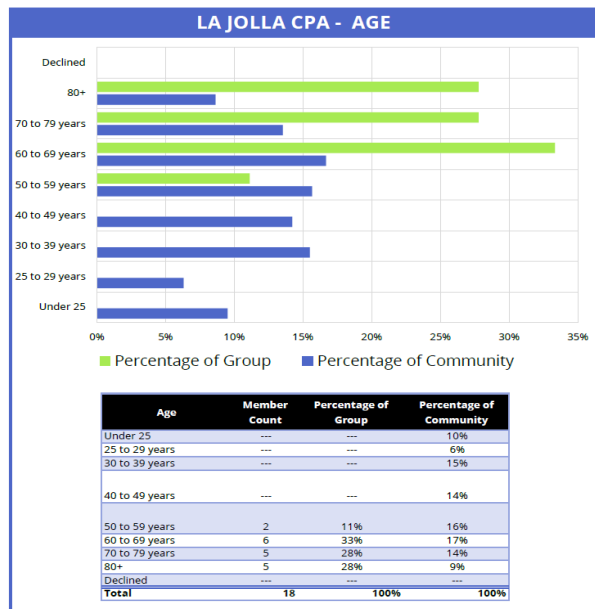
Exhibit 2: La Jolla - Household Income



Age

Approximately 75 percent of the population of La Jolla is between the ages of 30 to 79 years old with most of the population within the 60 to 69 age range. The members of the LJCPA consist of individuals within the 50 to 80+ age range. Members of the LJCPG consist of individuals from the under 25 to 69 age range.

Exhibit 3: La Jolla - Age



Community Participation and Representation

Both applications for the LJCPA and LJCPG include commitments to engaging a broad and diverse cross-section of the La Jolla community. They both individually describe that their efforts regarding outreach and inclusion would include educating and bringing awareness to the community through the use of a website and social media, creating partnerships with other community organizations and stakeholders to collaborate on issues and the share information. Both applications also mention generally measuring the success of outreach efforts by summarizing results from surveys, voter turnout, attendance at outreach events and other metrics which would be summarize in the planning group’s annual report. With regard to strategies that each group could potentially employ to implement their public outreach goals, both groups would employ similar techniques. However, the LJCPG additionally mentions the use of web-based meetings and “Board Annual Development Workshops” which would be open to the public and focus on communicating and engaging with cross-community board leaders to bring alignment on community-wide issues and concerns.

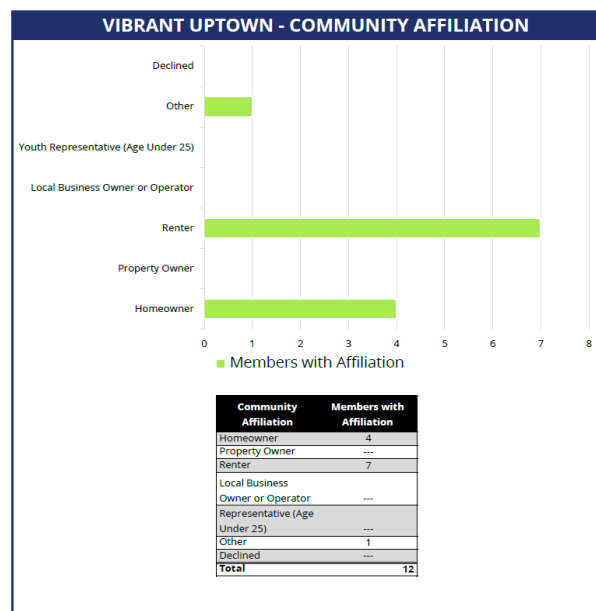
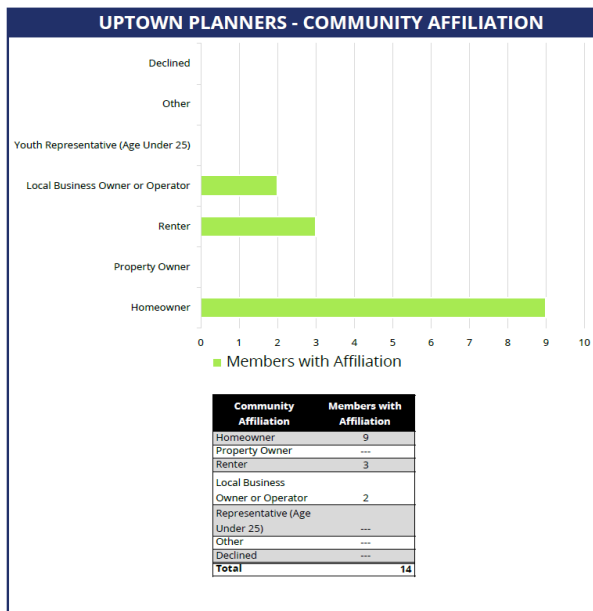
Uptown Community: Comparison of Competing Applications

The following provides a summary comparison between the applications submitted by the existing planning group - Uptown Planners (Attachment 5) and the newly-formed group – Uptown Community Planning Group (“Vibrant Uptown”) (Attachment 6) :

Community Affiliation of Voting Members

Both applications ensure that all voting members are affiliated with the community according to Council Policy 600-24. The Uptown Planners’ application indicates that a majority, 9 out of 14 members (reporting demographic information) are resident/homeowners. Renters consist of 3 members of the group and 2 individuals represent the local business/operator category. The Vibrant Uptown applications indicates that 7 out of their 12 members reporting on member affiliation are renters. Resident/Homeowners consist of 4 members on the group with 1 individual representing the “other category” as a non-profit representative.

Exhibit 8: Uptown – Community Affiliation of Voting Members



Planning group member composition is also represented differently by each group. The Uptown Planners will consist of 15 voting members with one appointed, non-voting youth seat. Each of the 15 seats would be undesignated and can be filled by any member of the community meeting the community affiliations identified for eligibility in Council Policy 600-24. Vibrant Uptown will ultimately have 18 voting members along with two non-voting seats representing large employers in the community. The 18 voting member seats are designated as follows:

- 6 Property Owner seats - One from each of the 6 neighborhoods in the Uptown community.
- 6 Renter seats - One from each of the 6 neighborhoods in the Uptown community.
- 5 Business seats - From the Uptown community at-large.
- 1 Non-Profit seat - From the Uptown community at-large.

Race and Ethnicity

The population of Uptown is predominantly White making up approximately 62 percent of the community's population. Hispanics make up approximately 23 percent of the population followed by Asians making up approximately 7 percent and Blacks making up 2.6 percent. American Indian and Pacific Islander groups combined make up less than 1 percent of the population and mixed racial and ethnic groups make 3.4 percent.

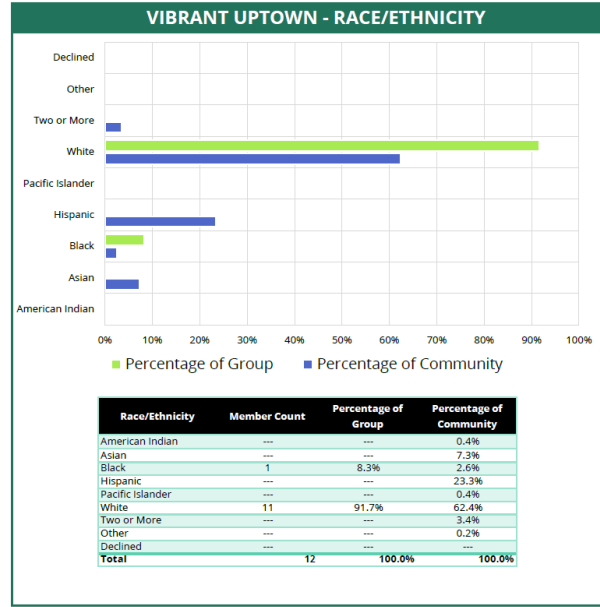
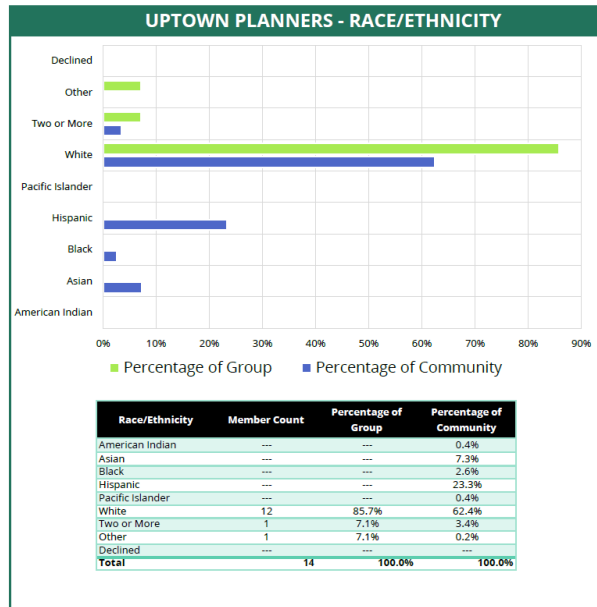
Similar to the community's demographics for race/ethnicity, both the majority of Uptown Planners and Vibrant Uptown voting members are White and exceed the community-wide percentage of White residents in the community by 23 percent and 29 percent, respectively.

Both the applications report no members within the Pacific Islander, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian racial and ethnic groups, which together make up just under 31.5 percent of residents in the community.

The Uptown Planners do not report any Black voting members on their group. However, Vibrant Uptown has a single member from this racial and ethnic group representing 8 percent of their voting members and exceeding the community-wide percentage by approximately 6 percent.

With regard to members of two or more ethnic and racial backgrounds, the Uptown Planners has a single member from this category representing 7 percent of their voting members, exceeding the community-wide percentage by approximately 4 percent. Additionally, the Uptown Planners has a single member within the "other" racial and ethnic category representing 7 percent of their voting members, exceeding the community-wide percentage for this category by 7 percent. Vibrant Uptown does not have any voting members within these two racial and ethnic groups.

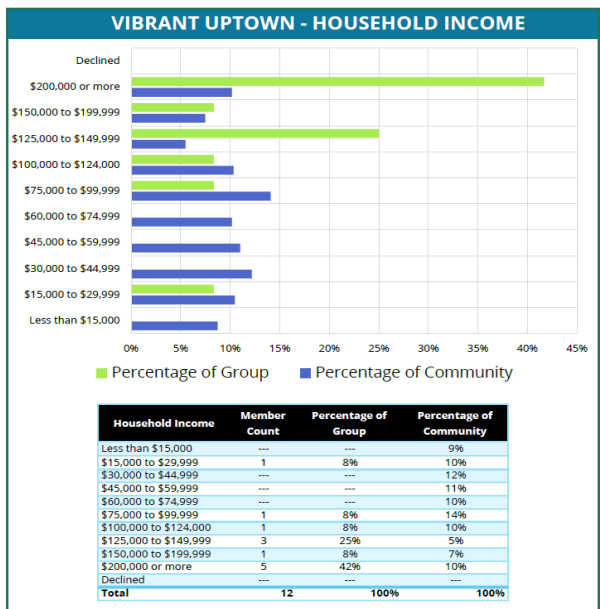
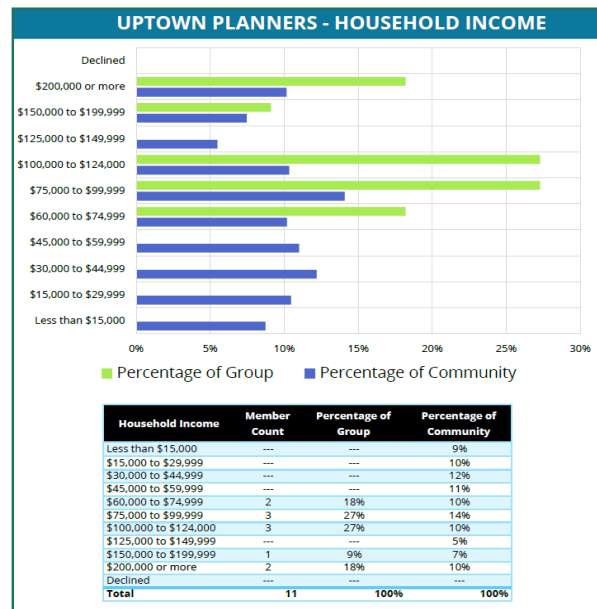
Exhibit 5: Uptown - Race/Ethnicity



Household Income

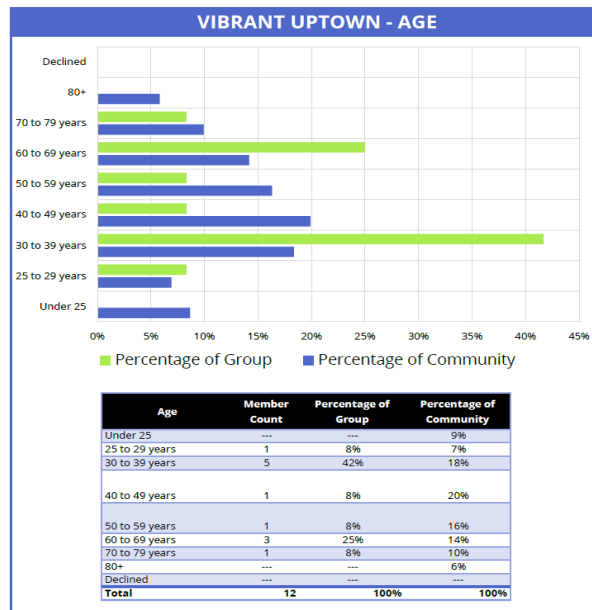
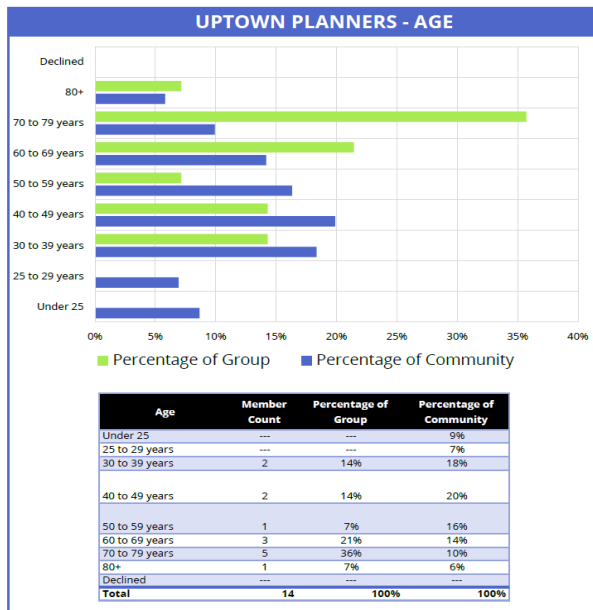
Approximately 14 percent of Uptown residents have a household income of \$275,000 to \$99,999 which makes up the majority income range for the community. Members of the Uptown Planners have household incomes of \$60,000 or more, with the majority of Uptown Planners members - 54 percent falling within the income range of \$75,000 to \$124,000. The majority of Vibrant Uptown members have household incomes of \$75,000 or more with 42 percent of that majority falling within the \$200,000 or more income category. A small percentage of the Vibrant Uptown membership consisting of 8 percent falls within the \$15,000 to \$29,999 income category.

Exhibit 6: Uptown - Household Income



The majority of the population in Uptown is within the 40 to 49 year age range. This makes up 20 percent of the total population in the community. The majority of the members of the Uptown Planners at 36 percent, fall into the 70 to 79 year age range, while the majority members of Vibrant Uptown at 42 percent, fall into the 30 to 39 year age range. Both groups show that the next most populous age range is 60 to 69 years with 21 percent of Uptown Planners members making up this category and 25 percent of Vibrant Uptown members making up this category.

Exhibit 7: Uptown - Age



Community Participation and Representation

Both applications for the Uptown Planners and Vibrant Uptown committed to engaging a broad and diverse cross-section of the Uptown community, as well as communicating in ways that are inclusive, transparent and respectful. They both individually describe that their efforts regarding outreach and inclusion would include educating and bringing awareness to the community through the use of a website and social media, and creating partnerships with other community organizations and stakeholders to collaborate on issues and the share information. Both applications also mention in general, measuring the success of outreach efforts by summarizing results from surveys, voter turnout, attendance at outreach and other metrics which would be summarize in the annual report. With regard to strategies that each group could potentially employ to implement their public outreach goals, both groups would employ similar techniques.

The Community Participation and Representation Plan for Vibrant Uptown also mentions hosting all meetings to the extent possible in person and virtually to ensure that members of the community who may not be able to physically attend meetings may participate.

Although both groups' operating procedures state that ad-hoc committees can be created to serve a special purpose, the Vibrant Uptown application specifically identifies a Community Engagement Committee as a standing meeting that will be charged with:

- Publicizing the work of the planning group and involving the community its work
- Public engagement on relevant community matters

- Developing and maintaining an outreach plan
- Collecting statistics on outreach efforts and alignment with Uptown’s neighborhoods

City of San Diego Strategic Plan:

This item focuses the Strategic Plan’s priority area: Protect & Enrich Every Neighborhood by ensuring that planning groups operate in a manner that is transparent to the public, accessible to and inclusive of all community members and reflects the diversity of the communities where they operate.

Fiscal Considerations:

None.

Charter Section 225 Disclosure of Business Interests:

N/A; there is not contract associated with this action.

Environmental Impact:

This activity is not a project pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), as it is an organizational or administrative activity of government that would not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment. As such, this activity is not subject to CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15060(c)(3).

Climate Action Plan Implementation: N/A.

Equal Opportunity Contracting Information (if applicable): N/A.

Previous Council and/or Committee Actions:

This item will be heard at Land Use & Housing Committee prior to Council.

Planning Commission Action: N/A.

Key Stakeholders and Community Outreach Efforts:

On June 29, 2023, the recognition process was presented to the Community Planners Committee (CPC). During the summer and fall of 2023, two information sessions and three workshops were held citywide to increase awareness of planning groups and assist current planning groups and potential new groups with the recognition process. Additional assistance was also made available to any groups requesting individual support with completing applications. The proposed amendments to Council Policy 600-24 are scheduled to be discussed with the CPC on March 26, 2024.

Heidi Vonblum

Planning Director

Casey Smith

Deputy Chief Operating Officer