



Mid-City Communities Plan Update Working Group Meeting Summary

MEETING DETAILS

August 13, 2025 • 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. Global Village Event Hall 5555 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92105

The meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, allowing participation in-person and via Zoom.

PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

The purpose of this Working Group meeting was to celebrate the release of the *Draft Ideas Report* and to solicit feedback from Working Group members and the general public. Because the report covers a wide range of topics, City staff divided its contents into two meetings. For this first meeting, City staff presented on the following chapters: "Introduction," "Sustainability, Equity, and Climate," "Land Use," and "Urban Design," with remaining chapters to be covered at the next Working Group meeting. The Working Group members and community members discussed the aspects of the presentation that stood out to them, suggested ideas, and provided feedback.

BACKGROUND

As a part of an inclusive engagement process, the City has convened a Working Group for the Mid-City Communities Plan Update. The primary role of the Working Group is to inform the Mid-City Communities Plan Update process. Additional details can be found by reviewing the *Mid-City Communities Plan Update Working Group Protocol and Membership* (April 16, 2024). In addition, an orientation was held for Working Group members on April 24, 2024, to encourage members to make connections with other members and inform the Working Group on what to expect from their role and the timeline of their involvement.

The City published the *Draft Mid-City Atlas: Existing Conditions Report* online on June 14, 2024.

Meeting 1: The first Working Group meeting on June 26, 2024 included a presentation and discussion of the "Introduction," "History and Place," and "Sustainability, Climate, Equity, and Resilience" chapters of the *Draft Mid-City Atlas*. The City released a *Draft Overview of Key Community Engagement Efforts* on September 4, 2024, which highlighted key engagement efforts such as online surveys, in-person workshops, pop-up events, office hours,





community interviews, emails, and youth engagement. Additionally, it features appendices with detailed information from the workshops, including attendance records, comments from community members, poll results, Zoom chat transcripts, and discussion group notes.

Meeting 2 and 3: The second and third Working Group meetings were held on September 11th and December 11th, 2024, respectively. The September session focused on presentations and discussions of key highlights from the "Land Use & Development," "Mobility," and "Parks, Public Facilities & Open Space" chapters of the *Draft Mid-City Atlas*. In the December meeting, the City presented the *Draft Existing Conditions Mobility Assessment* and an overview of Historic Preservation.

Meeting 4: The fourth Working Group meeting was held on March 19th, 2025. The March session presented the *Public Engagement Summary* and focused on the findings from the *Draft Historic Context Statement and Survey*, which will inform the Historic Preservation component of the Mid-City Communities Plan Update.

WORKING GROUP MEETING PARTICIPANTS

As shown in Table 1, fifteen Working Group members attended the meeting. Fourteen attended in person, one attended virtually, and one was absent.

Table 1 - List of Working Group Attendees

Working Group	Attendance	Community
Marcellus Anderson	In-Person	Designee - City Heights CPG
Steve Aldana	In-Person	City Heights
Brittany Poggiolo	In-Person	City Heights
Nam Nguyen	In-Person	City Heights
Victor Ponce	In-Person	City Heights
Randy Torres-Van Vleck	In-Person	City Heights
Emilie Colwell	Virtually/Zoom	Designee – Normal Heights
		CPG
Thomas Aristide	In-Person	Normal Heights
Madeleine Baudoin	In-Person	Normal Heights
Lynn Edwards	In-Person	Designee - Eastern Area
		CPG
Eric Kelley	In-Person	Eastern Area
Paul Smith	In-Person	Eastern Area
Zach Young	In-Person	Eastern Area
David Moty	In-Person	Designee - Kensington-
		Talmadge CPG
Die Spittle	In-Person	Kensington-Talmadge





Lisa Stone	Absent	Kensington-Talmadge

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

In addition to the Working Group members, 46 members of the public attended the meeting. 25 members of the public attended in person, and 21 attended virtually.

STAFF ATTENDANCE

The Working Group meeting was supported by City staff listed in Table 2.

Table 2 - Staff Attendance

Project Team	Attendance	Affiliation
Alexander Frost	In-Person	City of San Diego
Morgen Ruby	In-Person	City of San Diego
Selena Sanchez Bailon	In-Person	City of San Diego
Vanessa Tang	In-Person	City of San Diego
Mauricio Aguilar	In-Person	City of San Diego
Aparna Padmakumar	Virtually/Zoom	City of San Diego
Kelly Stanco	Virtually/Zoom	City of San Diego
Kelsey Kaline	Virtually/Zoom	City of San Diego
Maureen Gardiner	Virtually/Zoom	City of San Diego
Phil Trom	Virtually/Zoom	City of San Diego
Coby Tomlins	Virtually/Zoom	City of San Diego

MEETING SUMMARY AND ACTIVITIES

At the beginning of the meeting, City staff welcomed the Working Group (WG) members and the public. Given that it was a hybrid meeting, the WG members who attended online were encouraged to have their cameras switched on and to update their nametag to indicate which community they represented. The meeting started with an introduction, meeting logistics and agreements, followed by a presentation on the *Draft Ideas Report*. The presentation paused for a 20-minute Working Group discussion regarding the report "Introduction," and "Sustainability, Climate, and Equity" chapters, facilitated by City staff. The questions used to prompt discussion included:

- What resonated with you?
- Is there something missing or needs to be corrected?
- Any additional recommendations or items to explore further?

Key takeaways from the discussion included strong support for expanding tree canopy and shade through both permanent plantings and temporary structures, along transit corridors, parks, and public spaces, to enhance climate resilience and community comfort.





Participants raised concerns about displacement linked to the Purple Line, funding and maintenance challenges for freeway cap parks, and the accessibility of public restrooms.

The presentation continued covering the "Land Use" and "Urban Design" chapters. City staff facilitated another 20-minute discussion amongst Working Group members based on the following questions:

- Which Land Use concepts stood out to you?
- Any additional recommendations, corrections, concerns, or items to explore further?

Summarized highlights from the discussion included a general support for increasing housing density through mid-scale options while balancing concerns about displacement and affordability. WG members debated parking, some favoring structures and others prioritizing walkability. Four WG members favored Land Use Concept 4, "Distributed Growth," with one preferring Concept 5, "Transit Centers & Corridors." The full record of the Working Group discussion is included in Appendix A.

The public comment period opened following the final Working Group discussion to hear from people about topics covered in the presentation. Members of the public were given one minute each to speak, and there were 23 speakers, 15 in person and 8 on Zoom. Records of the public comment questions and answers are included in Appendix B, and comments from the Zoom chat are compiled in Appendix C.

Members of the public were encouraged to share feedback on the *Draft Ideas Report* by submitting comments through the Public Comment Form by November 21, 2025.

The meeting concluded with City staff outlining upcoming events and engagement opportunities.

NEXT STEPS

- The next Working Group meeting is scheduled for October 29, 2025.
- Extensive community engagement activities will take place in the four communities related to the Ideas Report, starting September 2025.
- The Public comment period is open for the *Draft Ideas Report* until November 21, 2025.
- A Draft Community Plan is anticipated to be released in Spring 2026.





APPENDIX A - WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION NOTES

Feedback provided from Working Group members in response to *Draft Mid-City Ideas Report* included the following:

PART 1 - "INTRODUCTION" & "SUSTAINABILITY, EQUITY, AND CLIMATE"

- A recommendation was made to plant trees near bus stops to address the lack of shade and improve the connection between green streets and transit access. It was noted that a neighborhood park could support the growth of this greenery.
- Appreciation was expressed for the inclusion of trees as part of the urban forestry strategy. A suggestion was made to consider installing temporary shade structures at bus stops.
- A question was raised regarding solar/local energy generation initiatives to address climate resilience and mitigate climate change impacts.
- A recommendation was made to explore additional opportunities for installing shade structures throughout the community.
- A suggestion was made to incorporate strategies that foster community connection within the neighborhood.
- A question was raised about the planned route of the Purple Line and potential impacts on displacement. Many Mid-City elders recall displacement caused by the construction of the I-15 corridor, causing concerns of similar outcomes.
 - Staff's answer: SANDAG conducted an <u>alignment study</u>. Minimal displacement will occur as this will occur under Fairmount Ave. Potential cost projections are very high.
- A comment highlighted the importance of aligning the proposed plan with San Diego's Ready, Set, Grow program, which includes planting and protecting trees to improve neighborhoods through tree stewardship programs.
- A question was raised about potential roadblocks to expanding the Teralta Park freeway lid.
 - Staff's answer: The primary roadblock is funding. However, the advancement of technology and infrastructure could make it more feasible. Every city has a proposal for a freeway park; building it is different.
- A question was raised about the maintenance and accessibility of restrooms in parks and green spaces, noting that facilities at Adams Avenue Park and the skatepark are currently closed, and expressing concern about whether similar issues will affect parks included in the proposed plan.





- A comment was made that while building a park over the freeway is a good idea, there are concerns about how it would be funded and maintained. It was suggested to investigate other funding options and maintenance plans.
 - o Staff's answer: We can explore a potential implementation mechanism.
- A clarification was requested regarding the type of rail facility referenced in the summary, as it appears to mention heavy rail rather than light rail.
 - Staff's answer: SANDAG'S initial Purple Line Conceptual Planning Study evaluated the potential of a high-capacity rail service but switched to a light rail concept to reduce costs, better integration with the trolley network and minimize displacement.
- Excitement expressed about the future Global Village being developed by PANA and community partners, and thanked staff for incorporating community feedback into the report. The comment emphasized the importance of housing for all, the Purple Line, walkability, and rapid transit lines.
- A request was made to prioritize the creation of a Somali Town Cultural District—an
 initiative that has been in discussion for over 15 years—to honor the Somali
 diaspora, support cultural expression, and address displacement.
- A comment highlighted the importance of blue-green infrastructure and expressed support for the development of <u>Chollas Triangle Park</u> proposed next to the Global Village near the Community Plan Area as part of a walkable, transit-oriented community vision.
- A comment emphasized the need to address opportunities along canyon edges to enhance nature access.
- A comment called attention to the missed potential for diverse local businesses in the neighborhoods.
- Another comment supported helping small local businesses grow and build a sustainable food system. Appreciation was given for including these ideas in the plan. Suggestions included allowing rooftop farms and food production through zoning changes and using tools like those in the Barrio Logan plan to give the community first choice when buying land.

PART 2 - "LAND USE" & "URBAN DESIGN"

- A recommendation was made to increase residential density beyond just the rail corridor.
- A question was raised regarding the term "car storage" on Page 72, seeking clarification on its meaning and what the proposed policy aimed to discourage.





- Staff's answer: "Car storage" refers to car dealerships and auto repair shops along El Cajon Blvd.
- A comment was made emphasizing the importance of convenient parking to support local businesses, and to consider a parking structure similar to the one in North Park to attract more visitors and diners.
- A comment was made expressing concern that Land Use- Concept 5 could lead to displacement, as the remaining and unchanged housing stock could become more expensive, like trends seen in North Park. It was noted that the introduction of highrise developments only along the corridors may not be sufficient enough to decrease housing costs in Mid-City
- A recommendation was given for the inclusion of corner stores in residential areas, as they were seen as valuable community gathering points alongside parks.
- A comment was made clarifying a common misconception regarding the numbers
 of affordable housing, that may exceed other areas of the City. It was pointed out
 that Kensington–Talmadge includes housing for individuals with mental health
 challenges and that moderate resource areas still fall on the lower end of the
 opportunity scoring system.
- Some support was expressed for Concept 5 due to its potential to create new housing without displacing existing residents.
- A suggestion was made to prioritize the inclusion of a larger commercial grocery store over small corner stores.
- A recommendation was made to explore opportunities to utilize vacant lots in Kensington–Talmadge to help address the housing crisis, noting the prevalence of underutilized parcels in the area.
- A comment was made in agreement with previous remarks opposing high-rise developments in City Heights, emphasizing the urgency of addressing the housing crisis and minimizing displacement. Specific concerns were raised about the hundreds of individuals who have been displaced from City Heights and remain unhoused, with a call for immediate resource deployment.
- A comment was made reflecting on community memories of displacement during the construction of the I-15 corridor. Support was expressed for any land use plan that would minimize future displacement.
- A recommendation was made to discourage smoke shops, particularly near schools.
- A question was raised about the types of structures being proposed and what exists in terms of transitional housing or shelters. It was suggested that community perception of these structures should be considered as case studies.





- Staff Response: The ideas report has images that various building types and associated densities
- A comment was made that Concepts 1–4 align more closely with the College Area Community Plan than Concept 5, and that Concepts 3–4 appeared to offer more balanced growth.
- It was noted that the College Area currently lacks key resources, such as parks, recreation centers and aquatic complexes, and may continue to rely on the Mid-City area as it grows.
- Appreciation was expressed to staff for developing a diverse range of concepts. A
 preference was stated for Concept 4, with the belief that distributed growth would
 be the most equitable and would help extend opportunities to high and moderateresource areas.
- A suggestion was made to further analyze areas north of Meade Avenue to provide affordable housing.
- Support was expressed for policies discouraging underutilized land uses such as self-storage facilities, with specific mention of 52nd Street.
- A question was raised regarding the types of density proposed in Concepts 1–4.
 Clarification was requested on whether the density increase refers to building height, number of units per property, or other metrics.
 - Staff's answer: It is important to remember that updating the land use designation doesn't force anyone to build anything, but someone could potentially build a three-story walk-up in transit neighborhoods or townhomes, rowhomes and duplexes, in residential areas.
- A question was raised asking for an example of an existing neighborhood that reflects the characteristics of Transit Neighborhoods (Residential Medium)
 - Staff's answer: Developments and densities will look different, depending on the lot size. However, there are some good examples in North Park that can be equated. There are visual examples in the Ideas Report with local building types that people might recognize, and there are examples of all kinds of density ranges.
- A question was raised regarding whether the proposed land use concepts would exceed the existing 30-foot height limit.
 - Staff's answer: Depends on the concept. If medium or high density is proposed, it could potentially be higher.
- A question was raised about the types of housing being proposed, asking whether examples such as multiplexes or townhomes would be considered, and whether anything beyond that would be classified as high density.
 - Staff confirms these building types are envisioned for transit neighborhoods and residential areas.





- A comment was made emphasizing the long-term benefits of urbanism, noting that traditional parking structures often occupy valuable space that could otherwise support housing or businesses. It was suggested that walking environments should be prioritized over car-centric design, as current conditions often require navigating areas dominated by inactive parking spaces.
- A recommendation was made to consider residential parking permits to address local parking issues, with time-limited parking for non-residents.
- A suggestion was made to explore the potential for flex-use parking structures that
 could serve both community members and residents—used by businesses during
 the day and residents at night. It was noted that while such solutions are more
 complex to study and implement, they may offer more efficient use of limited space.
- It was suggested to incorporate the recommendations provided by the TEAH
 Taskforce, which were distributed to Working Group members in a letter. A request
 was made to include features such as tree-lined corridors and shared street
 designs.
- A comment was made about the value of reducing on-street parking lanes and improving parking management, with concerns raised about vehicles remaining parked for extended periods.





APPENDIX B – PUBLIC COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND ANSWERS FROM THE CITY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following are comments, feedback, and concerns shared by the public attendees during the meeting's public comment period.

- A comment was made that the trolley project is running out of funds and may be
 delayed indefinitely, It was also noted that there is going to be an increase in the
 fare (a fare study is underway), and questioned the need for the Purple Line given
 the existing Blue Line—raising concerns about spending billions on a new corridor.
 Support was expressed for the most equitable plan, highlighting the benefits of
 integrated neighborhoods and better outcomes for children in affluent areas.
- It was noted that the neighborhood needs economic growth with moderate and high-income housing, commercial and employment areas, and a grocery store rather than just corner stores. Spreading affordable housing throughout the city was emphasized to avoid concentrated poverty.
- The history and contributions of the Somali community were shared, along with improvements made to safety and infrastructure, requesting recognition of this progress.
- A comment was made to move Lea Street to the West, which would solve the issue
 of bisecting the PANA Global Village Hall property to allow the development of
 affordable housing.
- Suggestions were made to rethink land use along El Cajon Boulevard.
- Recommendations were made to create thousands of homes and improve commerce along El Cajon Boulevard.
- A suggestion was made to plan for more historic districts in underrepresented communities, especially in City Heights and expressed concerns that the historic survey doesn't list any in City Heights. They were also upset that Historic Park District is broken up in the survey.
- Appreciation was expressed for incorporating guiding principles that reflect the core
 values of City Heights. A comment was made about rising housing costs and
 residents being priced out. Staff acknowledged existing protections, and a
 suggestion was made to include business preference policies in the plan update, like
 those in the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment SDR, to protect legacy businesses.
 City Heights residents expressed concerns on safety, street conditions, cultural
 preservation, and the need for a healthy, resilient environment. It was emphasized





that with many schools in the area, it's important to provide clean parks, safe streets, and good air quality for children.

- Appreciation was expressed for the work done in the Plan Update. A comment was
 made about the loss of community history in City Heights, including spaces like
 Golden Hall that once welcomed refugees. Support was given for the creation of a
 Somali Town, which was seen to preserve history, support economic development,
 and reflect the pride and commitment of low-income residents to maintaining their
 community.
- A request was made to include a Somali Cultural District, highlighting that many families live, gather, and worship in the area. The district was described as providing a strong sense of belonging and a feeling of a home away from home.
- A City Heights resident calls her community the best and well connected. She commented that the Purple Line has been in the works for over 47 years and is frequently changing, hoping that it eventually brings different communities together in the future.
- A comment was made by a College Area resident/Fire Safe Council director emphasizing that plan updates are a good opportunity to improve fire preparedness. They look forward to collaborating with the working group and fire safety leaders to bring more focus on fire and land-use policies.
- A longtime City Heights resident shared that they have served the community for years and highlighted ongoing plans to build a Mid-City Somali Town Cultural District. It was described as an important gathering place used by people across San Diego.
- A comment was made in support of the Teralta Park concept and the need for more parks in areas where residents don't have access to one within a 10-minute walk. It was also suggested to ensure the boundary map aligns with the College Area Plan, as there may have been changes around College Blvd and Montezuma.
- It was noted that there is no fire department presence on the SDSU campus. The Planning Department has identified parks and recreation centers for use by the College Area.
- Concerns were raised about long wait times (up to 404 days) for streetlight repairs. The College Area is planned to see a 322% increase in housing based on current proposals from the College Area plan and SANDAG.
- Support was expressed for options 3 or 4 because they upzone single-family homes while allowing higher density near transit.
- A question was raised about whether low-density, single-family areas are still viable given current fair housing requirements, recent lawsuits, and state legislation.
- It was suggested that higher density be allowed beyond just one block from El Cajon Blvd, especially in neighborhoods already well-connected by transit.





- It was noted that requiring excessive parking drives up the cost of affordable housing, and that building more homes near transit can provide safe, cost-effective alternatives to driving.
- A teacher from City Heights emphasized the importance of mobility and noted that biking is unsafe on streets with cars going 30-40 mph, forcing people to bike on sidewalks.
- The City staff and Working Group members were appreciated, and a request was made to think long-term (20-30 years) about planning with Al and other technological advancements.
- Comments were shared about Teralta, and support was expressed for Global Village. It was suggested that housing goals be set over a 20–30-year period and that the Purple Line transit should stop at El Cajon Blvd and transfer at I-15.
- A request was made for more specific wildfire safety measures, noting that some canyons are densely populated. It was suggested to use fire risk reduction strategies that go beyond state requirements, with a call for stronger fire-safe policies.
- Support was expressed for concepts like Concept 5 and the development of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), while concerns were raised about corporations buying land and renting it at high prices. A desire for more parks in the neighborhood was also shared.
- Advocacy was made for the Somali District, highlighting the loss of the East African Community Center as a significant blow to the community. The Somali Cultural Hub was described as vital for preserving community ties and supporting future generations. There was concern about the City stripping the community of its identity.





APPENDIX C - RECORD OF COMMENTS PROVIDED THROUGH ZOOM CHAT

City Staff: According to SANDAG, the Purple Line is still considered to be implemented as Light Rail. Here is the description from the current 2025 Regional Plan data viewer (also showing extent and phase year)

Light Rail 582 (Purple Line)

Description - Mission Valley to U.S.-Mexico Border via City Heights, National City, Chula Vista

Type - Light Rail

Phase - By 2050

Person 1: Will online folks be able to comment? Or is the option to comment only for the Working Group?

City Staff: There will be a public comment period at the end of this presentation. We will hear your comments, and then thank you!

Person 2: How could one have been part of the "Working Group" and how were the applications made available/distributed?

City Staff: It was an application-based selection process that was unfortunately closed on Jan 31, 2024. To help spread the information, the application was shared with relevant council district offices, planning groups and community-based organizations!

City Staff: For reference:

Mid-City Communities Ideas Report: https://www.sandiego.gov/sites/default/files/2025-08/draft-ideas-report-august-2025.pdf

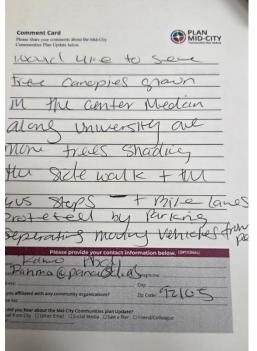
Share your feedback here:

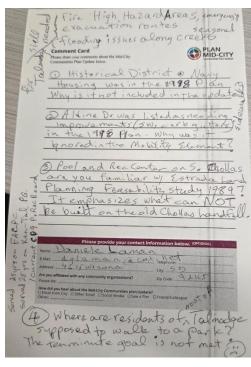
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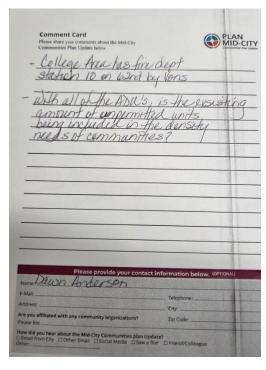


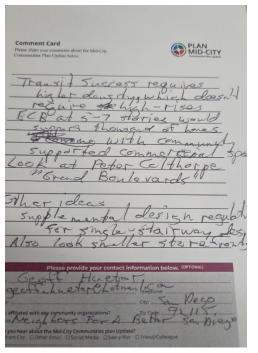


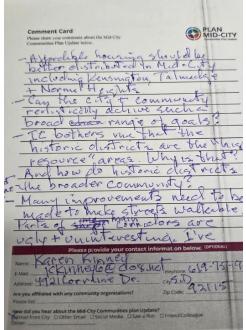
APPENDIX D - COMMENT CARDS RECEIVED

















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APPENDIX E – IN-PERSON SIGN-IN SHEETS AND ZOOM ATTENDANCE

IN-PERSON SIGN-IN SHEETS

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	Working Group Meeting Mid-City Communities Plan Update
	Wednesday, August 13, 2025 Name Affiliation/Organization
	Laura Rieban EACPC
	Davon Inderson -
-	Kanen Kinney
	CRAICABERNETHY HOMEOWDER
	Daviele Laman P+ Rec Bo
	CI II III CC
	Angel Pippins-loger City Heights ODC
	Karlin Austin College Area
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	Working Group Meeting Mid-City Communities Plan Upo Wednesday, August 13, 2025 Name	
	Ranno Abi	PANA
	Ramia Sattin	PANIA PA
	Geoff Hugher	NFARSD
	Laura Dinsin	TUS
	Ron Anderson	THS
	Rachel borascos	to PANA
	Revel Mezo	Asiantis
	Tina Abernothy	tal na deseno
	YOUNE JONES	CACPB
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	Jesse Ramrer	City Herits coc
	0	
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ZOOM LIST OF PUBLIC ATTENDEES

Sherrie Hatchett

Paul Jamason

Edwin Lohr

Kurt Stolle

Jan Hintzman

Sue Richardson

Patricia Vaccariello

Roland King

Priscilla Ann Berge

Angela Finn

Denisse Lopez

Debbie Sanders

Charles Kaminski

Halima Mohamed

Mauro Soria

Bettina Rausa

Judy Harrington

Julio Garcia

Ed Leonard

Danna Givot

John Hogan