



Minutes for Tuesday, October 10, 2025

Normal Heights Community Center/Zoom
4649 Hawley Blvd

Attendees:

X = in attendance

X	Paul Coogan (C)	X	Kenny Patrick		Emilie Colwell
X	Allan Harjala (VC)	X	Dan Soderberg	X	Sierra Orsinelli-Rivers
X	Sami Burrows	X	Mark Lawler	X	Brian Adams
X*	Frances Prichett (T)	X	Nancy Lawler	X	Madison Stevens
X	Julia Corbett (S)	X	Matthew Chaffee	X	Kim Pham

*Denotes Virtual Attendance

Paul called the meeting to order at 6:04 and read the opening reflection. Then Paul gave a brief overview of the meeting procedure.

Community Attendees

Estimate: 8 zoom participants, 15 attendees in person.

Non-Agenda Public Comment

- An audience member voices his support for Councilmember Sean Elo-Rivera's proposed tax on short-term rentals
- An audience member introduces himself to the group and expresses his interest in getting involved, especially with the community garden. He notes the city's delay in installing a water pipe and offers to help with the process. He is an MSW at a local university and social worker.
- A zoom attendee encourages folks to reach out to their local representatives regarding a loophole in smoke-free affordable housing policy. The policy does not apply to publicly funded, but privately operated, units. She worries about seniors, children, and those with asthma who may be impacted by second-hand smoke in affordable units.
- Board member Nancy Lawler shares that she participated in tree planting at Encanto and Colina Del Sol Park this past weekend along with a community group event that included attendance by public officials

Presentations

1) Project will replace water & sewer lines north of Adams Avenue

The project, funded by the city and run by consulting group Michael Baker, will replace water and sewer pipes with PVC, replace about 47 curb ramps, paint curbs according to San Diego's new daylighting laws, and bring water pressure in the impacted area up to city standards. The project will take place in phases beginning in October 2025 and is projected to end in the summer of 2027. The projected budget for the project is \$21.3 million.

The project will impact parking in the area, with certain streets anticipated to be closed to parking for 2-3 weeks at a time. Those areas that are affected will be notified 72 hours in advance by signage. The project team requests that individuals do not park close to the temporary water pipes known as "high lines", as they are prone to damage. They also ask that folks not utilize their driveways when their street is impacted by trenching and no parking signage, as it will require assistance by construction crews that will delay the projects' timeline.

The PVC pipes that are installed will last for 100 years. Water pressure of impacted areas will *temporarily* decrease.

Comments:

- Paul: Please consider repaving Mansfield between Adams & Collier
- Madison & Paul: Suggest using DeMille's parking lot as a staging area and note previous complaints about staging area activities in the neighborhood.
- Francis: inquires about the design and placement of new curb cuts and when it will be finalized.
 - Project rep.: They are still finalizing this but will pass along maps when they are done. The curb cuts are a part of the final stages of the project and will most likely be completed in 2027.
- Paul: Asks why the project uses PVC
 - Project rep: The material is preferred by the city because the costs of materials is lowPaul: Notes that property line monuments have been buried in the asphalt, please keep an eye out for them & let the board know if you find one.
- Matthew Chafee: will there be ADA access?
 - Project rep: In short, yes. There are temporary ramps available & impact on curb cuts will be limited.
- Attendee: notes that the community has been waiting 6-7 years for repaving and undergrounding
 - City rep: Undergrounding is scheduled for 2027
- Julia: Currently, water hydrants in the area have water pressure that is below the city's standard. Will the water pressure of impacted hydrants be increased to city standards when the project is completed?
 - Project rep: We will be testing water pressure against the city's standard, so water pressure in the impacted area will be brought to city standard.

2) City Presentation on Mid-City Community Plan Update

Density: The plan calls for increased density along transit. The document outlines several development area categories which correspond to planned density levels. Those development area categories include transit villages, transit corridors, and main streets. Specifically, the plan calls for high-density zoning along University Avenue and El Cajon Blvd. (which are designated as transit corridors), and middle-density along Adams Avenue (which is designated as a main street).

Historic Sites: Normal Heights boasts the Carteri Center Historic District on Adams Avenue, which includes several historic buildings.

Transit: There is also a proposed bike lane that would wrap around the residential area North of Adams, and then head south to El Cajon Blvd. A new purple line proposed by SANDAG would run north and south, running along the portion of the '15' adjacent to Normal Heights.

Parks: The plan calls for a Eugene Place pocket park, and the expansion of Teralta Park. Tree planting in Mid-City, including Normal Heights south of Adams, is also mentioned. A green corridor is considered along 40th street.

Library & Rec Center: New potential sites for a Normal Heights recreation center and a Normal Heights-Kensington joint library are included. The proposed library site is on the Normal Heights side of Adams Avenue.

There will be an October 18 public engagement meeting for the community plan update at the Normal Heights Community Center from 3:00- 5:00pm. The next Mid-City Community Plan Update meeting is on October 29th at the Park De La Cruz gym. City planning staff are also available for 1:1 15-minute meetings.

Comments:

- Audience request for statistics on parks specific to each neighborhood, like Normal Heights, rather than an entire planning area, to better show where parks are deficient.
 - City Planner: This information is available in the appendix of the community plan update materials
- Audience requests that female trees, rather than exclusively male trees, be planted while the city increases urban canopy. She notes that more male trees can increase pollen counts and aggravate pollen allergies for residents.
 - City planner: this is being taken into consideration. Notes that the gender of the tree can be hard to predict at the time of purchase.
- Audience request for safer biking on Adams Avenue
 - City planner: the city is currently updating its bike master plan, and there will be a CícloSDías event (<https://sdbikecoalition.org/full-calendar/ciclosdias-1>) on University Avenue. The event occurs on Sunday 10/26 and will close University Avenue to cars and open the street to pedestrians, bikes, and more.
- Brian: Are you assuming the proposed Purple Line will be built in this plan
 - City planner: essentially yes. SANDAG says they'll build the purple line, so we are planning for it. This plan reflects the 20 - 40 years of growth, and it's helpful to be aspirational to secure funding.

Actions/Decisions

September Minutes Approved

Allen 1st, ? 2nd

Abstain: Julia, Sami, Sierra, Dan

Yes: Paul, Allan, Frances, Kenny, Mark, Nancy, Matthew, Brian, Madison, Kim

Reports/Updates

Elected Representatives Reports & Updates

Written Statement from Fatima on behalf of the city

The city is directing inter-agency interventions for homeless encampments

Standing Committees

Adams "Community Recreation Advisory Group" - Nancy

The Rec Center is hosting a 'Trunk or Treat' event in the park

Community Garden- Paul

The community garden is waiting on a conditional use permit for water from the city, as well as on some answers regarding insurance questions. Emilie has volunteered to write the permit to save time.

Normal Heights Smart Growth - Paul

The company London Motor Advisor submitted a subdivision proposal for town homes in San Diego. The plan calls for 4-unit town homes, each with about 2-3 bedrooms, with parking on the lower level. The townhomes are for sale, not for rent. The proposal is not for Mid-City, however, the group believes the proposal is an improvement on ADUs.

The Community Planners' Committee - Paul

- The City is trying to formalize and improve upon their existing efforts on inclusive public engagement.
- La Jolla has proposed becoming its own city. This would require a vote to take effect.
- Community plan updates in the College Area are being fast-tracked after the ideas report. Something to be aware of as the same thing might happen in Mid-City.
- The city is considering converting existing billboards to light-up LED panels, among other options.

Advisory Committees

Traffic Calming Committee - Brian

List of requests have been submitted to the city

Community Engagement and Finance Committees - Sami

The group is temporarily inactive.

Utility Undergrounding & Street Lighting MAD - Frances

- Audience: A couple notes they do not want acorn lights, as they don't want to pay for them or pass down the cost of the lights in property taxes to their heirs. They ask if there will be an estimate of the cost in the vote.
- Frances: We're pretty early-on in the process, but it will eventually be put to a vote. Right now, it sounds like undergrounding won't happen until 2027. Hopefully we'll have an estimate of the cost by then.
- Another audience member suggests getting in touch with Talmadge Maintenance Assessment District regarding the cost, as undergrounding has already happened there.

Final Comments

- Nancy: The DeMille's site is currently in escrow, and the planned property is a 7-story building
- Madison: The San Diego blood bank is having a blood drive on Thursday
- Julia & Paul: A special election will take place on the same date as the next meeting, Tuesday November 4th. There is one prop on the ballot. The meeting will remain at the same time, as the Normal Heights Community Center is not a polling place.

Adjournment

Paul called the meeting to adjourn at 8:00pm