



Downtown Community Planning Council San Diego

Planning a Vibrant Downtown for All

Downtown Community Planning Council Meeting Minutes

August 20, 2025, 5:30 PM

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

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

A. Call to Order

1. Meeting called to order at 5:31p

B. Roll Call

1. In attendance (10 of 12): In Person: Brendan Bargmann, Gabrielle Werve, Danny Avita, Gary Hewitt, Chris Eddy, Greg Helmer, Gregory Barr, and Bob Link. Virtual: Alejandra Salas and Damon Robles

II. Non-Agenda Public Comment

- A. Becky Rapp: Raised concerns about intoxicating hemp products sold in convenience stores and smoke shops, citing recent city action against the Yard Hookah Lounge in Logan Heights. Urged the council to recommend a city-wide ban and stronger zoning policies.

III. Community Reports

A. Representatives from Elected Officials and Agencies

1. Christina Gaffney: Community Representative (Councilmember Whitburn)
 - a) New parking meter district approved for Balboa Park (6th Avenue and Balboa Drive); meters effective October 1st at \$2.50/hour
 - b) City agreement with Caltrans for encampment management along 5-mile freeway stretch
 - c) HBO installation updates: 11 projects complete, 4 under construction, 9 under permitting review
 - d) North Central Square Park design plan to be complete in 4-6 weeks
 - e) Development Services Department headquarters relocated to Mission Valley; Planning Commission meetings now held there
2. Jessie Brown: District Representative (State Senator Akilah Weber Person)
 - a) Legislature returning from summer recess; available for state agency issues

IV. Committee Reports

A. Balboa Park (Eddy)

1. Parking funds allocation still unclear regarding budget allocation

2. Balboa Park Committee meeting scheduled for September 4th
- B. Downtown Parking
 1. Second monthly meeting canceled
 2. Little Italy Association chair stepped down; Gary serving as interim chair
 3. Discussion of parking district management transition and funding challenges

V. Action Items

- A. Ballpark District Maintenance & Services
 1. Presentation by Dominic Lamandri (New City America, District Director):
 - a) Services began July 2nd with 22 full-time employees covering 22 blocks
 - b) Operations: 7 days/week, 5 AM-10 PM, plus security patrol 4 PM-1 AM
 - c) July statistics: 30,000 lbs trash collected, 1,200+ tickets resolved (100% completion rate, 83% within one hour)
 - d) 73.5% of tickets security-related
 - e) New equipment received; pressure washing machine arriving in two weeks
 - f) Coordinating with Department of Public Works on abatement services
 2. Public Comments:
 - a) Rob: Expressed concern about implied designation as "sports and entertainment district" potentially changing neighborhood character without proper community input or planning review
 - b) Gary Smith (Downtown Residence Group): Reported complaints about service response, particularly residents being told to call police instead of receiving direct assistance
 - c) Multiple residents emphasized need to maintain residential emphasis zoning and prevent entertainment district creep
 3. Board Discussion:
 - a) Concern raised about incremental expansion of entertainment uses without discretionary review
 - b) Discussion of Padres land holdings and development plans
 - c) Agreement that zoning changes would require community input through the planning process
 - d) Note that New City America agreed to remove "entertainment" language from district description
 4. No action
- B. Approve July Minutes
 1. Approved unanimously
- C. Market Tower Design Review
 1. Design Review Committee Report (Greg Helmer):
 - a) Appropriate development for the area with significant improvement to blighted site
 - b) Goals for affordable housing (30%-80% AMI, 2-3 bedroom units)
 - c) Target: 1,000 affordable units across three planned buildings

- d) Minimal parking (22 surface spaces) but well-situated for public transit
- e) Waivers requested generally acceptable, though outdoor open space at 50% of requirement
- f) Project includes three towers total; only reviewing first tower
- 2. Public Comments:
 - a) Gary Smith: Strong objection to 22 surface parking spaces wasting over one-third of lot; concerns about driveway widths (30-40 feet) and pick-up/drop-off access creating noise/security issues
 - b) Paul Jamason (virtual): Supported project; noted need for affordable housing distributed throughout city, not just downtown
 - c) General support for project's affordable housing goals
- 3. Board Discussion:
 - a) Parking necessary for building services (management, maintenance, deliveries)
 - b) Project appropriate for area near transit
 - c) Concern about concentration of affordable housing but noted 80% AMI serves working/middle-class families
 - d) Adjacent Padres developments will provide market-rate balance
 - e) Trolley noise mitigation through building design standards
- 4. Motion: Approve project as presented, passed unanimously

VI. Remainder Non-Agenda Public Comments

- A. Nolita Hall conditional use permit granted with recommended conditions
- B. Mission Hills organizing effort for historic designation
- C. Horton Plaza development: Bank foreclosed; receivership discussions ongoing; quick action expected
- D. California Theater settlement reached
- E. City Operations Building listed as surplus
- F. Tom's Watch Bar conducting outdoor DJ events without apparent permits; code compliance to be pursued

VII. Adjournment

- A. Meeting was adjourned at 6:56p