

UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY PLANNING GROUP

Meeting Minutes
Hybrid Meeting
April 8, 2025
6:00 PM

Meeting held at the Terranova Conference Room, third floor of Alexandria's GradLabs building.

Directors present, directors absent

Chris Nielsen (CN) (Chair), Neil de Ramos (NR), Joann Selleck (JS), Daren Esposito (DE), Jon Arenz (JA), Anu Delouri (AD), Kristin Camper (KC), Carol Uribe (CU), Georgia Kayser (GK), Karen Martien (KMar), Andrew Wiese (AW), Fay Arvin (FA), Anna Bryan (AB), Emma Chavez (EC), Mike Borisov (MB), Apolo Madrigal (AM), Josh Kenchel (JK), Coby Tomlins (CT-City of SD Planning).

1. Call the Meeting to Order: Chris Nielsen, Chair, at 6:00 pm.

2. Agenda: Call for additions / deletions: Adoption.

CN: Any additions or corrections to the agenda? Motion to approve DE, seconded by AB.
Passed without objection,

3. Approval of Minutes: April 8, 2025.

CN: Are there any changes for the March 11, 2025, minutes?

KM: I have a few minor corrections (incorrect attributions).

CN: I'll entertain a motion to approve with Karen's changes. Moved by DE, seconded by AB.
Approved unanimously, 16 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain.

4. Announcements: Chair's Report, CPC Report

CN: We have two main items on the agenda tonight, so we'll move on to UCPG officer elections, public comment, a short presentation by Cass Street Co. on their plans for the former Costa Verde mall site, Pure Water, and reports from elected representatives. Our mail agenda item will be the Sorrento-Miramar double-tracking project lead by SANDAG.

5. Action Item: UCPG Officer Elections. Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Membership Secretary will be chosen.

CN was elected Chair, Fay Arvin Vice Chair, Secretary will be unfilled with minutes taken on a rotating basis, and Anu Delouri will be Membership Secretary. The board indicated that minutes should be brief going forward unless there is an item requiring a permanent record.

6. Public Comment. Items not on the agenda but within the scope of the UCPG. Two-minute limit.

Becky Rapp: Concerned about the continued sale of intoxicating hemp products throughout our community, and about the higher THC levels in these products. She requested the UCPG ask the city for more enforcement of existing ordinances and to create San Diego specific rules.

Diane Ahern (UCCA): Announced that on Saturday April 12 that the Cal Coast Credit Union will host a 5-year anniversary celebration, and on Tuesday April 20 there will be a conversation with Fire Chief Robert Logan at the University Community library on Governor Drive.

Andy Wiese: Announced that the weekend of April 26 through 28 will be the upcoming annual city nature challenge, a global biodiversity nature challenge in which citizen-scientists from different cities compete for the most species observed. Friends of Rose Canyon will be meeting at 10AM to noon on April 27 at the lower UC High parking lot. Please come out.

Barry Bernstein: Mentioned the closure of Genesee at SR-52 on Friday the 11th. Please follow detours.

7. Information Item: former Costa Verde mall site, located at 8610 Genesee at Genesee and Nobel. The project team from Cass Street Co., the owner and master developer, represented by Luke Daniels and Michael Yanicelli, will present.

CN: This will be a short introductory item for the development plans for the site. There will be a site visit arranged between this meeting and the next, with an action item scheduled for the May 13 UCPG meeting.

Luke Daniels discussed the development of a new neighborhood in San Diego at the former Costa Verde site. The developers, Cass St. Co., and Alexandria presented their plans for the site, which include rescinding the outdated specific plan, updating parcel boundaries, and creating a new neighborhood with a mix of uses such as shops, restaurants, residential, commercial, and cultural uses. The developers also discussed the need to prepare the site by conducting demolition, grading, and installing infrastructure, particularly sewer and other utilities. The next steps include developing and partnering to implement the vision of the mix of uses for the site. The developers plan to return to the group on May 13th for an action item for the new parcel map and rescission of the Costa Verde specific plan. A site visit to allow people to ask questions and see the different aspects of the neighborhood is planned in early May.

Q&A:

JA: Residential was missing from the previous project for Costa Verde so I'm excited for that. How is parking on the site to be managed?

Luke Daniels: Parking is to be self-contained on each of the new parcels, with parking generally underground.

Luke Daniels: We look forward to seeing you at the site visit and on May 13. Thank you.

Follow Up: CN to coordinate with Ashley Johnson regarding invitations to an early May site visit to the site.

8. Information Item: Pure Water Project. The pure water construction team will present an update on the project. Mike Parks, Yvette Gonzalez-Mendez, Carlos Molina.

Carlos presented an update on the Pure Water Project, focusing on current work areas and upcoming closures. The project has completed 1,751 linear feet of tunnel and installed 36,334 linear feet of pipe. A full closure of Genesee Avenue at SR-52 is scheduled from April 11th at 9 PM to April 15th at 5 AM for pipeline installation. Carlos discussed traffic impacts, detours, and notification methods for the closure. He estimated that work at the Nobel and Genesee intersection will begin in the summer and last 6-8 weeks. Additionally, he disclosed plans for a 3-inch-deep grind and overlay of the entire route from curb to curb due to begin in late fall.

Q&A:

JS: When do you expect to tear up the intersection at Genesee and Nobel? How long will the disruption be?

Carlos: We anticipate May 27 as the start date of 6-8 weeks in duration.

KM: Please make sure the detour signs are easy to understand.

Carlos: We will have advanced signage in place for the closure.

ST: Will you have a flagger at the intersection? What about the lumpiness of the road?

Carlos: Yes, unless it rains with some intensity. This is why we will be doing a three-inch curb-to-curb grind and overlay for the entire route.

MB: There are two bus routes along Genesee, the 41 and 105 that will be impacted.

Carlos: The apps will be updated to indicate to riders that certain bus stops will not be available during the work.

9. Presentations.

- Zach Burton, CM Lee.

Thanks to the North UC library and the Rec Center at Nobel for all their help in a recent event. Their partnership is highly valued. We have the Mayor's newest budget released. We'll be digesting that and seeking input from the community and hosting a D6 budget forum. He will be in touch with UCCA and other organizations to follow up when the location is established.

- Anu Delouri, UC San Diego.

There is an update to the 2018 Long Range Development Plan available for a 45-day comment period, and similarly a subsequent EIR for CEQA. A recent decision by the Legislature to admit more California students to UC has resulted in higher enrollment projections and this has affected the original LRDP. A public hearing has been scheduled for April 20, location at the Survivance building in the Theatre District.

- Kristin Camper (MCAS Miramar).

Field carrier landing practice is being carried out at MCAS Miramar, so noise levels will be higher while this is in progress.

10. Information Item: PRJ-1086203, Public Project Sorrento Mesa Double Track Phase 2. SANDAG is proposing a project to double track a 2-mile segment of the rail corridor between Sorrento and Miramar, located in the LOSSAN Rail Corridor between the I-805 freeway overpass in Sorrento Valley south to Miramar Road. The goals of the project are 1) to realign the rail to smooth out the tight curves and lessen the derailment potential of freight trains and, 2) add a second track to add capacity for passenger trains and avoid "train meets" so opposing trains can pass one another and, 3) reduce travel times by increasing the passenger train speed from 25mph to 40mph. Realignment of the rail will involve some slope grading that impacts ten properties with City open space easements, which will require partial easement vacations. The grading will also impact the City MHPA overlay zone and an MHPA boundary line adjustment (BLA) has been prepared. The MHPA BLA is included in the project Biological Technical Report along with a Conceptual Revegetation Plan. Mike Widman, TYLin Co., Erich Lathers, BRG Inc., Tim DeWitt, SANDAG, and Amanda Gonzales, Merkel Inc., presenting.

Mike Widman presented the proposed rail project in San Diego, which aims to double-track and straighten curves along a 2-mile section of the existing rail corridor. The project has multiple goals: to increase passenger train speed from 25 to 40 mph, reduce derailment risk for freight trains, and eliminate bottlenecks by allowing trains to pass in both directions simultaneously. While the time savings from increased speed alone may be minimal (around 2 minutes), the double-tracking will significantly improve capacity and reliability, especially

as ridership and train frequency increase in the future. Some concerns were raised about the environmental impact of straightening the curves versus the benefits gained, particularly for freight trains. The project is estimated to cost around \$300 million, but funding has not yet been secured from state or federal sources. Mike explained the need for easement vacations and dedications, which require city approval. The project involves significant grading work, with cut slopes and retaining walls, but all excess soil will be deposited within the project limits to minimize environmental impact.

Amanda Gonzales, a biologist with Merkel and Associates, presented the biological resources and impacts of the project. The project area has been reduced from 88 acres to 72 acres, including 0.8 acres of wetland impact, 42 acres of sensitive upland impact, and 29 acres of non-sensitive upland impact. The project involves an MHPA boundary line adjustment, losing 21 acres but gaining 31 acres, resulting in a net gain of 10 acres. The project will impact some MSCP-covered species, including the displacement of two coastal California gnatcatcher individuals, but mitigation measures are in place. Environmental commitments include measures to allow wildlife movement during construction and protection of large coast live oak trees where feasible.

Amanda explained the MHPA loss and gain areas of the project using a slide. The red areas represent impacts and loss, including a major fill slope on the north side. While this area will be revegetated, it's not counted as MHPA gain. The green areas show proposed MHPA gain, including vacated railroad right-of-way that will be revegetated. The spoils parcel will serve as both MHPA boundary adjustment and project mitigation, requiring longer maintenance and monitoring. JS expressed concerns about the project's benefits relative to its costs and its alignment with long-term passenger rail goals. Tim explains that the project is part of a larger effort to double-track the entire corridor, improving safety and allowing for more frequent train service. The project is currently second in line for construction funding among remaining double-tracking projects.

AW discussed the potential benefits of the Miramar Bypass tunnel, emphasizing its convenience and potential to attract more users. He also raised concerns about the scale of the proposed project's cut and fill, particularly the depth of the cut and the height of the soil nail wall. Mike confirmed that the wall would be over 100 feet tall and cost around \$36 million to build. AW also questioned the environmental impact of the project, specifically the removal of 1.1 million cubic yards of soil and the potential loss of 21 acres of habitat. Amanda clarified that the majority of the habitat would remain untouched, with only a small portion being impacted and revegetated.

Amanda clarified that the spoils parcel, which will change substantially the parcel's elevation, will be revegetated and contoured to be as natural as possible. Most of the spoils parcel will be revegetated with coastal sage scrub with areas of native grassland, some areas of coastal oak woodland, and some chaparral. Amanda also explained that the spoils parcel can be used to support the revegetation efforts for the long-term temporary impacts, but most mitigation will occur off-site. AW raised concerns about the contradiction in the environmental

documents regarding the use of the spoils area for mitigation. AW also expressed concern about trading old growth for potential revegetation new growth saying the two types of MHPA are not interchangeable. Most impacts will be mitigated elsewhere, not on the project site. AW expressed concerns about the impacts to the old growth chaparral in the right of way and urged SANDAG to consider mitigating those impacts. Amanda confirmed that all impacts, including those in the railroad right of way, have been accounted for and will be mitigated. AW expressed concern about a large oak tree that may be affected by the project. Amanda clarified that there are larger oak trees in the area that will be preserved. Tim and Mike suggest potential modifications to the project design to protect the tree. MB argued that the rail project is environmentally beneficial overall due to reduced CO2 emissions from car travel.

KM emphasized the importance of preserving designated habitat areas and suggests that double-tracking without straightening the curves could achieve most of the benefit with less environmental impact. KM also emphasized that the proposed project could be considered as two projects, the first straightening the track curves, and the second adding a second track, with the first project alone possibly much less environmentally damaging than both projects and should be considered by SANDAG. The discussion concluded with concerns about wildlife corridor disruption and requests for more information on mitigation plans.

Follow-Up:

- SANDAG Team: Locate and identify approximately 40 acres of off-site land for habitat mitigation
- SANDAG Team: Identify and establish long-term funding and identify a conservation entity for perpetual maintenance of the spoils parcel
- SANDAG Team: Set up conservation easements for mitigation areas
- SANDAG Team: Explore design modifications to better protect the 58-inch oak tree, including potential relocation of storm drain and junction structures

11. Adjournment. Next meeting will be April 8, 2025, at our usual meeting room at Alexandria's GradLabs building, third floor Terranova Room, 9880 Campus Point Drive, and on Zoom.