



Downtown Community Planning Council San Diego

Planning a Vibrant Downtown for All

Downtown Community Planning Council Meeting Minutes

June 17, 2026, 5:30 PM

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

I. Call to Order & Roll Call

Meeting was called to order at 5:43 PM.

In Attendance: Hewitt (Chair), Wagner, Schwarz, Mahoney, Palmer, Sweeney, Baham, and Avitia (arrived late). Quorum met with 8 of 13 members in attendance.

Absent: Helmer, Bargmann, Salas, Arenas, Hustrulid

II. Non-Agenda Public Comment

The Chair noted updates to the agenda format: public comment is now two minutes per speaker (one minute if more than eight speakers), the second non-agenda comment period has been removed, and board members may make announcements during this item.

- A member of the public thanked the City Attorney's office for its recent enforcement action against illegal marijuana sales at two San Diego smoke shops, but noted that shops continue to openly advertise and sell marijuana, flavored tobacco, and kratom products in violation of state and local law. Asked planning groups to press city leaders to make enforcement a citywide priority, including revoking licenses or permits of noncompliant businesses.

III. Community Reports

A. Christina Gaffney, Office of Council Member Steven Whitburn

- On June 9 the City Council adopted the final FY2027 budget, which the Mayor signed without changes. The city reconciled a deficit of over \$100 million; the Council restored the majority of arts and culture funding proposed for elimination and some library and recreation center hours.

- Following the BNSF train derailment, the Harbor Drive Bridge has been repaired and reopened.

Board Discussion:

- A board member asked whether downtown library hours changed in the budget. The Central Library will lose half a day on Saturdays.

B. Danny Avitia, Office of County Supervisor Paloma Aguirre

- The Supervisor held a telephone town hall on housing with approximately 12,000 participants. The county will host a same-day wraparound services fair (IDs, records, medical and dental screening, food, clothing) on June 26, with the goal of holding fairs once or twice a month; the next is planned for Spring Valley in August.
- The Board of Supervisors meets next Wednesday (Innovative Housing Trust Fund for unincorporated areas) and Thursday (budget adoption).

Board Discussion:

- A board member asked for an update on the Tijuana River crisis. The Governor has released \$46 million; once received, the county will begin cleaning culverts and extending a pipeline to route toxic chemicals away from the immediate area, though flows will still reach the ocean. The air filter program has been expanded. A board member noted a lawsuit over the air purifier bidding process; the county stated the bid was competitive.

IV. Action Items

A. May Regular Meeting Minutes

No board comments were raised.

Motion to approve the May regular meeting minutes by board member Schwarz; seconded by Avitia. **Approved unanimously.**

B. 6th Ave Crossing Letter of Support

Following the March 2026 presentation on the Sixth Avenue Crossing - a volunteer-led proposal to improve the pedestrian connection between Downtown and Balboa Park along the 6th Avenue corridor, with a long-term vision of spanning I-5 - the board considered a letter of support drafted by Baham, Community Plan Update Subcommittee Chair. The letter encourages

the city and Caltrans to support the project. It was noted that the proposal has been incorporated into the 2026 Downtown Community Plan update materials submitted to the city.

Motion to approve the Letter of Support for the Sixth Avenue Crossing and authorize the Chair to execute and transmit it by board member Wagner; seconded by Sweeney. **Approved unanimously.**

C. Community Planners Committee (CPC) Alternate

The Chair serves as DCPC's representative to the CPC. Per the city's recommendation, the board considered designating Greg Helmer as the alternate representative to attend and vote on DCPC's behalf when the Chair is unavailable.

Motion to designate Helmer as the DCPC alternate representative to the CPC by board member Schwarz; seconded by Mahoney. **Approved unanimously.**

D. Board Member Removal — East Village South Business

The Chair presented the attendance record for Alejandra Salas, holder of the East Village South Business seat, who has missed more than four regularly scheduled meetings in the preceding 12 months, below the minimum attendance requirement of DCPC Operating Procedures Section 4.2.2. The member was provided notice and an opportunity for rebuttal; no rebuttal or public comment was offered. Removal requires an affirmative vote of two-thirds of non-vacant seats (8 votes).

Board Discussion:

- A board member encouraged recruiting candidates who improve the board's representation (including women and renters) when filling the vacancy.

Motion to find that board member Salas has failed to meet the minimum attendance requirements of Operating Procedures Section 4.2.2, to remove her from the board effective immediately, and to direct the Chair to provide written notification to the city within 30 days, by board member Wagner; seconded by Avitia.

Approve: Hewitt, Wagner, Schwarz, Mahoney, Palmer, Sweeney, Baham, Avitia

No:

Motion **approved 8-0**

E. Board Member Removal — Columbia Business

The Chair reported that Brendan Bargmann, holder of the Columbia Business seat, communicated his resignation after the agenda was published. In lieu of the noticed removal action, the board voted to accept the resignation.

Motion to accept Bargmann's resignation by board member Hewitt; seconded by Avitia.

Approve: Hewitt, Wagner, Schwarz, Mahoney, Palmer, Sweeney, Baham, Avitia

No:

Motion **approved 8-0**.

V. Informational Items

A. DCPC 2026–2027 Board Priority Survey

The Chair presented results of the board priority survey, completed by all 11 active members. Transportation, mobility, and active transportation was the top priority area (selected by 6 of 11 members), followed by housing and affordability; public space, parks, and environment; and quality of life, safety, and cleanliness. Highest-rated individual issues included maintenance and activation of downtown parks, strengthening relationships with governmental and institutional stakeholders (Port, airport, MTS, SDPD), homelessness response coordination, recruiting candidates for open seats, and complete streets and traffic calming. The Chair proposed organizing work through a mix of subcommittees, liaisons, and invited speakers.

Board Discussion:

- Board members discussed how homelessness and street-level conditions fit within the board's land-use scope; any board position should be rooted in the Downtown Community Plan and implementable land-use policy. A breakout discussion was suggested. It was noted that homeless services are relocating out of downtown while impacts remain.
- A board member suggested focusing on enforcement levers (e.g., liquor license compliance in the Gaslamp); the Chair raised the "night mayor" concept of after-hours code enforcement.
- Members asked that late-night transit service be added to the transportation priority.
- The board will take up stakeholder outreach and the annual infrastructure priorities list (due to the city in August) at the July meeting.

B. DCPC Expense Reimbursements and Budget

The Chair reviewed the board's operating expenses (Google Workspace, form and election software, domain registration), which have been consolidated for the coming year, and will submit for reimbursement through the city's process (up to \$500 per year).

C. Chair Updates

- Land Development Code noise ordinance item (see May minutes): the Chair presented to the CPC, which changed its position to opposed and sent a letter requesting removal of the item. The Planning Director issued a memo stating the language does not change existing ordinances, and the City Council adopted the item on second reading without removing it. Council Member Whitburn acknowledged resident concerns and asked that any resulting problems be flagged to his office. A board member presented the same material to the Cortez Hill Active Residents Group, which intended to send a supporting letter. Stronger noise language could be proposed in a future LDC/community plan update cycle.
- An application for a multi-use event venue at the Wonder Bread Building (14th Street and Imperial Avenue) will come to the board in July; the Design Review Subcommittee will review it in early July.
- The DCPC website has moved from WordPress to Google Sites (downtownplanningsd.org), with agendas, minutes, letters, rosters, and subcommittee information now maintained in Google Drive.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Elections

With tonight's actions the board has eight open seats, most of them business seats plus two community organization seats. The Chair will transfer the elections email account, operating procedures, and election materials to Sweeney (Elections Chair), who will have authority to determine candidate eligibility. A former board member has expressed interest in returning to an open business seat; the Chair will agendaize the appointment for July. Recruitment outreach will continue, prioritizing filling seats to protect quorum.

B. Community Planners Committee (CPC)

The Chair reported on the citywide CPC meeting: the city proposed converting the flat general plan update fee (approximately \$700 per application) to a percentage of total permit fees, so smaller projects would pay less; the CPC was skeptical and the city will return with a revised recommendation. Board discussion touched on the downtown development climate: downtown is regarded as comparatively easy to develop in when projects are by-right, with delays driven mainly by variances, entitlement processes, and financing costs.

VII. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by board member Avitia; seconded by Schwarz. Meeting adjourned at 7:16 PM.

Next meeting: July 15, 2026 5:30 PM, City Hall 12th Floor Room A