



# MANIFESTO

FOR THE HEART OF SAN DIEGO



January 9, 2023

Authored by the Civic Center Revitalization Committee Design Roundtable



# MANIFESTO

We acknowledge that the City of San Diego sits on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Kumeyaay Nation. We extend our respect and gratitude to the Kumeyaay people who have lived here since time immemorial. We recognize their tremendous contributions to our region and thank them for their stewardship. We aspire to continue the responsibility to be stewards of this one Earth, taking care of the environment all around us.

Our City is poised to embark on a once-in-a-lifetime transformation of the downtown civic center – giving us the proud heart and soul that we all deserve – a welcoming place of pride and dignity that will serve our next generations long into the future. A new City Hall will be the cornerstone of a five-block redevelopment for living and working. The time is now to carefully shape our goals and aspirations to create a remarkable place – and it is time to commit to those goals.

Now is the time for huge, audacious thinking, broad outreach, strong partnerships, and thoughtful planning to guarantee success. Now means it is time to remember how greatness is achieved – it is difficult and it is expensive – and it takes commitment from us all. Mayor Gloria has assembled a committee of San Diegans who have dedicated their careers to improve the lives of all who call San Diego home. This group brings together people who can guide the Vision for what this place can be – people who know how to pay for it and people who know how to take care of it forever.

The Manifesto for the Heart of San Diego demands that we:

- Demand Design Excellence
- Celebrate Democracy
- Build Trust
- Honor Public Service
- Take Risks
- Create Dynamic Municipal Synergies
- Embrace Arts and Culture
- Shift Paradigms
- Center the Network
- Listen
- Address Housing Needs
- Commit to Climate Action
- Ensure Safety and Inclusiveness

**Demand Design Excellence.** The buildings and outdoor spaces of the new Civic Center MUST be exceptionally well-designed, emphasizing a new iconic aesthetic that can inspire and influence the surrounding downtown neighborhood. The selected development team(s) must demonstrate a proven track record for design excellence on this scale – in ideas and delivery beyond construction. To earn an honored place in history, every aspect of design must celebrate our unique San Diego personality and climate. The Civic Center must be an authentic expression of ourselves and our place. Look to successful built projects worldwide for aesthetic aspiration (Appendix 2: Design for Civic-Ness).

**Celebrate Democracy.** Our new Civic Center MUST provide a place for future generations of diverse San Diego citizens to actively engage in and protect our democratic system.

**Build Trust.** The reimagined Civic Center must nurture and strengthen the trust and partnership between those who govern and those governed, which is critical to a flourishing society. The design/build process must embrace the public first, welcome the diversity of our citizens, nurture healthy public discourse, engender civic pride, and facilitate a shared ownership in the outcome of public decisions.

**Honor Public Service.** A City Hall represents the noble commitment of thousands of public employees who dedicate their lives to public service. The offices, meeting rooms, break spaces, public spaces, and surrounding areas must dignify and inspire these workers and the members of the public who engage with government. Healthy environments created with appropriate design principles bring out the best in each of our City staff members and honors the public that we serve.

**Take Risks.** Bold Civic leadership is essential to any large-scale development success. Aspirations MUST be clearly articulated. Excellence takes time, dedication, and a commitment to bravery.

**Create Dynamic Municipal Synergies.** A Civic Heart, both physical and emotional, is most powerful when it is accessible - connected to urban transportation systems, housing, employment, schools, and cultural institutions – thus facilitating engagement in private/public initiatives. A collaboration with ALL LEADERSHIP in these systems must be initiated hand in hand with the Developer RFP's. Exponentially successful projects like Petco Park speak to the power of such collaboration.

**Embrace Arts and Culture.** Given its geographical position in the very center of our city, the new Civic Center MUST integrate Arts and Culture into its site design. Arts and Culture drive economic development in our largest, most international cities - a crucial element in attracting a dynamic work force, and in generating jobs and revenue. Arts and Culture play a crucial role in advancing social development including a feeling of belonging, fostering full engagement with our communities, and addressing the trauma we have experienced with COVID 19, racial injustice, homelessness, intolerance, and a widening gap of shared understanding.

**Shift Paradigms.** The new Civic Center MUST embrace an inclusive, future-forward global view to expand our cultural influence and impact. This shift champions all aspects of revitalization, housing, civic engagement, rebuilding of civic institutions, city hall, working spaces, public gathering and how our leaders inspire regional, bi-national community.

**Center the Network.** Our city's center is growing rapidly and is poised for more phenomenal growth as we build critical urban infrastructure and homes to address our housing crisis. San Diegans have been waiting for convenient, realistic, speedy, and direct public transportation to the City Hall, the Mexico border, the Airport, and to the entirety of San Diego County. Our region needs a sustainable solution to climate change caused by fossil fuel automobile consumption. A world-class, accessible transportation center must be located at the core of the civic center redevelopment to achieve our housing and climate action goals. A concurrent collaboration with SANDAG must be a part of the City's work to solicit proposals from developers. Successful examples of municipal collaborations: Moynahan Station, Hudson Yard, World Trade and Grand Central Station in New York City.

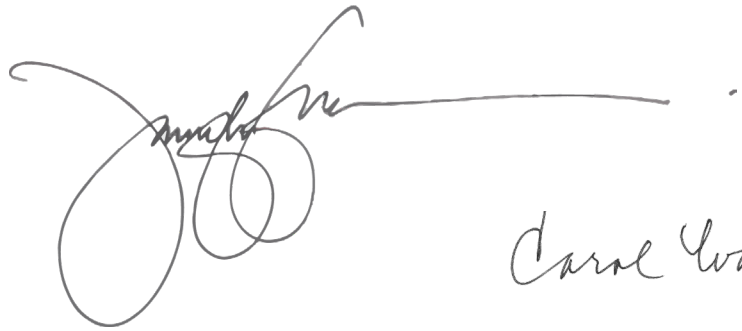
**Listen. Invest in Community Outreach.** Effective community engagement leads to positive outcomes for residents, the private sector, and government alike. The City and its Developer/Design team **MUST** engage the people of San Diego through properly-noticed discussions to inform how Civic spaces will benefit community and represent our beliefs and aspirations. **TRUST** all citizens to be articulate and clear. Note the powerful dialogue that resulted in a visionary Ballpark in our East Village neighborhood; one that came to fruition through community engagement (see Appendix 1: Resident Questionnaire).

**Address Housing Scarcity.** We must positively impact the region's housing shortage crisis through creative thinking and proper design. Housing must be located appropriately to provide for the health and wellness of residents - this project must consider local and regional plans to maximize opportunities for housing in the immediate site and surrounding downtown area. The Civic Center project must consider multiple housing types in its planning, including Extremely Low Income, Low Income, and Moderate Income/Missing Middle housing. Different typologies should be explored, including co-living, micro units, SROs and family units. No single site can respond to all of the housing needs of our times - creative partnerships must provide a model for how we can think about housing development in our City as a whole.

**Commit to Climate Action.** The new Civic Center redevelopment **MUST** implement proven sustainability initiatives. Our city's future; our children's future; our planet's future depends on this commitment from Civic Leadership.

**Ensure Safety and Inclusiveness.** Through public design strategies such as Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) the Civic Center core must create inspiring, well-lit, visually focused public spaces and places that are safe and welcoming for ALL.

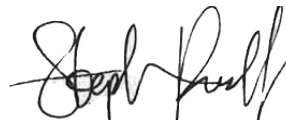
In the spirit of great civic endeavors of San Diego's past, we are inspired by the visionary tenacity of Civic Leaders who set aside the land for Balboa Park. Our new Civic Center MUST epitomize San Diego as a city of science, the arts, audacious courage, and bi-national, regional cooperation. Our recommendation is more than what the project looks like, or one that states which buildings to tear down, but an urgent call for holistic design in the broad sense. We have ONE CHANCE to get this right: a legacy project that is an opportunity to level up the city's economic, aesthetic, and societal value. Our leaders must engage the community and think big to develop an innovative Civic Center that will serve our City now and in our future.



Carol Wallace



Lori Krause



Thank you.

If you would like to add your name in support of the manifesto, [click here](#).