

Old Town San Diego Community Plan Update Advisory Committee Meeting

November 29, 2011 • 3:30pm - 6:00pm
Caltrans District 11 Office Building, Wallace Room
4050 Taylor Street San Diego, CA 92110

Meeting Summary

The following were present:

- City Staff:** Tait Galloway, Nancy Bragado, Samir Hajjiri, Victoria Huffman, Krissy Toft, Pari Ryan, Corey Braun
- Consultants:** Noré Winter, Christine Babla, Gerald Trimble, Stephen Cook, Mark Peterson
- Committee Members:** Bruce Coons, David Swarens, David Thornton, Diane Lowery, Fred Schwartz, Geoffrey Mogilner, Lorna Rice, Richard Stegner, Thurston Coe
- Public:** David Hulse, Denis Desmond, Simon Andrews, Lynda Barbour

The meeting was called to order by David Thornton at 3:40. A quorum was not established.

- 1. Opening Remarks** Opening remarks were made by Tait Galloway. Introductions were made by those present.
- 2. Non-Agenda Public Comment** There was no non-agenda public comment.
- 3. Approval of Meeting Summary for the February 15, 2011 meeting** February minutes were not approved since there was not a quorum. Geoffrey Mogilner mentioned that the summary reflected the March agenda. Tait Galloway said he would check on the accuracy with the planner at the time, and the February agenda.
- 4. Discussion of the Urban Design-Land Use Charrette Summary**

Noré Winter discussed the draft results of the Urban Design-Land Use Charrette that took place on September 29, 2011.

Public Comments:

- Charrette Team 5 had a suggestion for the Morena Blvd and Taylor Street entrance as a birthplace of “California Park,” but it is not reflected on the summary. The Consultant team agreed that these comments were what they sought, to ensure that notes from the summary were interpreted correctly.



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5. Preliminary Land Use Alternatives

Two maps were presented, with hard copies handed out. These showed the proposed draft community plan land use and the potential urban design focus areas.

Public Comments:

- Parks/Open Space:
 - It was recommended that the “cloverleaf” area be looked at closely,
 - Juan/Harney Streets have two County of San Diego properties with public parking for Heritage Park and Whaley House. These should be designated as park areas.
 - The City owned adobe chapel property should be designated as park.
- Residential
 - A residential land use designation could be more appropriate than commercial designation for the area near Harney and Jefferson Streets.
 - The area along Pacific Highway including the transit station could be suitable for residential uses to support workforce housing taking into account any necessary sound barriers needed. The current Community Plan encourages parking in this area, but it is difficult to get visitors to park there. This may be an area that works for workforce/affordable housing.
 - Should look at the potential for residential in all locations in the community.
- Mobility:
 - Taylor Street needs to be more pedestrian friendly. The current community plan places an importance on pedestrian orientation.
 - The cosoy.org site has a circulation plan that helps the Midway area without traffic going through Old Town. It can be found under the website’s solutions tab.
- Parking/Transit Center:
 - Parking in Old Town is often suggested for events in surrounding communities (ballpark, etc). These surrounding communities could help with financing additional parking facilities in Old Town.
 - Parking structures could help block views of the freeway, but should not be high rise structures. There are examples of parking structures with landscaping. Also, these structures can help serve as a sound barrier.
 - The Community Plan can provide guidance to State Parks Dept. for future uses of the shared parking lot for the transit center and the State Park. Guidance can include information on parking structure, and any potential attached developments to help finance the parking.
 - The Old Town community had provided input to Metropolitan Transit System/SANDAG concerning potential concepts for a parking structure at the Old Town Transit Station.



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- Additional uses on the site could reduce the amount of parking spaces needed for transit users and visitors.
- Future transit system improvements such as trolley extensions could increase the demand for parking at Old Town.
- A new parking structure could include a new office building for State Parks.
- The Caltrans office building parking lot could also be another potential parking structure location.
- Wayfinding:
 - Visitors should be able to identify entering Old Town.
 - Old Town Chamber of Commerce will present their proposed wayfinding program at the next Old Town CPUAC meeting
- Questions were asked about the process in which the Old Town Community Plan interacts with other plans as they focus on regional parking needs.
 - Staff stated that the Midway Pacific Highway and Old Town plans are being updated simultaneously, and the mobility analysis is being done by the same consultant team, to help create synergy. Planning group members of surrounding communities are always welcome to attend Midway and Old Town plan update meetings, and vice versa.

6. Infill Design Principles

“Design Traditions for Old Town” handouts were distributed. Noré presented conceptual design principles in Old Town. He explained how we can learn from the current buildings and how they reduce scale with different roof forms, particularly for larger roofs and windows that help break up massing. Noré asked for suggestions on the options.

Public Comments:

- Buildings should:
 - Look hand-made, authentic
 - Have high quality materials; details
 - Be small in mass; effortless
 - Avoid flat surfaces
 - Should have a rhythm, but not forced articulation
 - Appear to have grown naturally over different design periods
 - Relate to the underlying lot pattern
 - Have variation in setbacks

7. Character Photos for Architecture, Neighborhood Design, and Site Design

“Conceptual Design Principles for Old Town” handouts were distributed. Noré presented conceptual design principles in Old Town, emphasizing that while these were a draft, they help test concepts that can be included in the urban design element. Options for roof forms, awnings, and other architectural components were presented.



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Public Comments:

- Fine grain details are helpful in adding character. Examples include buildings in Santa Barbara and New Mexico.
- Avoid false fronts, same plane like on San Diego Ave.
- Buildings can meet the design guidelines, but fail to produce good building design.
 - A bad example is Cabrillo Plaza which looked good as drawn, but definition of story was used in a way that negates smaller massing. There are concerns with how things are measured and the loopholes that may be applied in new buildings.
- Street walls should have maximums. Keep in mind “rhythm of street fronts.”
- Keep street wall the same unless there is a plaza.
- Newer buildings don’t reflect styles of buildings previously in Old Town.
- There was a discussion about the presence of one-story vs. two-story adobe buildings prior to 1872.
 - Noré stated that there needs to be a discussion on what role historic authenticity plays.
- New buildings should complement older buildings, but not copy them.
- Old Town has a sense of history and there’s a need to establish or define character.
- Need to address building form, character, and envelope.
- There was a discussion on form-based codes and the general consensus was that in Old Town, they would work.
 - Consultant added that it should probably be more graphic examples, rather than a complicated list of details.

“Design Guidelines Imagery” handouts were distributed. Noré and Christine Babla went through the presentation to gather comments on the images they provided.

Public Comments:

- Buildings:
 - The roof shingles should be wood, but not shake. Composite tiles on places like the transit center are good.
 - The Mormon Battalion is a good example of building design for Old Town.
 - Simple and functional building forms such as the Larkin House or the Sota House are good examples of building design for Old Town.
 - Doors, windows, etc. should be proportionate and functional. Need to match historic element with needs for contemporary retailers (like adequate window space, double doors that open to the street, etc).
 - Designs should match capability of building type. For example, large adobe buildings with cantilevers would not be possible as the historic adobe building would not be able to withstand that type of architecture.



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- Should look at State Park guidelines for commercial building design.
- Streetscape:
 - Pop outs may not be appropriate for Old Town.
 - Wood in streetscaping is good.
 - Old Town Chamber counted 14 styles of street lights in Old Town.
 - Should standardize type of streetlights and avoid the use of cobra style lights.
 - Need more lighting posts or use LED lights in approved fixtures to allow for stronger light.
 - Pavers in a wave pattern do not reflect Old Town.
 - Community members need to perform sidewalk survey in Old Town to see if there are sidewalk materials that they like.
 - Sidewalks with upgraded material or stamped concrete could have a higher maintenance cost.
 - The big timber benches may be too big for Old Town, but are easier to maintain and have less chance of being stolen.

8. Closing The meeting was closed by Noré Winters at approximately 6:15pm.

