

Old Town San Diego Community Plan Update Advisory Committee Meeting

August 16, 2011 • 2:30 pm-5:00 pm
Caltrans District 11 Office Building, Gallegos Room
4050 Taylor Street San Diego, CA 92110

Meeting Summary

The following were present:

City Staff: Tait Galloway, Nancy Bragado, Robin Shifflet, Deborah Sharpe, Emily Lipoma, Krissy Toft

Consultants: Noré Winter, Christine Babla

Committee Members: Bruce Coons, David Bevilaqua, David Swarens, David Thornton, Fred Schwartz, Richard Stegner, Thurston Coe

Council District 2: Ian Clampett

Public: Paul G Chase, Cindy Eldred, Patricia Fillet,

The meeting was called to order by David Thornton. A quorum was not established.

- 1. Opening Remarks** Opening remarks were made by and Tait Galloway. Introductions were made by those present.
- 2. Approval of Past Meeting Minutes** A quorum was not established, approval of past meeting minutes was not conducted.
- 3. Non-Agenda Public Comment** There was no non-agenda public comment.
- 4. Discussion of the Existing Conditions/Walk Audit**

Noré Winter discussed the existing conditions and walk audit results. The existing conditions document is currently being developed and will be ready for public review by the September 27, 2011 charrette. Noré also mentioned that discussion of the right time and best way to notify people of this charrette should be conducted.

Noré described the adopted land use map and gave an introductory discussion of Old Town San Diego Plan District Ordinance (PDO) and community plan boundaries.

Public Question: Why is a section of Taylor St labeled Rosecrans? Answer: This is an example of something that can be clarified and 'cleaned up' in the update process.

Noré also discussed design standards and the different architectural styles approved for Old Town. Results of the walk audit were discussed. Paving and mobility were two primary issues that were addressed by those participating in the walk audit. Noré encouraged those present to consider the development footprint and massing of Old Town as well as the street character, gateways, and key intersections when thinking of what should stay the same or change in Old Town.



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Public Question: San Clemente has newspaper enclosures; can that be implemented in Old Town? Answer: There are several legal issues in regard to newspaper boxes, but staff will be investigating potential courses of action.

Public Comment: The Chamber of Commerce took an inventory of light fixtures in Old Town and found there were eleven different types of light fixtures on public property.

Public Comment: The suggestion of smaller zones or districts within Old Town is a good one. There should be uniformity within zones. Also, other lighting programs have been implemented in downtown San Diego neighborhoods. Design cohesion is important and is important to attracting and keeping visitors in Old Town.

Public Comment: The Old Town Chamber of Commerce was issued a grant to look at wayfinding and design of Old Town and has contracted with a consultant to do so. They are also looking at a way to connect Old Town to the Presidio. Noré responded that it would be good to work together and share information at a future CPUAC or Community Planning Group meeting. The community plan could provide policies or guidelines to address way finding signs.

Public Comment: What public involvement is included in Chamber's efforts?

Public Comment: The Old Town Chamber of Commerce is working with transportation engineers to examine transportation in Old Town.

Public Comment: There is too much traffic from Mission Hills to the freeway, and too much for San Diego Ave. Response from City Staff: A transportation study is being conducted as part of the update and it will address this issue.

5. **Mapping Exercise** Participants broke into two groups to examine and comment upon land use maps of Old Town San Diego. Participants were asked to review and discuss districts and boundaries and the key features within each and identify potential changes to these boundaries. Participants were also asked to identify three districts within Old Town and identify issues, opportunities and goals of these districts. (Refer to the separate summary of the mapping exercise.)
6. **Discussion of the Upcoming Workshop** Noré asked those present to comment on strategies that would help increase participation at the upcoming charrette workshop. Suggestions included providing food (specifically tacos) particularly because of the evening timing of the event. Members of the CPUAC agreed that having a raffle would be effective and that it shouldn't be difficult to get donations from local vendors.

When asked if door hangers or mailings should be done, responses included that the chamber of commerce has a mailing and email list which includes approximately 30% of the area businesses that could be used to provide workshop notices and that the notice should be colorful. There isn't an Old Town newspaper, but there is a presidio newsletter. There was also the suggestion that the notice should be sent to the churches of the area, particularly the Catholic Church and the Old Town Community Church.



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Discussion was held concerning who should send the notices if they are sent by email, and it was determined that if the city sent notices to key figures, these figures could send out the information. The Old Chamber of Commerce has an internal contacts list.

The comment was made that the meeting should be at a central location, and the response that it would be held at the former Fremont school was acceptable. The time of 4-8 PM was considered reasonable.

Public Comment: One strategy that proved effective at the Barrio Logan CPU was that participants would move to different stations to comment and get a ticket stamped. Completely stamped tickets would be entered in a raffle.

Identification of upcoming or ongoing public improvement projects was discussed and that it would be beneficial to have these projects identified as the CPU moves forward.

- 7. Discussion of Map Reviews** Several issues that were addressed in the small group exercise was that improvements should be made to make Old Town pedestrian friendly and to improve sidewalks and monument markers. Improvements should also be made to direct vehicle traffic into Old Town. More uses should be allowed in the core area and a greater connection should be made between historic park resources. There is a potential for resources to be grouped together.

Public Comment: There shouldn't be a zero foot setback for new development.

Public Question: Can the working base map be sent to the committee before the charrette? Answer by City Staff: A meeting summary of the current meeting will be sent to the committee.

Public Comment: The charrette should include ground rules and a time structure.

Public Comment: At a Rosecrans Study meeting, participants circulated around the room to discuss posted concepts or ideas and comment on stickies.

Public Comment: The issue of accessibility should be addressed in the CPU.

- 8. Closing** Tait announced that there will be a historic context open house on August 30, 2011 at the Caltrans building from 3-5 PM. An announcement will be posted.

The meeting was closed by David Thornton.



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Small Group Mapping Exercise Summary

During the August 16, 2011 meeting of the Old Town San Diego Community Plan Update Advisory Committee (CPUAC), those present were asked to participate in discussion and mapping exercises to document considerations, issues, goals, and opportunities for the Old Town San Diego plan area. Participants broke into two small groups and, using maps of the plan area, made notes regarding the boundaries of the land use/urban form districts within the community. Participants also noted what changes they would like to see to these boundaries, as well as any issues, opportunities, or goals that they saw for Old Town San Diego Plan Update. Summaries and key discussion points from these discussions are noted below and on the following pages.

After the completion of the small-group exercises, participants discussed additional points in a single large group. A summary of the ideas discussed are identified below:

- Old Town could be more pedestrian friendly and have more comfortable, walkable sidewalks by increasing sidewalk width and the removal of obstacles when feasible.
- Monument markers could be in place, particularly from Interstate-5 to the core.
- Parking structures could be considered at either at the school or at the transit station.
- There could be more uses allowed within the core, with limitations only on first floor uses. The core should also be defined by what the core or corridor feels like.
- Stronger connections could be made between historic resources. The historic resources within Old Town could be considered a group and the individual sites (the Presidio, upper/lower heritage park, and the cemetery, etc.) could be considered subsets.
- When discussing San Diego Ave, both sides of the street could be thought of as contributing to an overall experience.
- New development could be subject to a setback in order to get a wider sidewalk. Other ways to incorporate a setback is through the incorporation of patios and courtyards.
- Accessibility issues within Old Town may need to be addressed.

Summaries of Small Group Discussions

Group Summary of Group A:

Community Districts Boundaries:

The following could be considered:

- The area between I-5/ the southeastern community boarder/San Diego Ave/Jefferson St. and Conde St. is mostly hotel and office uses.
- The blocks at Harney St. and Jefferson St. is small scale and should be kept fine grained.
- The blocks at Jackson St./Sunset St./Twiggs St. is primarily of small scale single family.

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- The area between Hortensia St./Along San Diego Ave/ Twiggs St./including Mason St./north of Jefferson St.
- The State Park, the Presidio Park, and golf course to Taylor St.
- The commercial area along Taylor St.

Community Plan Boundary:

- The community plan should include the area north of Presidio Park to I-8 the area is within Plan District Ordinance (PDO).

Land Use Designations

The updated community plan could reflect that:

- The block at Congress St./Linwood St./Old Town Ave is currently an office use.
- The Caltrans site is an institution use.
- The block at Arista St/Jefferson St./Moore St. is currently hotel use.
- The block north of Conde St. includes the Whaley House is a park/recreation or institution use.
- The block at San Diego Ave/Harney St/Juan St is a hotel with two park/intuitional sites.
- The block at Harney St./Juan St. is the Mormon Battalion is an institutional use.

Park Specific Discussion:

- The old Caltrans office building could become a part of the State Park.
- The previous El Camino Real trail bisected the location of the current golf course.
- Is a Master Plan needed for the Presidio?
- At Presidio Park, access to the hill park and the destination should be enhanced.
- Could there be access to Presidio Park at Taylor St?
- At north edge of Presidio park there is a fragile bluff along Taylor St which could be impacted by changes in the transportation plan.
- North side of Taylor St. at Morena St there should be identified as part of Presidio Park.
- There is a need to address if there are required uses at the golf course, for instance, is there a deed restriction at the golf course?

Opportunities

There could be opportunities to:

- Revitalize the Whaley House, Old Adobe Chapel, Campo Santo for their further preservation and enhance has visitor attractions.
- Create stronger pedestrian connection from the community to the community recreation center.
- Enhance the visibility of the trailhead at Mason St./Jackson St. to be a greater mobility resource for the community.
- Site community parking structures at the Fremont school site and transit station.
- Bring back the former green-line pavement marker and/or mission bells.

There is an opportunity for gateway signage at the following intersections:

- Old Town Ave and San Diego Ave.
- Taylor St. and Congress St.
- Morena Blvd and Taylor St.

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Group Summary of Group B:

Community Districts Boundaries

The following could be considered:

- The area between Moore St./Ampudia St./Linwood St
- The area between Harney St./Jefferson St./Ampudia St./I-5.
- The area between Jefferson St./Ampudia St./north of Linwood St./Twiggs St.
- The area between Ampudia St./Linwood St./Sunset St.
- The area between I-5/Juan St./Ampudia St./ Taylor St.
- There could be stronger connections and sense of relationship between Old Town State Park and Presidio Park.
- The community could be considered as two cores: the historic core and the outer edges of the center core.
- At the State Park the historic “core” is the strongest connection with historic character.

Land Use Designations

The updated community plan could reflect that:

- The corner of Conde St. and Congress St. is mostly institution/retail uses.
- The corner of Arista St. and Jefferson St. is mostly office and hotel uses.
- The corner of Moore St. and Ampudia St. there is a hotel use

Issues:

- Pedestrian/Sidewalks/Streets:
 - The community could be more pedestrian friendly: utility boxes, paving, paper boxes, lighting, etc. could be addressed to make the community more pedestrian friendly.
 - On Jackson St. between Harney St. and Whitman St. there could be more sidewalk/pedestrian access.
 - At San Diego Ave between Twiggs St. and Conde St, the street is wide, but the sidewalk is narrow.
 - The pedestrian environment could be improved along the perimeter of the golf course.
 - Need to address if there are there pending improvements at Juan St.
- Gateways/signage:
 - On Taylor St. north of Whitman St. the historic markers/signage could be enhanced.
 - At the south end of the community the existing gateway sign could be enhanced.
- Presidio Park:
 - Consider reopening the park and ride at north part of Presidio
 - On Taylor St. on north side of Presidio Park a sidewalk could be needed
 - In Presidio Park there is an issue of brush maintenance which could be a fire hazard.
 - The under utilization of the Presidio Park could be due to lack of access.
- Regulations:
 - Congress St may not have enough pedestrian traffic to support retail/commercial use. The update community plan and PDO could consider allowing small offices at the ground floor street frontage; expand allowable uses in the core; or redesignate Congress St. blocks to a designation that allows small offices on street frontage.

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Opportunities:

There could be opportunities to:

- Fremont School Site:
 - Increase parking and also have a park if the school district does not need to school.
 - Create a joint use park/playground and/or picnic tables at the existing school.
 - Create a mixed use facility that includes the school use, or other form of public facility.
- Increase street front usage in the core district.
- Include the old Caltrans building for an extension of the state park, or a farmers market.
- Address- Cosoy Indian/Native American aspects.
- Site community parking structures transit station parking lot.
- Consider one-way streets.
- Consider moving traffic to Congress St between Taylor St. and Mason St.
- Archway signs to designate gateway areas of the community that could stretch over significant roadway points that are identified as gateway roadways into the community.
- There could be markers-small monuments, (perhaps obelisks) at key entry points.

There is an opportunity for a gateway signage at the following intersections:

- Old Town Ave between Jefferson St. and San Diego Ave;
- San Diego Ave between Ampudia St. and Old Town Ave;
- Congress St between Mason St. and Taylor St. (near transit station)
- Juan St. between Wallace St. and Taylor St.

Additional Comments Made at the Meeting for Consideration:

- Preserve the small scale (mostly residential) uses in the core
- Extend the core to the south
- Encourage larger/contemporary visitor serving uses (eg parking structures, hotels) on perimeter, especially transit, and freeway
- Enhance access to, and destination at, the Presidio