

Old Town Community Plan Update Advisory Committee

DRAFT Meeting Notes

November 16, 2010

City staff and CPUAC members met unofficially at the Caltrans District 11 Building.

The following city staff was present:

Bill Anderson
Mary Wright
Nancy Bragado
Shariar Ammi

Yara Fisher (AECOM)
Samir Hajirri

The following were also present:

Christine Robinson
David Thornton
Richard Stegner
Geoffrey Mogilner
Doug Livingston

David Swarens
Gary Lamble
Krissy Toft
Rob Hutsel
Fred Grand

The following were absent:

Bruce Coons
Fred Schwartz
Marie Pedrin-Gizoni

Bruce Johnson
Lorna Rice
Thurston Coe

Chuck Ross
Melissa Devine
Tom Doyle

Diane Lowery

1. **Opening Remarks:** The meeting was called to order by Bill Anderson at 3:45 p.m. A quorum was not established and there was a discussion regarding the feasibility of the Old Town Community Planning Committee continuing to act as a committee of the whole for the Community Plan Update. It was decided that the meeting would continue in an unofficial capacity.
2. **Introduction of Team and Participants:** City staff, consultant staff, CPUAC members and other attendees took turns introducing themselves.
3. **Community Plan Update Process: Bill Anderson**
 - a. **Meeting fundamentals**
 - b. **Meeting dates/times:** There was a confirmation that 3:00 p.m. is still a good time for the CPUAC to meet and it was agreed that other meeting at other times may be necessary for greater involvement from the community as a whole.
 - c. **Public involvement**
4. **Discuss Community Plan Update Advisory Committee: Nancy Bragado**
 - a. **Community Plan Update Process:** A discussion of the CPUAC structure was saved for a later date due to the lack of a quorum.
 - b. **Timeline:** Yara Fisher
 - c. **Review Brown Act**
5. **Review Existing Conditions and Other Studies/Plans: Nancy Bragado**
 - a. **1987 Old Town San Diego Community Plan**

- b. 1972 Old San Diego Architectural and Site Development Standards and Criteria
- c. San Diego/North Bay Station Area Planning (2004)
- d. Old Town Visitor-Oriented Parking Study
- e. Others?

The above documents were disused as one body of work and the conversation was structured by plan elements. This is reflected in the comments below.

Mobility

- There is a connectivity problem between key sites (Old Town, Presidio, hotels to the north and east, Mission Valley, etc.)
- Vehicular traffic and parking need to be kept to the perimeter. This was a good point in the current plan that needs to be better implemented.

History

- There used to be a green painted line that marked where El Camino Real was. It was removed in favor of pedestrian facilities. Maybe it could be redone with pavement treatment.
- Geoffrey Mogilner distributed a document titled *Kosa'aay Regional Circulation Proposal* which proposes several circulation-oriented goals
- Riparian features should be recognized to define why Old Town came to be in the first place.
- The entire 12,000 year history of the area should be recognized: Kumeyaay, Portola Expedition Garrison, and the Kosa'Aay. These should all be identified and promoted.
- The Power Point's second bullet should identify the historic core.
- Streetscapes could reflect a more historic use of landscaping; plants were originally grown in the area for food and medicine.

Socio-Economic

- There isn't a focus on developing housing, especially since so many people work here. We should consider if we want more.
- The current plan prohibits joining lots which is a fatal flaw that scares away development.
- I'm suspicious of lot consolidation but there could be targeted applications in key areas.
- We are ultra-sensitive to seismic issues. That combined with small lots make development hard.
- The Caltrans building is sitting on top of an active fault.

Commercial L/U

- Healthy retail suffers in Old Town due to a lack of drive-by, parking, and loading areas. Now we are restaurant heavy with a lack of balance. Econ analysis should look into.
- The last econ analysis recommended hotels/motels which has been successful. If high-end retail (antiques, etc.) followed, we'd be in better shape.
 - Those uses still need loading.
- Taylor Street is currently zoned as a ped oriented street.
- How do you implement the plan? We need mechanisms to help attract the kind of business we want. We have been thinking about how to do this.
- We should consider an anchor/parking on congress?
- We should look to Old Pasadena, Santa Fe, and Santa Barbara for how to attract retail without compromising history.
- Has the chamber surveyed retail customers?
 - Yes, it's about 50/50 locals and visitors.

Safety

- The bridge crossing at Taylor St. needs a solution. We're tired of losing people at the grade crossing
- Accessibility is a big issue. Accessible San Diego can't include Old Town in there guide. They should be involved.
- Some areas are too dark and need better lighting; especially in shopping areas.
- Groundwater contamination keeps coming up.
- The O.B. Bike Path is good but it's hard to get across the trolley, coaster, etc.
 - The Rosecrans study addresses this.

Open Space/Recreation

- Connections to the SD River and other resources are needed.
- The old Caltrans building could be taken over by State Parks to expand the presidio.
- The plan refers to balanced transport but for whom? Don't balance for the through traffic. It is a major problem that needs to be addressed.
- A link with mission valley would improve the relationship between the two communities.
- They keep adding transit without parking.
- There is no safe way to walk from Mission Valley to Old Town.
- Low impact links should be emphasized.
- People want to walk from Mission Valley hotels.

- Mission Valley's economic problems are getting transferred to Old Town.
- Some of the bus routes seem to make everyone happy with a split and are not rational.
 - The regional circle should be moved outside Old Town.

Public Facilities and Utilities

- We should underground all the power in Old Town.
- Storm Drains get clogged with runoff from the slopes and back up.
- Communications infrastructure is patchwork. We should look into whether or not fiber optics would help.
 - We should survey what is already there.
- We are in a constant state of construction. It is confusing and presents a poor image. Signage and better coordination are needed.
- A transponder antenna is being built in the middle of the Old Town Pitch and Putt, a historic site.
- The access road EIR said it would impact the national historic site. Is that a type?
- The 8-foot chain link fence around the school does nothing for the history or image of Old Town.
- Other successful historic towns have public parking facilities.
 - Santa Barbara, etc. are their own cities. Old Town is the step-child of San Diego instead of the emphasized historic germ.

Urban Design

- Architecture and design has been good and should be maintained. There are issues with enforcement. We can live without enforcement but not without design and redevelopment.
- We haven't had enough development to even see design. We need to change something to promote development but not compromise architecture.
 - Can we add Victorians to the picture?
- Architecture and design review are not very good and need to be improved.
- The plan should preserve the past and look to the future. Improve design regulations. We need an enforcement program. The cowboys water feature is ugly, not historic, and dangerous.
- We don't think enough about the natural environment; river, hills, slopes, etc.

6. Closing Comments

- The committee decided on a committee of a whole though many said they couldn't come.

- Will agenzize at the January meeting.
- Consider timing of CPUAC versus the CPG to make sure it works.

7. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 5:45 p.m.

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