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90<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
**HILLCREST**  
BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

January 14, 2013

Marlon Pangilinan  
Senior Planner  
Development Services Department - Planning Division  
1222 First Avenue MS-413  
San Diego, Ca 92101

Dear Marlon,

The Hillcrest Business Association (HBA) is an active partner in the City of San Diego's Uptown Community Plan update process. The HBA has hosted the most comprehensive outreach and engagement campaign of any neighborhood in this process. This campaign is entitled Hillcrest 2.0 and it engages business people and those who appreciate the Hillcrest business community to contribute to the plan update process. The HBA has sponsored the following activities as part of our campaign:

- Hosted five community forums in a 'mixer' setting on various discussion topics at local restaurants. Over 450 hours of neighborhood volunteer time was spent at the forums with over 150 individual neighbors attending one or more of the forums. Each forum featured a distinguished speaker who informed our discussion. Speakers included Dr. Mirle Bussell from UCSD, Dr. Sherry Ryan from SDSU, Howard Blackson of Place Makers, and Mark Steele, founder of MW Steele Group.
- Partnered with the University of California San Diego's Planning Department to host seven student research groups on topics including public art, pedestrian alleyways, environmentalism, a business survey, a highway lid over SR 163, streetcars, and design guidelines.
- Invited nationally recognized speaker on urban renewal and community economics Charles Marohn of Strong Towns to speak in Hillcrest. The event, held at a local restaurant, was attended by over 60 neighborhood business people and residents.

As the community plan takes shape, the HBA is eager to contribute and respond to the work product of the City Planning Department and its consultants. As new elements of the plan develop, the HBA will provide ongoing feedback. This will be conducted through a special ad hoc committee that will discuss proposals and documents from the Planning Department. Suggestions from this group will be endorsed or modified by the HBA Board of Directors.

The feedback below was approved by the HBA, representing the businesses of Hillcrest, at its most recent meeting on January 8, 2013:

**As a general concept, the HBA supports Smart Growth in Hillcrest.** The HBA supports compact, transit-oriented, walkable, bicycle-friendly land use ideas, including concepts such as the Complete Streets theory, mixed-use development, and a range of housing choices.

**The HBA supports the height proposals but believes the suggested base heights are too low.** The HBA supports the concept of base height limits and allowing for additional height through discretionary review. The HBA also supports allowing for bonus height when appropriate amenities are provided. The HBA supports identifying locations for unlimited height in certain areas. The HBA is disappointed at the currently proposed base height limits. At minimum the IHO limit of 65', which represent an existing neighborhood compromise, should be the base for both the core and the east end of Hillcrest.

The HBA also supports the additional design proposals presented including providing height for appropriate retail and commercial uses in addition to base height limit.

**The height of the buildings must be based on the pedestrian experience.** As is stated in our Hillcrest 2.0 recommendations, the height of buildings in the neighborhood should be based on the pedestrian experience. The street width relative to building size is a good guide as to the appropriate height of buildings. The HBA recommends a 1:1 ratio of street width to the height of the "street wall". Individual building heights may vary based on incentives described above.

**There are two centers in Hillcrest.** The HBA believes that the plan must recognize the two centers of Hillcrest. When the 1988 community plan was written, the historic core at Fifth Ave. and University Ave. served as the heart of our neighborhood. Now, almost twenty five years later, the City must recognize that the east end of Hillcrest is at least as important as the historic heart of the neighborhood. The Uptown District, the LGBT Community Center, the Hillcrest Farmers Market and hundreds of new businesses have made the east a second "core" of Hillcrest. Both areas should be seen as hubs allowing for increased height and residential density.

**Small business storefronts will not succeed without residential growth.** The current proposals call for preserving small storefront businesses because they contribute to the street environment. The HBA agrees with this but believes that lowering the residential density range on the east end to 44du/ac and 74du/ac on the west end does not provide the opportunities for residential growth needed to accommodate small storefronts (especially in light of the fact that many of the parcels in Hillcrest are extremely narrow). Small storefronts and residential density go hand in hand. Small stores will fail without appropriate residential density. The business community demands a level of residential density to provide continued customer growth.

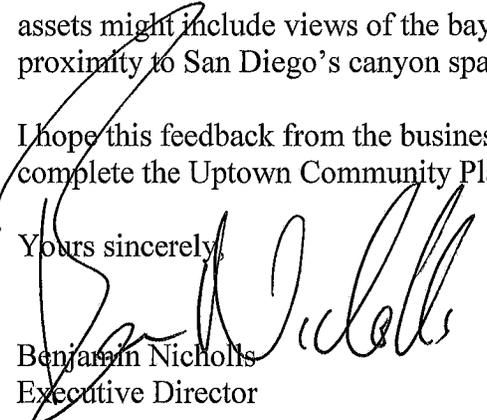
Hillcrest's diverse range of family types and sizes needs to continue to be accommodated through a mix of residential unit sizes. The current proposals that state the number of dwelling units per acre does not envision a diversity of unit sizes.

**Preserve and enhance the assets of the neighborhood.** The HBA supports the proposed goals of preserving the character of the business district. Walkable neighborhoods, modern living spaces, small storefronts and intimate restaurants are all assets that the HBA encourages. However, the HBA also encourages city planners to recognize that because of its location on the

crest of a hill other underutilized assets should be emphasized in development proposals. These assets might include views of the bay, downtown, Balboa Park and the eastern mountains; and proximity to San Diego's canyon spaces and Balboa Park.

I hope this feedback from the business community is useful and informs your ongoing efforts to complete the Uptown Community Plan.

Yours sincerely,



Benjamin Nicholls  
Executive Director

Copy: Council President Todd Gloria, Mayor Bob Filner