

Uptown Community Plan Update

CPUAC Meeting #1, 10/29/09

Meeting Summary (DRAFT)

Overview

On Thursday, October 29, 2009, the Community Plan Update Advisory Committee (CPUAC) held its first meeting. The following information summarizes the:

1. meeting process
2. meeting agenda
3. meeting comments

1. Meeting Process

Per the Brown Act, the meeting was publicly noticed, and open to public attendance and comment. Twenty CPUAC members attended; in total, the CPUAC has 31 members. Eighteen members of the public attended. The room was organized so that the CPUAC members and the general public were seated in separate sections. This separation recognized the roles of the CPUAC members as representatives of various stakeholder groups and interests to the Community Plan Update process.

The City Staff led the process and the presentation, which included an overview of the General Plan Principles, the homework assignment to photo document the community, and an introduction to each element of the existing Uptown Community Plan. The presentation was followed by a debrief process for the CPUAC members to comment on: what they liked about the process; what they would suggest to improve the process; what they learned; and, what they would like to know more about. After the debrief, additional comments were made by the general public and CPUAC members. Throughout the meeting, comments were charted on large sheets of paper that were displayed on easels. These charted comments summarized the ideas that were shared during the meeting.

2. Meeting Agenda:

The meeting was organized into five parts:

- Introduction
- Overview of General Plan Principles
- Photo documentation homework
- Slideshow of the existing Uptown Community Plan's Elements
- A Debrief for the CPUAC

The bulk of the meeting's time was dedicated to the slideshow of the existing Uptown Community Plan Elements. This discussion provided a beginning point for participants to familiarize themselves with the goals of each element in the existing Community Plan and to provide comments on those elements.

3. Meeting Comments:

Throughout the meeting, participants were able to comment on the meeting's agenda topics. Their comments were charted by two outreach team members. The following pages provide a summary of the comments received as well as the requests or action items that City Staff will track and add throughout the CPUAC process. These comments are summarized in the following order:

- a. General Plan Principles
- b. Existing Uptown Community Plan Elements
- c. Break Period
- d. Debrief
- e. Additional Public Comment

After the meeting comments, two final sections are provided. The first is an Action Items list to track requests for information. The second is a document showing public comments that have been received by the City after the meeting was concluded.

The charted comments are shown next.

a. General Plan Principles

Q: Will community plan preparation manual be provided?

A: Yes. Draft of it is on the City's website now.

Q: Since height ordinance can have 2 extensions, should we in advance go ahead and ask City Council to extend?

A: We can explore, but need to show progress first.

Q: In reference to the previous question: This meeting was supposed to start in March. We've lost time.

A: Plan is to show progress before asking to extend. This was our promise to the other side. (Bill Anderson)

b. Existing Update Community Plan Elements

B.1: Residential Element:

Park and Laurel

- 96 units, tall buildings are exclusive, high price does not equal building affordable housing.

Hillcrest new modern homes need active front door and parking garages

Explore conservation areas and boundaries

b. Existing Update Community Plan Elements, continued

Need more concrete, specific guidelines

- ie. Carlsbad design concepts and CCRs

Big problem: lack of understanding of what “character” is and what it means

- Multi family home standards(1991)
- “Character” is a code word
- People need to articulate what they mean
- Unique = Eclectic neighborhood
- Need to establish character = what to keep can’t be too suggestive

Uptown, Hillcrest has diverse populations and is desirable places to live.

How to accommodate new people/neighbors and how to engage them

Low income housing is not a possibility if we do the other things.

Building up = high return

We’re built out.

Need financial realism

What is connection between new density and new residential? Need to tie in new development with facilities.

Code Compliance Department may be less available/responsible. We need to be mindful of how we implement the plan. Code compliance may be put in other city office to be enforced.

Cumulative impacts

- Don’t want spot planning
- Look closely at ministerial

NY Times article

- What the city is doing buying high rise units, income not good
- Is it smart to go up?

Combine variety of housing and character

- Would love to see models of this

University Heights transportation tandem parking

- Parking problem: rage, less parking

Large street...El Cajon may work, but not appropriate for us

Lot consolidations should be discretionary PDO not up to date

b. Existing Update Community Plan Elements, continued

b.2: Commercial Element:

There's no separate parking element for both for commercial and residential. We need to look at it.

We need to look at interfaces between commercial and residential.

Pedestrian orientation - the timing of the crossings is a problem.

Recognition of success we've made in the business district

- Night life
- Medical districts
- Support more existing business

Encouraging businesses that are on the edge is critical (retail, restaurants)

Identify what's missing from our business districts

- Office space - architects, creative types

Pedestrian - sometimes we need smaller districts as community gathering places

- Recognize existing gathering places
- Encourage business that provide gathering places

Appreciate that we have made great progress

There are a lot of open buildings - Economic development needs a big slice of this.

Uptown services a much larger community than lives there. If we lose that, that would damage the character there.

Vermont Street Bridge is a pedestrian super highway.

- Packed all the time, people walking for several blocks carrying groceries
- Huge selling point
- Nice character element

If you are not sensitive to parking for regional customers to area, you are hurting business.

Residential near commercial - insulation and noise containment. In entertainment areas, consider this so that they live more acceptably with each other.

Photos in powerpoint about these elements - 2 blocks between Robinson and Washington isn't totally representative. There are many strip malls - 3 businesses with parking in front. That doesn't feel like a pedestrian experience. This needs to be addressed.

On parking, each business has "their" parking lot, need to turn that into a more common experience.

b. Existing Update Community Plan Elements, continued

To preserve historic buildings, use gap between residential and commercial. When you do this you are preserving affordable housing.

Upper right hand corner the Village Hillcrest area used to be a bowling alley and now it's a community hospital, etc. It's the evolution of the community.

b.3: Transportation Element

Washington Street could be nice walkable route, but for the intrusion of 163 ramp. Would be nice to have bridge over it and to time the lights, synchronize.

Plan for electronic cars, solar trees = be ready

Multi-use of transportation corridors

- Make more use of these
- Create additional space or co-use space

University Heights

- Architectural drawings for Washington Street corridor
- Transportation hub, have professional input/designs
- Need to study

Medical center: Traffic flow on 1-way streets causes driver confusion.

Walkable = people out of cars. Need to provide:

- Parking (lots)
- Free shuttles

Right-of-way not fully used. Look for opportunities there.

Hillcrest parking places:

- white curbs are really not passenger zones
- Why have red curb areas?
- Parking meters and wasted space could be utilized better

b.4: Urban Design Element

We need a Master Plan of Design for height issue,

- It's a horrible thing, a waste
- "Compatibility"- what does this mean?
- Have a design form of how we want things to look. It's hurting us not to have one

Hillcrest selected as 1 of the top 10 great neighborhoods in the nation. Lots of those neighborhoods are "short". That's one of the reasons they chose us.

Height is a crucial element in Urban Design.

- Decimates the character of an area

b. Existing Update Community Plan Elements, continued

Even if people can't articulate in words what character is, you can do it with pictures. I challenge the group to do this. Use pictures to describe.

Height affects character, especially the light on that street.

Height problem: Area of shade that is cast around these taller buildings

The idea of preservation is very strong in the room. It's a good idea to look at National Main Street strategies to preserve by being economically viable. Take a page out of their book.

There are tall buildings that are respectful. There are ways to break apart the building so that it's viable to the community. Design Guidelines are good ways to work this out.

b.5: Community Facilities and Services

San Diego is a resort community

- Sun and beach
- Cultural tourism is biggest employer

Make use of outdoor spaces

Current plan (80's) trolley Hillcrest and Downtown. Hope this stays in.

Finding ways

- Community service facilities may not be publicly owned
- How to attract diversity and benefit from it

A needs assessment should be done.

Fire station on 9th, the neighborhood different than when first built. Could this be relocated?

There are pockets of civic buildings that we may not need anymore.

Give incentives to draw people from outside of the area to use Uptown facilities.

Homeless is part of community and how to provide services.

b.6: Open Space and Recreation Element

Hillcrest doesn't have parks or community gardens. We should look at pocket parks, places for dogs.

I'd like to challenge the concept that the neighborhood can't have large parks because it is built out.

b. Existing Update Community Plan Elements, continued

Explore opportunity for trails and passageways.

Connections to other neighborhoods outside of ours

- Try to get bicycles to get to the San Diego River

2 slides with bridges are the most attractive thing

- Maybe we have to come up with ways to connect communities with bridges.
- They look attractive to me.

I would love it if there were more organic link to Mission Valley. (Someone offered “gondola” which was followed by some laughter.)

Here’s another minus for height limit, you’ll never get any open space.

- Developer devoting open space
- Downtown Paris, you don’t see any parks.
- If you tied development rights to having open space, then you’ll start to see it appear.

Look at concept of “banking” for open space. Bundle it to make coherent park space and affordable housing.

I want to make sure the community plan identifies where that “banked” land would go.

b.7: Conservation, Cultural, and Heritage Resources

Historical resources = moving target

- Both good and bad
- Not all history is created equally.
- Brass Rail is historic, but not labeled or known.

Conservation district = volunteers to do this

Will we be keeping Uptown survey?

- We will keep parts of it and will do a new one but not start from scratch (*City Response*).

Need balance.

History is dynamic.

House can be surrounded by hospital

- No district, but no one can do anything

Historic preservation has already a good track record.

- Save and recognize.
- Make them places where people actively use it.

c. Break Period - Ideas and Issues Outside of CPU

Park Blvd is split between 2 planning areas. It needs to be in one or the other.

d. CPUAC Debrief

d. CPUAC Debrief – What I liked

Compliment to Marlon and staff - You kept us focused

I liked the process.

Great process. Open commentary.

d.2: What I Would Suggest

- Please listen to us.
- Don't bastardize what we say and then turn it into something we didn't say and then tell us we said it.
- Have to be careful; some people like to speak in public, others don't. Find balance.

d.3: CPUAC Debrief: What I Learned

- There's a variety of opinions.
- A lot of smart people in the room.
- No one of us is as smart as all of us.

d.4: Would I would like to know more about

- How to infill well
- Ideas about parking
- We need better way to move people around out neighborhoods
- Will this Update get approved?

d.5: Request

- I am concerned that the Plan Update won't be in place by the time the interim height ordinance expires.
- I would feel better if the city would extend the height ordinance because this is starting late.

e. Additional Public Comment After the Debrief of the CPUAC:

Announcement @ UCSD Planning presentation from member of the public.

Possible to do survey?

- Quick answer: No (Bill Anderson, Director of Department)
- It would have to be a scientific survey. (Bill Anderson, Director of Department)

Possible to do a poll?

- Answer: Polls can be misleading (Bill Anderson, Director of Department)

Uptown has some of the most involved community members

e. Additional Public Comment, continued

Here we have representatives that communicate for thousands of people.

I'd like to talk more about consensus. Group has a lot of diversity, I wonder if it can come to consensus?

- Our goal is consensus. Let's review the official process for a Plan Update through City approval process. (Bill Anderson, Director of Department)
- The goal is consensus. We want to get into what the public does like or doesn't like. Chances are when we get to the end, we won't have 100% consensus. But, the areas of disagreement will likely be narrowed to smaller parts and there will be a deeper understanding about choices. We, the Planning Staff, present those choices to City Council and they make the decision.

Follow-up Items List

Follow-up items made during the meeting's debrief.

Description	From Mtg.	City Update	Status
1. Can we initiate the extension of the height ordinance now?	CPUAC #1	The agreement is that "progress" needs to be shown before requesting the extension. Progress is being defined as agreeing to 3 plan alternatives that would result from the Charrette Process.	Charrette Process is currently scheduled for May 2010.
2. How to infill well.	CPUAC #1	Infill and how to do it well will be part of the Urban Design team's work. The Urban Design teams will begin working directly with the CPUAC February - September, 2010. There is also an 'educational' component programmed for an upcoming CPUAC meeting during which parking will be addressed.	This item will most likely be part of the Cluster Meeting #1 in March 2010 and the CPUAC meeting that follows in April 2010
3. We'd like ideas about parking.	CPUAC #1	We have a transportation firm that is going to work with all three communities - Uptown, Greater Golden Hill and North Park - on parking issues, as will City Staff and the Urban Design team, as it affects many aspects of the plan. There is also an 'educational' component programmed for an upcoming CPUAC meeting during which parking will be addressed.	This item will most likely be part of the Cluster Meeting #1 in March 2010 and the CPUAC meeting that follows in April 2010 and the technical evaluation July - September 2010.
4. How to move people between neighborhoods.	CPUAC #1	We have a transportation firm that is going to work with all three communities - Uptown, Greater Golden Hill and North Park - on parking issues, as will City Staff and the Urban Design team, as it affects many aspects of the plan. There is also an 'educational' component programmed for an upcoming CPUAC during which parking will be addressed.	This item will most likely be part of the Cluster Meeting #1 in March 2010 and the CPUAC meeting that follows in April 2010 and the technical evaluation July - September 2010.

Summary of Public Comment received Post-Meeting:

Topics Received by email:

Residential: When new housing is built, they have to provide adequate parking for the new units. However, often times there are more cuts put into the curb reducing the amount of street parking.

Conservation: Some mechanism by which the conserved part of the old building can reviewed for suitability (please don't ask me to define that) when a builder agrees to some conservation. Like the Egyptian. It's a great facade, but it is so small compared to the new building. It looks out of place.