

MEMO

To: Uptown Planners
North Park Planning Committee
Interested Persons – University Heights

From: Christopher Ward, UH Resident
Kristin Harms, UH Historical Society

Re: Community Plan Update – University Heights Land Use

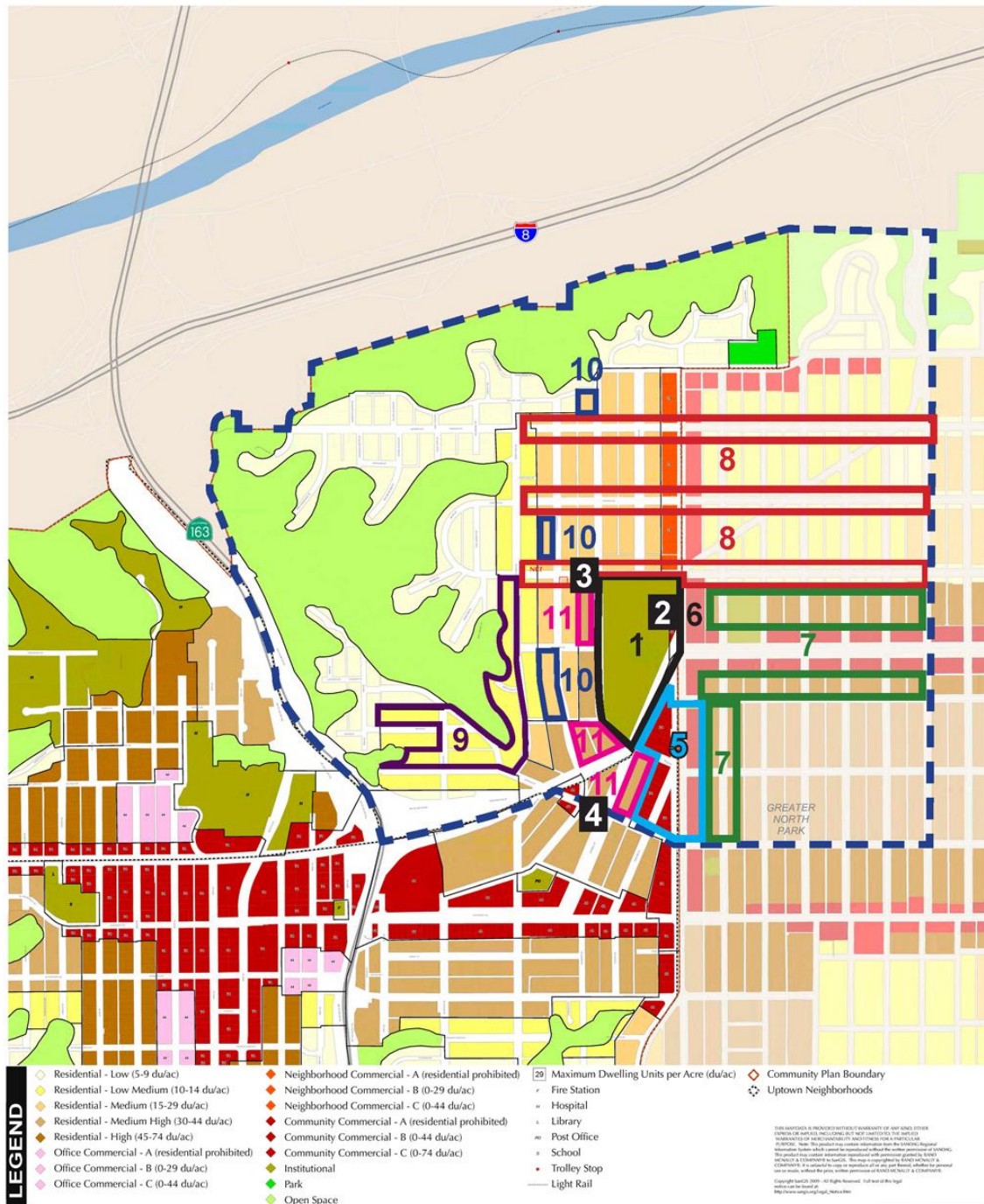
Date: May 20, 2013

COMMUNITY FORUM

On May 16, 2013, a group of approximately 50 individuals gathered to hear input about the status of the community plan update process and outstanding land use issues and questions posed by the City within the University Heights (UH) neighborhood. A survey was utilized to get individual feedback; 34 attendees returned the survey and from these forms, participant background could be established. Some were members of established neighborhood groups like UH Community Association, UH Historical Society, UH Community Development Corporation, Uptown Planners, North Park Planning Committee, and Friends of San Diego. But most of the attendees identified themselves as an unaffiliated resident. 24 indicated they were a resident or business owner in UH, while 3 claimed they were not. 14 claimed to live east of Park Blvd (North Park planning area); 15 stated they lived west of Park Blvd (Uptown planning area).

After a brief overview, including a discussion about demographic changes, examples of density, and planning process, 11 sites or areas were discussed for potential changes to the respective Uptown and North Park land use maps. The attendees provided discussion and sharing of opinions on these sites, and individually opted for one land use preference over another. The general results of these surveys are included here for consideration by the community planning groups. Area number references are matched to the keyed land use map, attached. Following these findings, a tabulated summary of the feedback form is included with this memo.

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS KEY LAND USE AREAS



FINDINGS

North Park

- Area 6: There is currently a church, parking lot, and two dwelling units on this block, directly across from Birney School joint use field. The City is proposing Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac). The majority of respondents (18) felt the area should have a lower scale of residential density and preferred the **Neighborhood Commercial (0-29 du/ac)** land use category. However, a significant number of attendees (13) preferred that the area fronting El Cajon Blvd be designated at a higher density (0-74 du/ac) to be consistent with the El Cajon Blvd corridor, and allow for a transition to lower density northward to the central commercial areas of University Heights.
- Area 7: The existing land use designation for these areas is Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac). The City is proposing Residential High (45-74 du/ac). The majority of respondents (20) felt that **Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac)** was the best proposed land use category for this area; while some (11) felt the Medium High (30-44 du/ac) would be acceptable.

North Park & Uptown

- Area 5: There are currently about 100 dwelling units and some businesses in this area. The current land use designation is Commercial/Residential-High Density (44-73 du/ac). The City is proposing Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac). The strong majority of respondents (20) felt that **Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac)** would be an appropriate density, possibly allowing for a gradual reduction of intensity as one travels northward along Park Blvd. from University Avenue to the central business district of UH. Whichever category is ultimately proposed, many cited the importance to mirror land use & density on both sides of Park Blvd.
- Area 8: There are many existing craftsman homes on the ends (“end caps”) of these east-west corridors of Madison, Monroe, and Meade. While the blocks between these streets are currently 15-29 du/ac, the end caps are largely 5-9 du/ac. The City is proposing that the end caps of these blocks be designated 5-9 du/ac on the east side of Park Blvd. A very strong majority (29) of respondents agreed that **Residential Low (5-9 du/ac)** would be appropriate for the parcels fronting Madison, Meade, and Monroe west of Park Blvd. as well.

Uptown

- Area 1: This site is currently occupied by the San Diego Unified School District administration and Birney Elementary and is designated “Institutional.” The City is proposing to designate this site as Residential-Medium (15-29 du/ac) for any future development. All respondents voted in favor of **keeping the site currently designated “Institutional”** and addressing any proposed development in the future with a site plan and community plan amendment.
- Area 2: This small parcel is located at the northeast corner of the San Diego Unified School District complex and is currently designated “Office/Residential (4-5 du/ac).” There is one small office building on the parcel. The City is proposing Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac). The majority of respondents (20) wanted to see the parcel kept unchanged at the closest match – **Office Commercial (0-29 du/ac)** and address any proposed development in the future with a site

plan and community plan amendment; similarly, a significant number (11) wanted to have the site changed to Institutional and treated the same as Area 1.

- Area 3: This parcel is on the southeast corner of the intersection of Meade and Cleveland. It currently has the American Mini-Mart on site and the land use designation is Residential-Medium (15-29 du/ac). The group was split on the specific category, though most (17) wanted to see Neighborhood Commercial and most wanted to see a residential component (24). Therefore, the best compromise land use category to blend these opinions would be **Neighborhood Commercial (0-29 du/ac)**.
- Area 4: There are two parcels along Cleveland Avenue south of Washington Street that are currently occupied by the Great Maple restaurant and the smog check station near the DMV. The current land use designation is split between Office/Residential and Commercial/Residential high density (44-73 du/ac). The City has proposed Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac) for these sites. The group was split on the specific category, though all wanted to see community commercial and most (16) wanted to see medium (0-44 du/ac) or high (0-73 du/ac) density. Some (9) wanted residential prohibited. Therefore, the best compromise land use category to blend these opinions would be **Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac)** as the City has proposed.
- Area 9: Existing development for this area is largely low density residential and the current land use designation is Residential Low-Medium (10-14 du/ac) which the City proposes to keep. The strong majority of respondents (25) felt the area should instead be designated **Residential Low (5-9 du/ac)** to reflect existing conditions and accommodate modest development, although some (8) concur with the current land use category.
- Area 10: Existing development for this area is largely low and low-medium density residential and the current land use designation is Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac) which the City proposes to keep. The strong majority of respondents (25) felt the area should instead be designated **Residential Low-Medium (10-14 du/ac)** to reflect existing conditions and accommodate modest development, although some (7) concur with the current land use category.
- Area 11: Existing development for this area is largely medium density residential and the current land use designation is Residential Medium-High (30-44 du/ac) which the City proposes to keep. The strong majority of respondents (23) felt the area should instead be designated **Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac)** to reflect existing conditions and accommodate modest development, although some (10) concur with the current land use category.

###

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE BALLOT
LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
May 16, 2013

Representing Community Organizations? UHCDC (5); UHCA (4); UHHS (2); Uptown (1); NPPC (2); Friends of SD (1)

Your Zip Code 92116 (24); 92103 (7); 92104 (3)

Are you a resident of or business owner in University Heights? 24 Yes 3No

If so, are you east or west of Park Blvd? 14 East 15 West

Please consult maps for locations of each numbered area below select your preferred land use designation:

PARCEL-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

1. **UPTOWN:** This site is currently occupied by the San Diego Unified School District administration and Birney Elementary and is designated "Institutional." The City is proposing to designate this site as Residential-Medium (15-29 du/ac) for any future development.

0 Designate Residential-Medium (15-29 du/ac)

34 Keep Institutional and address any proposed development in the future with a development site plan / community plan amendment.

Note: A few highlighted this as opportunities to have parkland; keep old buildings. One noted we should split site: school, park, admin site.

2. **UPTOWN:** This small parcel is located at the northeast corner of the San Diego Unified School District complex and is currently designated "Office/Residential (4-5 du/ac)." There is one small office building on the parcel. The City is proposing Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac).

0 Designate Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac) – look for consistency with Park Blvd south of Washington

3 Designate Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac)

20 Office/ Residential (4-5 du/ac) is not an optional category under the new General Plan. However, keep this parcel at the closest category match – Office Commercial (0-29 du/ac) and address any proposed development in the future with a development site plan / community plan amendment for the SDUSD admin site.

Other recommendation: 11 responses:Change to Institutional; treat same as site #1

One recommended connecting parcel w/ site #1

3. **UPTOWN:** This parcel is on the southeast corner of the intersection of Meade and Cleveland. It currently has the American Mini-Mart on site and the land use designation is Residential-Medium (15-29 du/ac).

17 Designate Neighborhood Commercial (0-29 du/ac)

10 Designate Neighborhood Commercial (residential prohibited)

7 Keep this as Residential-Medium (15-29 du/ac): no commercial if site redeveloped

**UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE BALLOT
LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
May 16, 2013**

4. UPTOWN: There are two parcels along Cleveland Avenue south of Washington Street that are currently occupied by the Great Maple restaurant and the smog check station near the DMV. The current land use designation is split between Office/Residential and Commercial/Residential high density (44-73 du/ac). The City has proposed Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac) for these sites.

16 Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac)

- 9 Community Commercial (residential prohibited)

Other recommendation: 9 responses: Keep same density as currently allowed / commercial 0-73 du/ac

One noted traffic concerns with high density and freeway entrances

COMMERCIAL / MIXED-USE AREAS

5. UPTOWN/NORTH PARK: There are currently about 100 dwelling units and some businesses in this area. The current land use designation is Commercial/Residential-High Density (44-73 du/ac). The City is proposing Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac). *Think about this area in the context of the Hillcrest proposals to the immediate south which may be designated 0-74 du/ac or remain 0-44 du/ac.*

- 8 Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac)

20 Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac)

Other:(0-55 du/ac) = 2 responses. (0-33 du/ac) = 1 response. Neighborhood commercial (0-29 du/ac) = 1 response.

Many cited the importance to mirror land use & density on both sides of Park Blvd.

6. NORTH PARK: There is a currently a church, parking lot, and two dwelling units on this block, directly across from Birney School joint use field. The City is proposing Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac).

18 Neighborhood Commercial (0-29 du/ac)

- 3 Community Commercial (0-44 du/ac)

- 1 Community Commercial (0-74 du/ac)

Other:13 responses: split: 0-74 du/ac (or 0-44) Community Commercial on El Cajon Blvd; rest of area along Park, Meade at 0-29 du/ac Neighborhood Commercial

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

7. NORTH PARK:The existing land use designation for these areas is Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac). There are many craftsman homes and older bungalow courts from the 1920s and 1930s in these blocks.The City is proposing Residential High (45-74 du/ac).

20 Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac)

- 11 Residential Medium High (30-44 du/ac)

- 1 Residential High (45-74 du/ac)

Other:1 response: Residential Low Density 5-9 du/ac

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE BALLOT
LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
May 16, 2013

8. UPTOWN/NORTH PARK: There are many beautiful craftsman homes on the ends (“end caps”) of these east-west corridors of Madison, Monroe, and Meade. While the entire blocks along these streets are currently 15-29 du/ac, the end caps are largely 5-9 du/ac. The City is proposing that the end caps of these blocks be designated 5-9 du/ac on the east side of Park Blvd.

29 Residential Low (5-9 du/ac) on the end caps along Madison, Meade, and Monroe west of Park Blvd.

- 2 Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac) on the end caps along Madison, Meade, and Monroe west of Park Blvd.

Other: 1 response: Residential Low 0-5 du/ac. 1 response: Res Medium-Low (10-14 du/ac) which is currently existing conditions.

Notes: Two noted corridors of significance to NP/Mid-City Bike Project

Two replied to not split w/ end caps: confusing; just designate low. One needed more discussion on this.

9. UPTOWN: Existing development for this area is largely low density residential and the current land use designation is Residential Low-Medium (10-14 du/ac) which the City proposes to keep. The area could be designated Residential Low (5-9 du/ac) to reflect existing conditions and still accommodate modest development.

25 Residential Low (5-9 du/ac)

- 8 Residential Low Medium (10-14 du/ac)

10. UPTOWN: Existing development for this area is largely low and low-medium density residential and the current land use designation is Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac) which the City proposes to keep. The blocks could be designated Residential Low-Medium (10-14 du/ac) to reflect existing conditions and still accommodate modest development.

25 Residential Low Medium (10-14 du/ac)

- 7 Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac)

Other: 1 response: Low (5-9 du/ac)

11. UPTOWN: Existing development for this area is largely medium density residential and the current land use designation is Residential Medium-High (30-44 du/ac) which the City proposes to keep. The blocks could be designated Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac) to reflect existing conditions and still accommodate modest development.

23 Residential Medium (15-29 du/ac)

10. Residential Medium High (30-44 du/ac)

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY PLAN UPDATE BALLOT
LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS
May 16, 2013

Other land use recommendations for UH:

- Leave all current single family areas like western UH and Panorama as single family. Generally in favor of density in major artery areas: El Cajon, Washington, Cleveland.
- SDUSD Admin site:
 - use as a mixed-use park, live/work, arts, etc.
 - community park potential and public garden potential
 - do NOT want a strip mall, liquor store, etc. instead, library, park, playground, dog park, etc.
 - build another Normal School.
- Generally favor higher density du/ac commercial/community residential along El Cajon and Park Blvd south of Howard. This is to emphasize preservation of existing blocks of single family homes.
- Do NOT want check cashing places, ugly apartments, strip malls. High density unit dwellings better for other neighborhoods; people that want to live in UH because it does not have such big units.
- New construction isn't reflecting character of neighborhood; it should match character and meet our needs.
- Based on prior SANDAG forecasts, the latest forecasts for population growth seem unrealistic and high. Therefore no area should be up-zoned.
- There is not enough parking as it is in UH. We can't have more density w/o parking. Have had to move my business already because of parking issues.
- Focus on historic – focus on schools – no more condos.
- Set land use designations at a level close to existing development has many benefits. It prevents excessive amounts of demolitions which allowing for selective increases.
- Look elsewhere where density makes more sense. Quality of life is a priority to the residents of UH.
- Parks!
- Put bike lanes on any street possible to keep pedestrian friendly & slow traffic.
- Go high density on Park Blvd, Adams, & El Cajon to maximize transit potential.
- Use form base code, use STAR transportation planning tool and coordinate w/ SANDAG NP-Mid City bike corridors project
- Turn Panorama Drive into a historic district
- Integrate any density with sensitivity to historic resources – that is why we need Conservation Districts.