

Draft FPA Comment Letter

Heidi Vonblum

Director, City Planning Department

202 C St, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

San Diego, CA 92101

Dear Ms. Vonblum:

We are a coalition of community members, business owners, non-profit organizations, and property owners who have many years of engagement in the Hillcrest community. We have formed an LGBTQ+ Cultural District Advisory Group to support the creation of an LGBTQ+ Cultural District and provide input from the community to the City of San Diego.

We have held a series of meetings this year to develop recommendations for the LGBTQ+ Cultural District and the related Plan Hillcrest initiative. We appreciate that City Planning Department staff members attended several of these meetings and listened to our recommendations for the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment.

We have reviewed the October 2023 Discussion Draft of the FPA and we are providing comments in the table below. Overall, we feel much of our prior input has been heard and incorporated into the plan. Although further refinement to the FPA is needed, the October Discussion Draft is moving in the right direction. We appreciate the City Planning Department’s willingness to listen to address issues raised by the LGBTQ+ community.

Page/Policy	Existing Language	Comment
<b>LU-37 (LU-2.11)</b>	Design and enforce stricter controls and location criteria on Conditional Use Permits in residential neighborhoods to minimize nuisances generated by nonresidential uses <b>outside of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment area.</b>	We support this change and request that it be included in the final version.
<b>MO-48</b>	None	Consider adding MO-1.18: “Implement the LGBT Walking Corridor through streetscape improvements and adjustments to the Spaces as Places program to increase pedestrian activity and interest along the corridor.”
<b>UD-92</b>	None	Add Streetaries and Active Sidewalks to the public space types listed. <b>[Consider adding Fifth Avenue as potential promenade in the future]</b>

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<b>UD-101</b>	None	Consider adding UD-4.79 to encourage setbacks and building orientation where new development is adjacent to private outdoor patios and entertainment spaces in commercial areas. [Recognize change for overshadowing impacts]
<b>UD-102</b>	None	Consider adding a graphic showing transitions from residential or mixed-use to existing commercial private outdoor areas.
<b>LC-109</b>	A cultural district is an area of the city formally recognized for its history, people, events, and culture.	Reorder to put “people” before “history”.
<b>LC-109</b>	It’s not just the bars, cafes, or Pride Plaza, but the entire neighborhood, its streets, street corners, sidewalks, and alleys that hold meaning.	Rephrase?
<b>LC-109</b>	Key Objectives of the LGBTQ+ Cultural District	We support the Key Objectives and feel they embody the vision of the Cultural District.
<b>LC-110/111</b>	Graphic	The graphic recognizes important events and locations and we appreciate it’s inclusion. Note that Numbers Nightclub closed in 2017.
<b>LC-112</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displacement of LGBTQ businesses is a major concern; policies are needed to ensure new development recognizes the existing businesses in the area.</li> <li>• Hillcrest needs more gathering areas for community events.</li> <li>• A Cultural District provides an opportunity to promote and leverage funding for neighborhood enhancements and investment.</li> </ul>	<p>Consider revising to state that new development should be compatible with LGBTQ businesses, not just recognize them.</p> <p>Note that a community-identified issue is also supporting the existing events in current locations.</p>
<b>LC-112</b>	For this and many reasons, the Pride Parade and Festival must take place in Hillcrest if a LGBTQ+ Cultural District is to have any meaning here.	This is an important statement and should remain in the final version. [Ask to Highlight Hillcrest Youth Center, plus remove the plus on Center – Nicole will send list of additional orgs]

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<b>LC-115</b>	Quotes	We appreciate the inclusion of the quotes from community leaders.
<b>LC-120</b>	Walking Corridor Map	Consider adding the following locations: [which?] Add guidance for people that want to create historic or interpretive elements and
<b>LC-120/121</b>	An LGBTQ+ Cultural District in Hillcrest could include a Walking Corridor consisting of conceptually connected “parklets” or other interpretive elements at key locations that are themed to recognize the locations’ significance in LGBTQ+ life in Hillcrest.	Rephrase to be definitive about the inclusion of the Walking Corridor in the Cultural District and include business establishments and organizations among the elements connected by the corridor.
<b>CD-1</b>	Work with organizations, business groups, property owners, and the Hillcrest Business Association to establish a program to formally recognize anchor institutions and businesses.	We support the inclusion of a program to recognize anchor institutions and businesses and look forward to its development.
<b>CD-5</b>	Evaluate the need for anti-displacement regulations to provide protections for small and local businesses so they have a space to stay in the community.	The FPA should include these regulations as SDRs. If the FPA only includes a policy to evaluate the need for them, the anti-displacement protections will not be in place prior to the City approving the changes that may cause the displacement.
<b>CD-8</b>	Explore the potential for an LGBTQ+ Arts and Culture Campus on the DMV site. The space may house several uses, including affordable housing, middle income housing, a hotel, LGBTQ+ businesses, and a broad of cultural organizations, such as SD Pride, Queer Youth Chorus and Marching Bang, Film OUT, and others.	We support this vision [any other comments?]  [Add support for CD-9 and what is the recognition for contributing resources – call out better focus on affordable housing on DMV site]  [Add comment to consider LGBT veterans memorial? Recognize veterans wall at Center? Any partner organization?]
<b>CD-11</b>	Acknowledge the significance of SD Pride and the Pride Parade in Hillcrest by formally recognizing it as a Cultural Event in the district and considering the impacts to the event when proposing street improvement projects,	Is there anything else we want to be formally recognized as a “Cultural Event” in the Cultural District?

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	development proposals, and infrastructure projects along the parade route.	Add that new events can be added and this isn't an exhaustive – what does this mean and what are the criteria and process?
<b>CD-12</b>	Engage the City of San Diego's Economic Development Department in the development of the Cultural District, focusing on programs that support local LGBTQ+ organizations and businesses, district marketing, and branding.	Since the Cultural District will be established at time of FPA adoption, this should focus on its "further development and implementation".
<b>CD-13</b>	Formally recognize a "Walking Corridor" as shown on Figure _ to provide a focus for conceptually connected "parklets" or other interpretive elements at key locations that are themed to recognize the locations' significance in LGBTQ+ life in Hillcrest.	Include important business establishments and organizations as elements connected by the Walking Corridor.
<b>EP-104</b>	<u>A strong LGBTQ+ Cultural District that recognizes and protects Hillcrest's unique role as a place for LGBTQ+ social interaction, activism, and community organization.</u>	We appreciate the inclusion of this statement and connection made between the Cultural District and economic prosperity.
<b>EP-107</b>	The success of Uptown's <del>Entertainment District</del> district, primarily <del>primarily</del> located within the Business Improvement District boundaries, depends on continuing to attract consumers from the central communities and the region.	Should location of entertainment district be in the Cultural District rather than the BID boundaries? Go with neighborhood boundary.
<b>EP-108 (EP-1.8)</b>	Request that future City Council legislation be considered to define and recognize the boundaries of the Hillcrest's <del>Entertainment District</del> district.	Does this still make sense now? Should boundaries be coterminous with Cultural District?
<b>EP-108 (EP-1.9)</b>	<u>Strengthen the LGBTQ+ Cultural District by supporting existing community uses that serve as anchor institutions for LGBTQ+ people.</u>	We support this language and it should be included in the final plan.
<b>EP-111</b>	<u>LGBTQ+ Cultural District</u>  <u>The LGBTQ+ Cultural District celebrates and honors the LGBTQ+ culture and history of Hillcrest. The district recognizes the importance of existing businesses,</u>	We support this language and it should be included in the final plan.  [Note: they pulled directly from our language]

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	<u>community organizations, and events that serve as anchor institutions for LGBTQ+ people. The district acknowledges Hillcrest’s unique role as a place for LGBTQ+ social interaction, activism, and community organization. For more information and recommendations, see the Urban Design Element.</u>	
<b>EP-112 (EP-2.5)</b>	<u>Support a certification or recognition program for places and events within the LGBTQ+ Cultural District that are tied to protections and incentives to strengthen establishments and minimize the potential loss of valued institutions.</u>	We appreciate the addition of this program and look forward to its development.
<b>NE-154</b>	None	Add an additional goal which aims to have development that is compatible with and coexists with existing commercial uses, especially within the Cultural District.
<b>NE-154</b>	<u>In Hillcrest, the mixed-use character and increasing intensities result in the juxtaposition of residents and more active, noisy uses due to foot traffic, restaurants, bars, and nightlife activities.</u> Reducing the effect from commercial activity noise involves site planning and integrating noise attenuation measures in new buildings that will reduce interior sound levels. <u>In addition, new residents will also need to accept higher noise levels in general as part of urban living.</u>	We appreciate the new text and believe it should be included in the final plan.
<b>NE-155 (NE-1.1, 1.2, &amp; 1.3)</b>	NE-1.1 Implement operational measures in areas where eating, drinking, entertainment, and assembly establishments are adjacent to residential. a. Institute appropriate open/close window hours for eating and drinking establishments. b. Lower the volume of amplified music during the last hour of service. c. Encourage the use of evening security staff to control loitering after hours and crowds.	This language should be updated to reflect the existing commercial uses and higher ambient noise levels within the Cultural District.

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	<p>d. Provide noise attenuation measures to reduce the noise levels generated from the establishment, to the degree possible, within their premises with special attention on “open air” concept establishments- such as beer gardens or large outdoor eating and drinking venues.</p> <p>e. Encourage bars to remain open to serve food after alcohol has stopped being served to encourage a slower flow of people leaving the establishment after hours.</p> <p>NE-1.2 Evaluate and consider potential noise impacts as a condition of permit approval, renewal, and/or a change of use, for eating and drinking establishments that incorporate “open air” or large outdoor eating and drinking venues, based on acoustical studies and/or industry best practices.</p> <p>NE-1.3 Locate the commercial portion of new mixed-use developments away from existing single-family residences and ensure that noise levels generated are at or within acceptable levels when residential uses are located nearby.</p>	
<p><b>NE-155 (NE-1.5)</b></p>	<p><u>Encourage upfront disclosure of noise concerns in mixed-use and residential developments near commercial/entertainment areas. Particularly within the LGBTQ+ Cultural District, during property sales or lease agreements.</u></p>	<p>We support this and it should remain in the final version of the plan.</p>
<p><b>NE-159 (NE-1.22)</b></p>	<p>Consider the establishment of a “buffer zone” between the location of special events and Sixth Avenue <u>with the exception of the Pride festival and parade.</u></p>	<p>We support this addition and it should be included in the final version of the plan.</p>
<p><b>SDR-B.8</b></p>	<p>Regulations for Contributing Resources</p> <p>a. Preservation of Historic Features:</p> <p>i. Existing building facades along the street wall(s) shall be retained and preserved.</p>	<p>Preserving existing facades and requiring restoration to prior conditions for contributing resources should be removed. This will cause a financial hardship for businesses, many of which are anchor institutions to the LGBTQ+ community.</p>



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