



January 22, 2024

Mr. Marlon Pangalenin
Program Coordinator
City Planning Department
City of San Diego
202 C Street.
San Diego, CA 92103

Dear Marlon:

The Hillcrest Business Association has an interest in the ongoing discussions concerning the reform of the Uptown community planning group as part of the community planning group reform process currently being undertaken by the City. Decades ago, the HBA was pivotal in the formation of the original Uptown Planners and has an obvious interest in making sure Hillcrest and Hillcrest businesses are represented in the reformed Uptown community planning group.

Over the last several months, the HBA has received presentations from both groups (Vibrant Uptown and the Uptown Planners) submitting proposals to the City as part of the Uptown community planning group reform process. The HBA Board of Directors have considered these proposals and, rather than endorsing one group or another, have developed several principles that should be reflected in the new organization.

Hillcrest businesses are seeking the following from their City recognized planning group:

1. **Proportional representation for neighborhoods in the make-up of the board.** There should be a defined number of residential and business seats on the board for each neighborhood in Uptown reflective of the population in each community. Hillcrest makes up the largest part of Uptown and yet is consistently underrepresented on the Uptown Planners.
2. **A neighborhood should vote for its own seats.** Voters from one neighborhood in Uptown shouldn't be able to vote for candidates from other neighborhoods. Because all the seats on the Uptown Planners are currently at-large, it is very difficult for individuals to overcome a large block of voters from one neighborhood.



While we understand that the criteria that City staff are using to evaluate the proposals for the recognized community planning groups may not include the elements described above. We do believe that the diversity and representation that the City is seeking is enabled to come to the fore when organizations are representative in nature rather than being at-large. We saw this years ago when the City Council of San Diego was divided into districts enabling minority voices to come to the fore.

We support proposals that meet the standards described above for neighborhood representation and encourage your team to consider them in your deliberations. We will work with our members and supporters to advocate that these principles are reflected in the management plan for the group selected to represent Uptown in the community planning process.

Please reach out to me if you have questions regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Nicholls".

Benjamin Nicholls, Executive Director
Hillcrest Business Association

Copy: Councilmember Stephen Whitburn; Heidi Vonblum, City Planning Director; Shannon Corr, Senior Planner; Jason Frye, Hillcrest Town Council Chair; Stu McGraw Chair, Uptown Planners; & Michael Donovan, Vibrant Uptown.