



May 9, 2022

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The ongoing Plan Hillcrest effort undertaken by the San Diego Planning Department calls for supporting "...local businesses to ensure a thriving and sustainable business district..." and celebrating "...the legacy of the LGBTQ+ community by preserving historical resources..." On behalf of the Hillcrest Business community and our 1,300 members, we would like to further our proposal to create the Hillcrest Entertainment District as part of this process.

The Hillcrest Entertainment District would support the nightlife community in Hillcrest. A vibrant restaurant, night club, and performance scene in Hillcrest is a critical part of our neighborhood economy. The Hillcrest Entertainment District would also preserve a vital part of Hillcrest's LGBTQ+ legacy and a critical historical economic resource. Nightlife businesses have always been (and continue to be) safe spaces for the LGBTQ+ community and the continued support of these business types would be an appropriate way to recognise the history of LGBT businesses in the community.

The Hillcrest business community would like to propose several elements that would make up the Hillcrest Entertainment District. They include:

- **Permissive sidewalk cafe rules.** Providing for standardized and permissive guidelines for sidewalk patios will give guidance to businesses and regulators concerning what sidewalk clearance is permissible in Hillcrest. We would like to propose that patios in Hillcrest be allowed to encroach into the sidewalk so long as four feet of clearance is provided for pedestrians. We would like to propose virtual patio barriers be allowed for businesses who serve alcohol.
- **Permissive entertainment license allowances.** Many new LGBT businesses struggle because they are denied even the most simple entertainment licenses. We would like to propose that Hillcrest restaurants be allowed to apply for entertainment licenses regardless of proximity to other licenses. We would also like to allow those restaurants with entertainment licenses to be able to utilize them to provide entertainment within business hours inside or outside their businesses.

HILLCREST

BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

- **Extended patio hours.** We propose a waiver to the Spaces as Places and private patio use hours to allow patios to be used until close of business rather than the arbitrary 10pm time that is currently allowed.
- **Disclosure statement.** As new buildings are developed, it is important that new residents be aware that the Hillcrest commercial core is an historic entertainment district. Including a map in the plan that highlights the entertainment district (which would be disclosed to them when they purchased their property) would be helpful for those new owners. It would also be useful for regulators such as code enforcement and police officers when mediating concerns relating to noise complaints.

I hope you will include this input in your planning documents and I look forward to meeting you and your team to discuss these proposals. Please contact me if you have questions concerning this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Benjamin Nicholls (he/him/his)
Executive Director

Copy:

Councilmember Stephen Whitburn, Nancy Graham, Tait Galloway, Sameera Rao, Elizabeth Studebaker, & Stephen Hill