



vibrantuptown@gmail.com
<https://vibrantuptown.org>

31st December 2023

Pangilinan, Marlon

Interim Program Coordinator
City of San Diego
City Planning Department

Dear Mr. Pangilinan,

We represent an Uptown-based community group, Vibrant Uptown. We are a group of community members advocating for more direct community engagement in the planning process and with the Community Planning Group (CPG) representing our neighborhoods.

Pursuant to Council Policy 600-24, we are requesting recognition as the Uptown CPG, under the name "Uptown Community Planning Group." We have elected to take advantage of the changes to Council Policy 600-24 to provide an alternative approach to community engagement than that of Uptown Planners, the existing Uptown CPG. Accordingly we have developed a set of operating procedures and an aggressive outreach plan to engage with our Uptown neighborhoods in an effort to both educate folks on what a CPG is and does for the community, but also to recruit a more diverse demographic to get informed about and engaged in the CPG's work, and to participate as members of the CPG board.

To that end, we attached here the following documents required by Council Policy 600-24:

- Operating Procedures
- Community Participation and Representation Plan (to be included as Exhibit B to the Operating Procedures)
- List of initial CPG board members
- Community Planning Group Recognition Member Composition Form - Worksheet

The attached Operating Procedures include the required "Ethical Procedures" (see Section 8.3 thereof).

The approach we are taking to diversify the CPG board has a number of elements to drive recruitment from the various communities within Uptown neighborhood populations:

- Geographical diversity by allocating 12 of the 18 voting member seats equally to the six neighborhoods comprising Uptown (2 seats per neighborhood)

- Designated voting seats for (i) renter residents, (ii) homeowner residents and (iii) business interests (including a non-profit voting seat)
- Designated non-voting seats for large Uptown employers
- Elections will have residents voting for both at-large candidates and candidates from their particular neighborhood of Uptown
- A standing Community Engagement Committee charged with publicizing the work of the CPG to the Uptown community and involving the Uptown community in its work, the discussion and implementation of the adopted Uptown Community Plan, engaging with members of the Uptown community (including individuals and community groups) about matters relevant to the adopted Uptown Community Plan
- Recognizing that a 30-year community plan must have participation from a younger demographic, a commitment for CPG outreach to the places and groups they attend

We anticipate our meetings will be less formal and more community-engagement focused, more of a conversation or town hall than a formal board, within the constraints of the Brown Act, our adopted rules of procedure and the need to respect everyone's time. We aim to rotate meeting locations between different community spaces in different Uptown neighborhoods to attract a more diverse audience - our CPG will go where the community members are.

We also intend to engage the community in the work of the CPG through community events we co-sponsor with other community organizations. An example of this engagement was our successful LGBTQ+ Cultural and Entertainment District Town Hall event held on November 15, 2023 at Rich's San Diego, where over 80 community members both learned about the LGBTQ+ Cultural and Entertainment District being proposed as part of the Hillcrest Focused Plan Amendment, and had the opportunity to provide their thoughts and ideas during group breakout discussion sessions (which input Vibrant Uptown provided to the Planning Department following the event). We have attached a number of photographs of the event, as well as an event flier we distributed reflecting that our event was co-sponsored by a number of Uptown community groups.

We are approaching this not with a sense of bureaucratic oversight of development and change in our community, but of collaboration and consensus. We expect to work with the city, residents, businesses, community groups and developers to develop a shared understanding of what best fits the character of our neighborhoods and try to work together for the benefit of all.

We expect to have our first election in the normal 2025 cycle, giving time to do outreach into the community to both educate and draw in new and diverse members. We note that our note that (i) we have intentionally left some designated seats vacant on the initial board list attached to enable us to leverage the vacancy appointment process to bring on new and diverse members over the first year and (ii) as a result our initial board members do not fully align with the designated seat system established in the Operating Procedures that goes into effect upon the 2025 election.

However, we believe our initial board list reflects much of the diversity of the Uptown community. As reflected in the attached documentation, our initial board is comprised of persons who are (i) renters (7) and homeowners (4) (as well as a representative of a local non-profit), providing more proportional representation to the renters that make up the 68%¹ of Uptown community members that live in multifamily housing, as well as representation to homeowners, (ii) 50% persons 39 years old or younger, providing a proportional voice for the just over 50%² of Uptown community members that fall into that age bracket, (iii) 5 members that identify as LGBTQIA+, providing representation for members of the strong LGBTQIA+ community that exists in Uptown, and (iv) at least one military veteran, another important demographic in Uptown and San Diego at large.

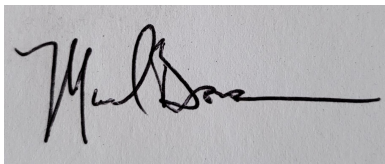
And as noted above, we intend to expand the diversity of the initial board membership by appointment of additional members during the first year, with particular aim to recruit persons of color and Uptown business representatives. In particular, we note that (i) we have connected with David Mier, Director of Health Community Relations at UC San Diego Government and Community Relations and (ii) he confirmed UCSD is willing to apply to fill a “Large Employer Non-Voting Seat” if we are recognized as the Uptown CPG, providing valuable representation of both UCSD as a business and its many employees that work and/or live in Uptown.

We hope you will recognize that we have taken some time to consider what has worked across the spectrum of CPG groups and what could be improved as we have crafted our approach. We look forward to working with the City as the Uptown CPG.

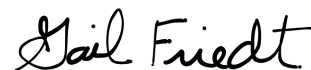
Sincerely,



Zach Thompson
Vibrant Uptown Member



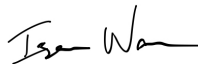
Michael Donovan
Vibrant Uptown Member



Gail Friedt
Vibrant Uptown Member



Jon Anderson
Vibrant Uptown Member



Ike Warner

Attachments:

¹ Source: SANDAG's Data Surfer website, 2021 estimates. We did not find statistics on owner-occupied vs renter-occupied, but we note that in documentation provided by the Planning Department found on <https://www.planhillcrest.org/>, in Hillcrest itself 74% of residents are renters (vs 54% city-wide).

² Source: SANDAG's Data Surfer website, 2021 estimates.

Operating Procedures

Community Participation and Representation Plan

List of initial CPG board members

Community Planning Group Recognition Member Composition Form - Worksheet

Zip File: LGBTQ+ Cultural and Entertainment District Town Hall event photographs and flyer