



YIMBY Democrats of
San Diego County
3401-A Adams Avenue #345
San Diego, CA 92116
YIMBYdemssd@gmail.com

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February 1, 2022

Planning Commission
1222 First Avenue, MS 501
San Diego, CA 92101

Subject: University Community Plan Update YIMBY Endorsement

San Diego faces many challenges - climate change, housing affordability, and accessible transportation options. The University Community has billions of recent transit investment, large job clusters, and proximity to world class educational and research facilities. The direct access to these resources provides the community a unique opportunity to develop housing and employment opportunities at scale. The Mid-Coast Trolley Blue Line extension provides a generational opportunity for San Diego to build a community that is economically sustainable, inclusive, and affordable. As advocates for sustainable growth, and new housing, we are grateful for the City's hard work over the last two years to develop land-use concepts that take advantage of University City's unique resources and respond to the community's needs. We are in strong support for the concepts that provide the most employment and housing, and believe that some of the focus area options are highly preferable. The City must capitalize on the generational opportunity created by the Mid-Coast Trolley Extension and prove we can do "Big City" things. As a whole, we believe that the scenarios providing for the largest increase in new jobs and housing are the most preferable options.

Nobel Transit Village Focus Area: We support Option A within the Nobel Transit Village Focus Area, which includes the potential for more infill development than Option B or C. This option provides a higher density of mixed-use development on the Nobel Drive Station. We should be prioritizing the space next to the trolley line specifically for housing and commercial structures, and not just parking. Development should be modeled after the Grantville and Palm Drive affordable housing developments in progress around the City.

UTC Transit Village Focus Area: UTC Transit Village Focus Area is located within a Transit Priority Area and includes the Westfield UTC mall as the centerpiece of the plan. In addition, for the past couple of years, many UCSD students have been unable to find ANY housing options after UCSD reduced housing capacity due to the pandemic. Option A envisions UTC as a dense, mixed-use human-oriented urban environment. This option provides a healthy amount of housing to support the newly built transit infrastructure and businesses, and an opportunity to provide the desperately needed housing for UCSD students, within walking distance to school. We must not forget that students are also affected by the region's housing crisis.



Campus Point & Towne Centre Employment Village Focus Area: This area is located just north of the Voigt Drive trolley station and is a major employment center (>12000 jobs), but contains fewer than 250 housing units. With the increased access to transit, the focus should be to add as much housing as possible to support the jobs and newly built transit infrastructure. We endorse Option A, which would increase residential densities along Genesee.

Governor Community Village Focus Area: This area currently has zero land zoned for housing. Option A provides an opportunity for development of infill within the existing retail, including additional multi-family residential. Building housing within this focus area would provide immediate affordability relief to existing housing within surrounding communities and focus areas.

The North Torrey Pines Focus Area: This area currently has zero housing options and very few retail options, but over 5000 jobs serving the biotech, medical, and education fields. While Option A is the best choice, it does not do enough to provide the focus area with the resources it needs to become a healthy, vibrant community. While the job centers located within the focus area are crucial economic stimulators, providing secondary uses like small retail and housing would allow this focus area to become a healthier, and more fiscally responsible community.

The YIMBY Democrats of San Diego County respectfully request that the City move forward with a plan that better facilitates smart growth that capitalizes on the Mid-Coast extension, job centers, and education facilities within each focus area. We look forward to a University Community Plan that fosters a healthy community with affordable housing, accessible transit options, and sustainable placemaking opportunities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marissa Tucker-Borquez", written over a white background.

Marissa Tucker-Borquez
President, YIMBY Democrats of San Diego County

CC. Katie Witherspoon