

City Heights CDC Community Planning Project

City Heights Community Development Corporation

Empowering Neighborhoods to Fight Displacement



THE CHALLENGE

City Heights, a diverse immigrant neighborhood in Mid-City San Diego, faces displacement pressures driven by rising housing costs, gentrification, and decades of underinvestment. As redevelopment accelerates, long-term residents risk losing housing, cultural identity, and community connections.

The Mid-City Community Plan Update (CPU), which shapes land use and investment decisions, has required residents to navigate language barriers and inaccessible participation processes. Shifting timelines and the broad scope of the community plan have created additional barriers to community participation.

WHY IT MATTERS

Displacement threatens the long-term stability of City Heights. The Mid-City Community Plan Update gives residents an opportunity to shape policies affecting the future of their neighborhood. Residents and leaders from the Transportation, Environment, and Affordable Housing Coalition (TEAH) and Built Environment Team (BET) have demonstrated that community-led planning and advocacy are essential to advancing equitable development and neighborhood stability.

THE SOLUTION

The project equips residents to advocate for anti-displacement policies and equitable community planning. Key efforts include:

- **Building resident leadership** through trainings on zoning, city planning, housing policy, and advocacy strategies.
- **Conducting community research** through walk audits, surveys, mapping, and visioning activities to inform recommendations for housing, mobility, green spaces, and preservation priorities.
- **Advancing policy advocacy** by submitting community recommendations, providing public comment, and promoting priorities such as affordable housing and anti-displacement protections.
- **Building coalitions and engaging decision-makers** to ensure resident voices shape planning decisions impacting the future of City Heights.

Resident Recommendations for the Mid-City Communities Plan

- **Affordable Housing:** Require 30% to 50% affordable housing in new developments tied to local income levels.
- **Resident Protections:** Prioritize long-term and displaced residents and provide stronger displacement protections.
- **Community Ownership:** Support Community Land Trusts and mixed-income housing while shifting investments away from corporate tax breaks toward community-based development.
- **Infrastructure & Accessibility:** Require accessible, transit-friendly community infrastructure.
- **Developer Accountability:** Increase fees for non-affordable developments and relocation support for displaced tenants.
- **Community Oversight:** Create resident oversight of developer fee funding.
- **Anti-Displacement Strategies:** Advance equitable land use and community priority agreements.