

THE NORMAL STREET PROMENADE

Frequently Asked Questions



The Normal Street Promenade will accommodate the weekly Hillcrest Farmers Market as well as other treasured events, such as the San Diego Pride Festival and Parade. The promenade will provide ample space for new community events, such as movies or concerts, art events, and additional space for street fairs.

The promenade also includes a proposal for additional parking space realignments on Normal Street from Lincoln Avenue to Washington Street.

Background

The project will help fulfill the vision laid out in the San Diego Regional Bike Plan, which aims to make riding a bike a more convenient and safer choice for everyday travel. The Eastern Hillcrest Bikeways project is a vital part of the regional bike network, GO by BIKE, and a high priority project funded through the Regional Bike Plan Early Action Program. The project is also consistent with the City of San Diego's Climate Action Plan, Vision Zero Plan, and Bicycle Master Plan as well as the Uptown Community Plan and the North Park Community Plan.

Since the Uptown Bikeways project began in 2012, seven community workshops have been held and more than 100 presentations have been made to community groups to discuss project details and gather community input for the project.

Overview

The Normal Street Promenade will be a new public space in Hillcrest along Normal Street between University Avenue and Washington Street. The traffic lanes on the west side of Normal Street will be closed to accommodate the Eastern Hillcrest Bikeways as well as to create a public promenade and pedestrian thoroughfare for the community — becoming the first transit-oriented pedestrian promenade in San Diego. Pride Plaza will also be expanded.



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Why Normal Street?

Normal Street has been identified as opportunity for community space since the 1988 Uptown Community Plan. At various points since then, the community has rallied around improvement projects including construction of medians that was done in the 1990's.

In 2015, a series of community meetings including presentations at Uptown Planners, Hillcrest Town Council, Hillcrest CDC, and the Hillcrest Farmer's Market resulted in renewed community desire to pursue a public opportunity on Normal Street. In 2016, the community staged a **4-day closure** of Normal Street called "Reimagine Normal" that demonstrated what the space could become; the street was chalked with bike lanes and filled with activities such as yoga classes, live music, movie screenings, a beer garden hosted by Hillcrest Brewing Company, and other events. Following this event, the initial "New Normal" designs were prepared and provided to the City and SANDAG for consideration.

As part of the Uptown Planner's update of the Uptown Community Plan from 2009-2016, which was approved by Planning Commission and City Council, Normal Street was again identified as a priority Capital Improvement Project requested by the community. In 2017 and 2018, Uptown Planners voted to include Normal Street as a priority and requested that the City move forward on this project. In October 2018, the City officially signed onto the project and started the process of working with community stakeholders to bring the project to fruition.

Why now?

In addition to the Reimagine Normal plan, SANDAG has been moving forward a \$200 million Bike Early Action Program, building a regional bike network funded by *TransNet*, the local half cent sales tax approved by San Diego voters. Part of that network includes the 12-mile Uptown Bikeways and the 13-mile North Park | Mid-City Bikeways, which are connected via Lincoln Avenue and Park Boulevard. Public outreach for this network began in 2012 and resulted in a preferred route for a bikeway being selected along University Avenue, Normal Street, and Lincoln Avenue to connect the Uptown Bikeways and the North Park | Mid-City Bikeways. This route is known as the Eastern Hillcrest Bikeways.

The Eastern Hillcrest Bikeways suggested a preliminary design that repurposed one driving lane in each direction on Normal Street into separated bikeways. The SANDAG Board of Directors approved the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) exemption for the project in 2016. The project is in final design and intended to begin construction in 2020. In 2018, the City of San Diego and SANDAG recognized the opportunity to bring the vision of the Uptown Community Plan and Reimagine Normal Street to life by incorporating it into the Eastern Hillcrest Bikeways project. The City of San Diego's Council and the SANDAG Board of Directors

approved this direction in December of 2018, with the intent to begin construction for the entire project in 2020. Because significant outreach had already been done for Reimagine Normal Street, it was determined that that design would be the basis of the new concept.

What is the project timeline?

At the conclusion of the public outreach period (November 2018 to April 2019), the approved general concept plan will be sent to engineers for plan development. The engineering plans will be submitted to the City of San Diego's Development Services Department to go through the permit process and multidisciplinary reviews. The project is anticipated to go to construction bid in Summer 2020, with construction anticipated to begin in late 2020 or early 2021.

How is the project funded?

This project is unique in that it leverages funding sources from different agencies and stakeholders to the greatest community benefit. To date, The Normal Street Promenade has been allocated \$2.2m in funding – a combined \$1.8m from Uptown Community Parking District and \$400k from the Uptown Development Impact Fee Fund. Future allocations are anticipated in FY20 and FY21 to complete the project funding.

The current project funding allocations do not come from public tax dollars; they are comprised of parking meter fees and Development Impact Fees (DIF) which are paid by developers when a new building is built to fund infrastructure needed by new residents including libraries and fire stations. These fees can only be apportioned to specific types of projects – in this case, they are limited to transportation/mobility and public infrastructure projects.

The bikeway and other traffic improvements on Normal Street will be separately funded by SANDAG as part of their Uptown: Eastern Hillcrest Bikeways project.

Why isn't the Promenade a traditional park?

The Promenade is the first of its kind; it is a "complete street" that reclaims underutilized roadway and turns it into a pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented corridor. This means that the Promenade is different from a traditional park in that construction will be oriented toward mobility, as opposed to passive recreation.

The City maintains an easement over the property that allows for transportation and mobility uses; the property is not designated for traditional park and recreation uses. City is open to working with adjacent property owners who are interested in expanding the easement to create more recreational opportunities for the community on site, and the Promenade design itself will not preclude these future opportunities.



What's the deal with parking ?

The project provides angled parking on all three blocks within the project footprint. Depending on the final design selected, over the three-block footprint, the project as currently designed could provide a net gain of 37-63 spaces. This number is an estimate and could change during final design. In any event, the amount of on-street parking in this area, which will only be increased with the project, is rarely afforded anywhere in San Diego.

While the number of parking spaces on Normal Street will increase overall, there will be a reduction in spaces from the existing condition between University Avenue and Harvey Milk Street. However, the existing parking utilization rate for the spaces on this block is 37%; meaning on average, 63% of the spaces are available. At peak parking time the utilization is only 49%.

What is happening with the Hillcrest DMV?

In 2018, the State of California announced plans to demolish and rebuild the existing Hillcrest DMV. After significant community concern regarding the best use of the land, in 2019 State officials elected to pause the proposed development to evaluate other development options such as the inclusion of residential housing on site. Assemblymember Todd Gloria, Senate Pro Tem Toni Atkins, State officials, and the DMV have been briefed on the Normal Street Promenade project and the City/SANDAG are working closely with them to coordinate Normal Street Promenade and the DMV redevelopment to the extent possible.

What are future opportunities for the Promenade?

The current proposal is the first step toward re-orienting excess public space to a pedestrian- and cyclist- scale environment. The Promenade will be of the first of its kind and is intended to be flexible in order to accommodate current uses such as the annual San Diego Pride Parade, weekly Farmer's Market, monthly car shows, annual AIDS Walk, and other special community events such as Pride Block Party and Nightmare on Normal Street. Future uses can include opportunities for additional recreation and amenities, which can accommodate the Hillcrest community for generations to come.

Placemaking

In 2018, the City of San Diego passed a new Placemaking ordinance that allows a low-cost permit and easy process to community members interested in creative projects in public spaces. Placemaking opportunities can be applied for by any member of the community and can include potential projects such as creative lighting installations, parklet seating and staging, art installations, art murals, and other projects and uses. The Normal Street

Promenade offers a key opportunity for community members interested in exploring new, fun ways to engage their neighbors and surrounding community. Please see the following for more information on how to get started: <https://www.sandiego.gov/economic-development/business/starting/placemaking>.

Programming and Special Events

The Hillcrest Business Association is spearheading an effort to create a **Friends of Normal Street Promenade** group that will be comprised of various community representatives. **Friends of the Normal Street Promenade** will be primarily charged with implementing and coordinating programming such as bringing food truck events, Movies in the Promenade, Concerts in the Promenade, street fairs, food and craft beer tasting events, art walks, yoga classes in the Promenade, neighborhood block parties, and other fun community events. It is envisioned that the friends group will also distribute cafe style furniture each day, have full-time program staff on site, coordinate a calendar of third-party events, and provide other daily services.

The City of San Diego does not require special event permits for assemblies under 50 people; this means that the space is available for any local organization who would like to host a fitness class, meeting, or other small event.

Larger events over 50 people will be required to have a \$150 permit and approval through the Special Events office. Any member of the community is welcome to plan an event in the Promenade. Please see <https://www.sandiego.gov/specialevents-filming> for more information.

What about additional services?

Maintenance Assessment District

The Hillcrest Business Association is currently working on a Maintenance Assessment District expansion to include University Ave, Normal Street, and Park Blvd. The Maintenance Assessment District proposes to expand services that are currently offered to western Hillcrest such as private security guards, increased trash service, street tree maintenance, and monthly power washing to eastern Hillcrest, in order to improve the level of level and quality of services to the community.

Other opportunities for funding enhanced maintenance and security can be provided by the Uptown Community Parking District funds. The parking district already provides funds for maintaining the median on Normal Street. These funds can be increased as needed.

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For More Information

Previous project presentations, design concepts, and renderings can be found at:
[KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/
EasternHillcrestBikewaysInvolved](http://KeepSanDiegoMoving.com/EasternHillcrestBikewaysInvolved)

For any questions, concerns, or feedback, please reach out to:

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Community Outreach overview/timeline

March 2015 – Presented to Uptown Planners

April 2015 – Presented to Hillcrest Town Council

March 2016 – Presented to Uptown Planners

April 2016 – Presented to Hillcrest Town Council

May 12-15, 2016 – Re-imagine Normal Street; street closure for 4 days

April 2018 – Presentation to Hillcrest Town Council

October 2018 – City announces formal commitment to pursuing Normal Street Promenade

December 2018 – Councilmember Ward attended Uptown Planners to discuss Normal Street Promenade and announce 2019 Workshops through Uptown Planners

January 2019 – First Public Workshop for Normal Street Promenade

February 2019 – Second Public Workshop for Normal Street Promenade

March 2019 – Third Presentation to Uptown Planners for Normal Street Promenade

As part of the noticing of this project, residents were sent hard copy letters advising of public meetings in December 2018, January 2019, and February 2019. In addition to the hard copy letters sent to approximately 600 households, notice was posted to social media and e-blasts were sent to a distribution list of over 8,000 Hillcrest residents.

Eastern Hillcrest Bikeways Project Schedule

