

UNDEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Four neighbors go out for dinner. Midway through the meal, the waiter comes over and says we have several ways to pay, “You can divide the bill evenly, you can pay for what you eat, or by majority vote, you can make one person pay for everything.”

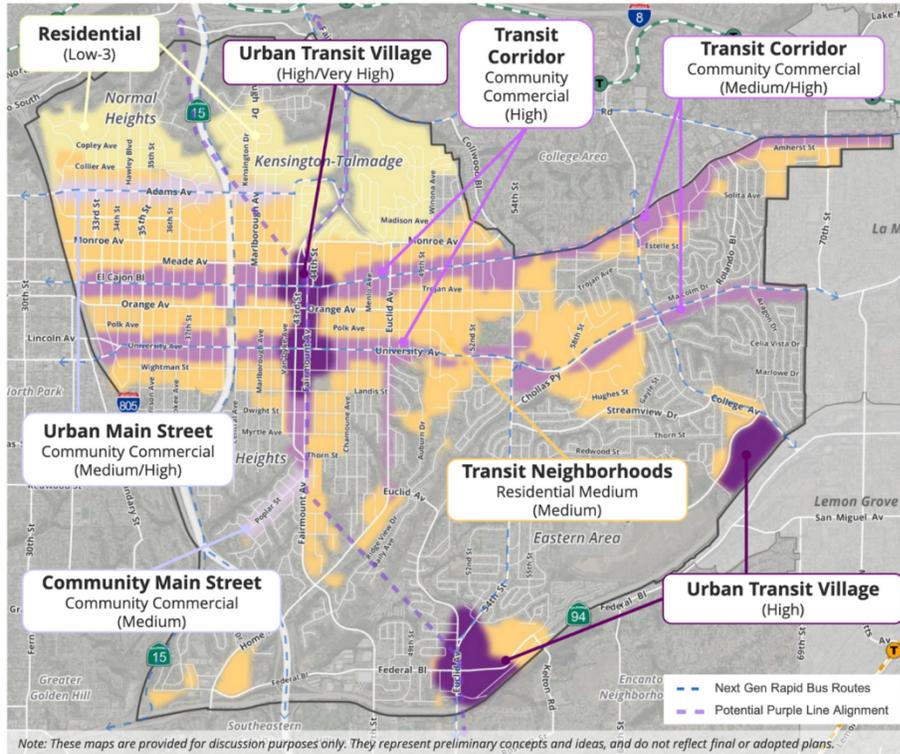
In the Mid-City update, the City-selected individuals from the other communities voted to force Kensington, Talmadge, and Normal Heights to upzone nearly all of their remaining single-family areas to avoid doing it to themselves.

The Community Plan update is on track to end this year, and we’re being railroaded all the way.

WHERE WE’RE HEADED – CONCEPT PLAN #2

The update area ties Kensington and Talmadge together with Normal Heights, City Heights, and Eastern Area (Rolando south to Oak Park). The update working group only has 3 of 16 people from Kensington and Talmadge.

The City is close to developing an official draft plan, and everything indicates that they intend to upzone nearly all of Normal Heights and Kensington-Talmadge for multi-family housing, as shown on the following **Concept Plan #2** map:



Note: These maps are provided for discussion purposes only. They represent preliminary concepts and ideas, and do not reflect final or adopted plans.
 *Additional density will be studied between El Cajon Blvd and University Ave and along the SR-15 rapid bus corridor while assessing considerations related to fair housing, air and noise pollution, and feasibility testing. DRAFT IDEAS REPORT | AUGUST 2025 | PLAN MID-CITY

- Yellow** areas = 3-Story Multi-Family
- Orange** area = 6-Story Multi-Family
- Light Violet** area = 8-Story Multi-Family/Mixed Use
- Purple** area = 8++ Story Multi-Family/Mixed Use

The zoning the City is considering doesn't actually add any more density than the bonus ADU program does. **The big change is in building size.** On a typical 5000 square foot lot, the current limit is 3000 square feet of floor area, whether it's from one house or one house and multiple ADUs.

Under Plan 2, that could more than triple to 6250 – 6500 square feet, plus an additional 3000 sf for a carport.

Based on San Diego's land development code, this is what I believe the City's preferred zoning will allow in our neighborhoods:



Artist interpretation of allowable building volume under Land Use Concept Plan #2



PITTING NEIGHBOR AGAINST NEIGHBOR

In its presentations, staff made a big issue of how the average income in Kensington and Talmadge is (just barely) 1% more than the City average, and how that makes us so much better off.

No, what that means is we're AVERAGE.

If a complete income levelling of the city is the goal, Kensington and Talmadge are already there, at least in terms of income. We're not there on park space and infrastructure.

The City measures parks and their amenities in "park points." Of the 41 community plan areas in the city with a population over 5000, which is the City's threshold for park space, Kensington-Talmadge likely ranks 40 out of 41. Our park deficit is **-92%**. Only the Midway area is worse off.

Normal Heights has 4x more park points per person. City Heights has 6x more, and Eastern Area, from Rolando south to Oak Park, has 11x more.

Over the past 30 years, the City has also shorted Kensington and Talmadge on infrastructure spending in comparison to the rest of Mid-City. We're 10% of the population and only 6% of the money was spent here. I will freely admit that other areas had some significant issues that needed to be addressed, but so do we, like the street lighting on the Alder Loop and Aldine Drive on the Talmadge side – so heavily used, and repeatedly closed for landslides.

CARRYING OUR WEIGHT ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING

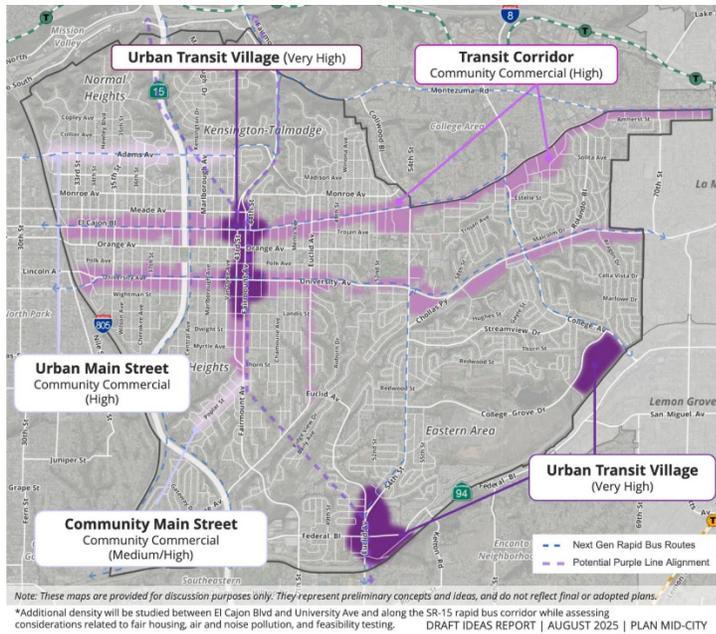
By one measure of deeded affordable housing, which compares the number of officially deeded affordable housing units to the community's total housing units, **Kensington-Talmadge is 32% above the city average with its share of affordable housing.**

In fact, to avoid concentrating poverty, the City's Inclusionary Housing regulations, which mandate 10% affordable units in every market-rate project, no longer apply in Kensington-Talmadge. Within Mid-City, only City Heights and Kensington-Talmadge have reached that level. We have carried our weight.

By another measure that accounts for our smaller houses and households – don't let the fewer, big homes blind you to the fact that most of our houses are smaller – Kensington and Talmadge are ranked 8 out of 41 communities in the ratio of affordable units per 1000 people, higher than City Heights or the other Mid-City areas in this plan.

THERE IS ANOTHER, BETTER OPTION

The City has another option that would serve ALL Mid-City communities equally — **Concept Plan #5:**



Light Violet area = 8-Story Multi-Family/Mixed Use

Purple area = 8++ Story Multi-Family/Mixed Use

Concept Plan #5 is the **only** option that directs high-density to Mid-City's corridors — immediately adjacent to transit — and affects all plan areas equally.

And to their credit, three of four elected community planning groups in Mid-City voted to support Concept Plan #5: Eastern Area, City Heights, and Kensington-Talmadge planning groups.

Lastly, if this plan is adopted, **state law makes these changes permanent.** Even a future City Council couldn't undo it. These changes will be forever.

Please discuss the community plan update with your neighbors. Many do not know what is happening. Also, go to <https://www.neighborsforabettorsandiego.org/> and subscribe to their email list.