



Planning Commission

FINAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING November 5, 2025

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

Location: North Berkeley Senior Center, 1901 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94709

1. ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Jeff Vincent, Darrell Owens, Christina Oatfield, Emily Marthinsen, Alfred Twu, Savlan Hauser (Departed 8:30 pm), Angela Wang, Blaine Merker

Commissioners Absent: Charles Kahn

Staff Present: Secretary Justin Horner, Clerk Faye Messner, Robert Rivera

2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Chochen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: 2

4. ORDER OF AGENDA: No change

5. CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

- Chair Marthinsen had no report

6. AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES AND LIASON COMMENTS

- None

7. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None

8. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Upcoming PC Meeting Items**
- December 3rd Planning Commission:
 - Design Review Requirements for the MU-R
 - Local and State Density Bonus stacking within the Adeline Corridor Zoning District
 - 2026 PC Calendar
- January 2026 PC: *Nothing Scheduled*
- February 2026 PC:
 - Safety/EJ Elements
 - Small Business Policies (Corridors Referral)
- **Upcoming City Council Items:**
 - Nov. 6: Corridors and San Pablo Specific Plan Worksession
 - Nov. 18: SLTE Public Hearing,
 - Dec 2: ADU Condos, Alcohol in C-T
 - Jan. 20: SB 684, Undergrounding of Transformers

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion/Second (Merker/Vincent) to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from October 8, 2025.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Owens, Oatfield, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None Absent: Kahn (8-0-0-1). Motion passed.

10. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Public Hearing: Amendments to Berkeley Municipal Code Title 23 (Zoning) to allow the retail sale of alcohol in the Telegraph Avenue Commercial (C-T) Zoning District.

Assistant Planner Faye Messner presented proposed amendments to BMC Title 23 (Zoning) to allow the retail sale of alcohol in the Telegraph Avenue Commercial (C-T) Zoning District. There were no public comments. There were no questions or comments from the Commissioners.

Public Comments: 0

Motion/Second (Oatfield/Merker) to close the public comment.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Owens, Oatfield, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None Absent: Kahn (8-0-0-1). Motion passed.

Motion/Second (Twu/Owens) to approve staff recommendation.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Owens, Oatfield, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None Absent: Kahn (8-0-0-1). Motion passed.

B. Public Hearing: Amendments to Title 23 to Implement Program 32 of the Housing Element.

Principal Planner Justin Horner presented proposed amendments to BMC Title 23. Commissioners took public comments, asked questions and made comments including, but not limited to: the legal requirements of Design Review in the Government Code, the intent of Design Review in BMC and Design Review impacts on project cost and timeline including the number of rounds of review that is typical for Design Review.

Public Comments: 4

Motion/Second (Vincent/Merker) to close the public comment.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Owens, Oatfield, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Kahn (8-0-0-1). Motion passed.

Motion/Second (Oatfield/Owens) to approve staff recommendation including the provision for Design Review.

Substitute Motion/Second (Merker/Hauser) to approve staff recommendation with direction to preserve a staff level Design Review option with a single consultative meeting with the Design Review Committee to be scheduled within 60-90 days from the determination of a complete application and to remove the appealability of a project based on a Design Review decision.

Vote on Merker/Hauser Motion:

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Owens, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: Oatfield. Abstain: None. Absent: Kahn (7-1-0-1). Motion passed.

C. Discussion: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Senior Planner Robert Rivera presented on the Draft San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan. Commissioners took public comments, asked questions and made comments including, but not limited to: plazas and the current lack of public space along San Pablo Ave., exploring a Business Improvement District (BID), uplifting diverse local businesses, increased public realm considerations, the narrow applicability of a revolving loan fund, a Legacy Business Program, improvements for pedestrian safety, front setback requirements, and the importance of community facilities that serve as public spaces.

Public Comments: 7

D. Discussion: The Role of the Planning Commission

Principal Planner Justin Horner presented the role of the Planning Commission. There were no public comments. Commissioners asked questions and made comments including but not limited to: establishing sub-committees and using the Commissioner's announcements section of the Planning Commission Meeting Agenda.

Public Comments: 0

11. CORRESPONDENCE

12. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING: Wednesday, December 3 at 6:00pm

13. ADJOURN

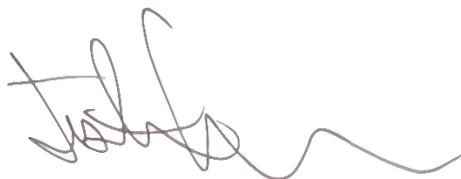
Motions/Second/Carried (Vincent/Merker) to adjourn the meeting at 9:00 pm.

Ayes: Merker, Vincent, Owens, Oatfield, Marthinsen, Twu, Hauser and Wang. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Kahn (8-0-0-1). Motion passed.

Members of the public in attendance: 14

Public Speakers: 14

Length of the meeting: 2 hours and 59 minutes



Justin Horner, Planning Commission Secretary