



Planning Commission

FINAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING February 4, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

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

1. ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Emily Marthinsen, Blaine Merker, Christina Oatfield, Charles Kahn, Angela Wang (Arrived 6:40), Alfred Twu, Darrell Owens, Kera Binns (Alternate for District 8 Commissioner Savlan Hauser)

Commissioners Absent: Savlan Hauser. Jeff Vincent

Staff Present: Secretary Justin Horner, Clerk Faye Messner, Uttara Ramakrishnan

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: 1

4. **ORDER OF AGENDA:** No change

5. CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

- Chair Marthinsen reported on the Vision Zero working group and sent materials to the Commissioners for their comments.

6. AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES AND LIASON COMMENTS

- None

7. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- None

8. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Upcoming PC Meeting Items:**

- **March**

1. San Pablo Specific Plan Discussion
2. State Law and Technical Edits Public Hearing
3. 5th Street Zoning Ordinance and General Plan Amendments Public Hearing

- **April**

1. SB 79 and AB 893 Discussion
2. Objective Design Standards Discussion

- **May**

1. Safety/EJ Discussion

- **Upcoming City Council Items:**

- February 24: SB 684
- March 10: Transformer Undergrounding, Nonconforming Uses for Middle Housing

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion/Second (Twu/Owens) to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from January 21, 2026.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Twu, Owens, Wang, Kahn, and Merker Noes: None. Abstain: Oatfield, Binns Absent: Vincent (6-0-2-1). Motion passed.

10. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Elections for Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Commissioners elected a Chair and Vice Chair.

Vote to Elect Commissioner Marthinsen as Chair and Commissioner Hauser as Vice Chair:

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

B. Discussion: Corridors Zoning Update – Objective Design Standards and Small Business Anti-Displacement Strategies

Associate Planner Uttara Ramakrishnan and consultants Dena Belzer and Chris Sensenig presented proposed anti-displacement strategies for small businesses and Objective Design

Standards for the Corridors Zoning Update. Commissioners took public comment, asked questions and made comments including but not limited to: successful small business anti-displacement mitigation tool examples from other jurisdictions, construction mitigation tools for small businesses, clarification of height and density bonus scenarios, legacy business support, support for the proposed ground floor objective design standards, zoning for residential uses around commercial corridors instead of along them, right sized zoning for retail needs in the next decade, and streamlined permitting for small businesses. The Commission formed an Ad Hoc Committee made up of Commissioners Merker, Twu, Owens and Kahn to develop a "sense of the Commission" statement for further discussion and eventual transmission to the City Council.

Public Comments: 40

C. Discussion: Density Bonus in the Adeline Corridor Commercial (C-AC) Zoning District.

Motion/Second(Oatfield/Binns) to postpone the Density Bonus in the Adeline Corridor Commercial (C-AC) Zoning District discussion item to a future meeting date determined by staff.

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

Public Comments: 0

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

None

12. CORRESPONDENCE

13. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING: Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission scheduled for Wednesday, March 4, 2026 at 6:30 PM.

14. ADJOURN

Motions/Second (Kahn/Merker) to adjourn the meeting at 10:30 pm.

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

Members of the public in attendance: 76

Public Speakers: 40

Length of the meeting: 4 hours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Justin Horner", with a wavy flourish at the end.

Justin Horner, Planning Commission Secretary