



Planning Commission

FINAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

March 4, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

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

1. ROLL CALL:

Commissioners Present: Emily Marthinsen, Savlan Hauser, Jeff Vincent, Blaine Merker, Christina Oatfield, Charles Kahn, Angela Wangm, Alfred Twu, Darrell Owens,

Commissioners Absent: None.

Staff Present: Secretary Justin Horner, Clerk Faye Messner, Jordan Klein, 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: 0

4. ORDER OF AGENDA: No change

5. CHAIRPERSON REPORT:

- Chair Marthinsen reported that public comment time will be limited to 10-12 speakers and asked the Commission members to comment on the Vision 0 Taskforce materials.

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
 - **April**
 1. SB 79 and AB 893 Discussion
 2. Objective Design Standards Discussion
 3. C-AC Zoning District
 - **May**
 1. Corridors Rezoning
 - **June**
 1. San Pablo Specific Plan Public Hearing
 - **July**
 1. Safety/Environmental Justice Elements
- **Upcoming City Council Items:**
 - March 10: Nonconforming Uses for Middle Housing
 - April 14: Transformer Undergrounding

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion/Second (Merker/Kahn) to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from February 4, 2026.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Hauser, Vincent, Twu, Owens, Wang, Kahn, Oatfield and Merker. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: (9-0-0-0). Motion passed.

10. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Public Hearing: 1646 and 1650 Fifth Street Re-Zoning and Associated General Plan Amendments

Associate Planner Joshua Muller presented proposed amendments to the Zoning Map, General Plan and West Berkeley Plan. Commissioners took public comments, asked questions and made comments including but not limited to: how often parcels are split-zoned and the origin of split zoned lots.

Motion/Second (Oatfield/Vincent) to close the public hearing.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Hauser, Vincent, Twu, Owens, Wang, Kahn, Oatfield and Merker. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: (9-0-0-0). Motion passed.

Motion/Second (Twu/Kahn) recommend staff's proposal to rezone 1646 and 1650 5th Street and associated Zoning Map and General Plan Amendments for adoption by City Council.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Hauser, Vincent, Twu, Owens, Wang, Kahn, Oatfield and Merker. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: (9-0-0-0). Motion passed.

Public Comments: 1

B. Ad Hoc Committee's Memo on Corridors Upzoning

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Corridor's Upzoning presented a memo to the Commission. The Commissioners took public comment, asked questions and made comments including but not limited to: an upzoning strategy for opportunity sites, height and street width ratio as an objective standard applied across all three corridors, opportunities for densification through FAR and lot size, Density Bonus incentives that prioritize on-site affordable housing, support for small business protections, and support for the ground floor ODS with suggestions including smaller commercial spaces and increased sidewalk widths and setbacks for a high quality retail corridor. The Commission directed staff to prepare Zoning Ordinance amendments to increase heights to .75 of the street width only for opportunity sites with additional capacity analysis.

Public Comments: 11

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

12. CORRESPONDENCE

13. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING:

- Special Meeting of the Planning Commission, Wednesday March 18, 2026 at 6:30pm.
- Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission: Wednesday April 15, 2026 at 6:30pm.

14. ADJOURN

Motions/Second (Oatfield/Kahn) to adjourn the meeting at 9:01 pm.

Ayes: Marthinsen, Hauser, Vincent, Twu, Owens, Wang, Kahn, Oatfield and Merker. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: (9-0-0-0). Motion passed.

Members of the public in attendance: 70 in person, 49 on Zoom

Public Speakers: 12

Length of the meeting: 2 hours 31 minutes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Justin Horner', with a wavy underline.

Justin Horner, Planning Commission Secretary