



Planning Commission

1 **DRAFT MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**
2 **JUNE 3, 2026**

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

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

5 • **ROLL CALL:**

6 **Commissioners Present:** Emily Marthinsen, Savlan Hauser, Blaine Merker, Christina
7 Oatfield, Alfred Twu, Charles Kahn, Darrell Owens.

8 **Commissioners Absent:** Angela Wang, Jeff Vincent

9 **Staff Present:** Secretary Justin Horner, Land Use Division Manager Anne Hersch, Clerks
10 Joshua Muller and Branka Tartarevic.

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12 • **LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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

28 • **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: 1**

29 • **ORDER OF AGENDA:** No change

30 • **CHAIRPERSON REPORT:** None

31 • **AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES AND LIASON COMMENTS:** None

32 • **COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

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• **STAFF ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Upcoming PC Meeting Items:

- **July 1**
 1. Ashby BART: West Lot Objective Development Standards, Part 1
 2. Planning Commission work plan
 3. Public Hearing: Hearst Project TTM
- **No August meeting**
- **September 2**
 1. Ashby BART: West Lot Objective Development Standards, Part 2

9. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Motion/Second (Hauser/Merker) to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes from the May 6, 2026.
Ayes: Marthinsen Hauser, Twu, Wang, Oatfield, Kahn, Owens and Merker. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Wang (7-0-0-1). Motion passed.

10. ACTION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Public Hearing: San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan

Principal Planner Justin Horner presented the Specific Plan goals, a summary of outreach and engagement efforts, provided a summary of the Specific Plan document, including revisions based on Planning Commission feedback, proposed changes to the General Plan and other associated plans, CEQA analysis, and provided recommendations to the Commission. Commissioners took public comments, asked questions and made comments including but not limited to: ground floor requirements and uses in Designated Nodes, housing on MU-LI parcels within the Specific Plan area, local density bonus program relative to state density bonus, business types allowed with temporary use permits, sidewalk and open space requirements and incentives, retirement of certain specific plans, City housing needs, neighborhood character, potential rent and land value impacts, mixed-use legacy of West Berkeley, potential impacts from increased height limits, potential massing design standards, potential support for artists and legacy businesses, affordability and inclusionary requirements, potential elimination of design review, public plaza location and design, potential impacts on existing businesses, setback standards, human scale, economic development language, proposed density requirements, placemaking potential, Designated Node vs. non-Node uses and requirements, potential replacement requirement for grocery stores, potential transportation improvements, proposed goal and intent of the specific plan, sidewalk width vs. road median.

Motion (Kahn/Merker) to strike the minimum density requirement from the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan and the proposed Zoning Ordinance amendments.
Ayes: Oatfield, Twu, Kahn, Owens, Merker, Hauser, Marthinsen. Noes: None. Abstain: None. Absent: Wang (7-0-0-1). Motion passed.

79 Motion (Kahn/Marthinsen) to reduce the maximum height standard from seven stories to five
80 stories.

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82 Ayes: Oatfield, Kahn. Noes: Twu, Owens, Merker, Hauser, Marthinsen. Abstain: None. Absent:
83 Wang (2-5-0-1). Motion failed.

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85 Motion (Kahn/Marthinsen) to add a requirement that in Designated Nodes, non-prohibited uses
86 need only occupy the front 50 feet of the ground floor.

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88 Ayes: Oatfield, Kahn, Twu, Merker, Hauser, Marthinsen. Noes: None. Abstain: Owens. Absent:
89 Wang (6-0-1-1). Motion passed.

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91 Motion/Second (Merker/Hauser) to recommend the City Council adopt the draft San Pablo
92 Specific Plan with the following modifications:

- 93
94 1. Remove the proposed minimum density requirement;
95 2. Non-prohibited uses need only occupy the front 50 feet of the ground floor in Designated
96 Nodes;
97 3. Add a minimum sidewalk width of 16 feet achieved through a ground-floor setback.

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99 Ayes: Hauser, Twu, Marthinsen, Owens, Merker. Noes: Oatfield, Kahn. Abstain: None. Absent:
100 Wang (5-2-0-1). Motion passed.

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102 Motion (Kahn/Marthinsen) to create an ad-hoc subcommittee of Commissioners Owens, Kahn
103 and Hauser to explore potential strategies for placemaking along San Pablo Avenue.

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

107
108 Motion/Second (Merker/Kahn) to recommend the City Council adopt the draft San Pablo
109 Specific Plan Design Standards with the following modifications:

- 110 1. Remove the proposed minimum density requirement;
111 2. Non-prohibited uses need only occupy the front 50 feet of the ground floor in Designated
112 Nodes;
113 3. Add a minimum sidewalk width of 16 feet achieved through a ground-floor setback.

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115 Ayes: Hauser, Kahn, Twu, Marthinsen, Owens, Merker. Noes: None. Abstain: Oatfield. Absent:
116 Wang (6-0-1-1). Motion passed.

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118 Motion (Marthinsen/Hauser) to recommend the City Council adopt the associated General
119 Plan Text and Map Amendments and Zoning Code and Map Amendments.

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121 Ayes: Oatfield, Twu, Owens, Merker, Hauser, Marthinsen. Noes: Oatfield, Kahn. Abstain:
122 None. Absent: Wang (5-2-0-1). Motion passed.

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124 Motion (Kahn/Owens) to recommend the City Council retire the West Berkeley Specific Plan
125 and the San Pablo Avenue Public Improvements Plan, and make staff's recommended
126 amendments to the University Avenue Strategic Plan,.

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128 Ayes: Kahn, Twu, Owens, Merker, Hauser, Marthinsen. Noes: None. Abstain: Oatfield. Absent:
129 Wang (6-0-1-1). Motion passed.

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131 **Public Comments: 21**

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133 **11. INFORMATION ITEMS**

134 None

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136 **12. CORRESPONDENCE**

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138 **13. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING:**

- 139 • Regular Meeting of the Planning Commission: Wednesday July 1, 2026 at 6:30pm.

140 **14. ADJOURN**

141 Motion/Second (Owens/Twu) to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 pm.

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

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146 **Members of the public in attendance: 25 in person, 13 on Zoom**

147 **Public Speakers: 21 (17 in person + 4 online)**

148 **Length of the meeting: 2 hours 46 min**