



FINAL MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING JUNE 3, 2026

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

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

- **ROLL CALL:**

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

Commissioners Absent: Angela Wang, Jeff Vincent

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

- **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 uncanceled 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.

- **PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: 1**

- **ORDER OF AGENDA:** No change

- **CHAIRPERSON REPORT:** None

- **AD HOC SUBCOMMITTEES AND LIASON COMMENTS:** None

- **COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None

- **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.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Public Comments: 21

11. INFORMATION ITEMS

None

12. CORRESPONDENCE

13. NEXT COMMISSION MEETING:

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

14. ADJOURN

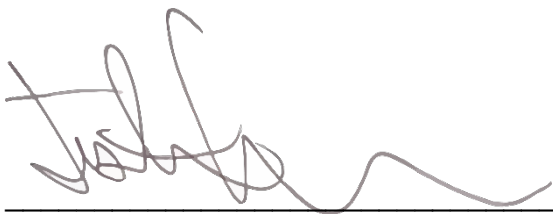
Motion/Second (Owens/Twu) to adjourn the meeting at 9:19 pm.

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

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

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

Length of the meeting: 2 hours 46 min

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Justin Horner', written over a horizontal line.

Justin Horner, Planning Commission Secretary