



PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
November 21, 2013

West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California 90069

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair DeLuccio called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:35 P.M.
2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Christi Hogin led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. **ROLL CALL:**
Commissioners Present: Aghaei, Altschul, Buckner, Shink, Yeber, Chair DeLuccio.

Commissioners Absent: Vice-Chair Huebner.

Staff Present: Bianca Siegl, Senior Planner, Georgia Sheridan, Assistant Planner, Bob Cheung, Senior Transportation Planner, Peter Noonan, Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager, Elizabeth Savage, Director of Human Services and Rent Stabilization, David DeGrazia, Acting Current and Historic Preservation Planning Manager, Melissa Antol, Long Range and Mobility Planning Manager, Stephanie DeWolfe, Community Development Director, Christi Hogin, Assistant City Attorney, and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.
4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**
ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission Agenda of Thursday, November 21, 2013 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Aghaei, seconded by Commissioner Buckner and passes, noting Vice-Chair Huebner absent.**
5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

A. **October 3, 2013**

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission Minutes of Thursday, October 3, 2013 as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Aghaei, seconded by Commissioner Shink and passes; noting Vice-Chair Huebner absent.**
6. **PUBLIC COMMENT.**
GENEVIEVE MORRILL, MARINA DEL REY, President/CEO, West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce, thanked and wished everyone a happy holiday and encouraged participation in the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce “Eat, Shop, Play West Hollywood” by visiting www.eatshopplayweho.com

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Stephanie DeWolfe, Community Development Director presented the Director's Report.

She stated at the City Council meeting on Monday, October 21, 2013, a contract was awarded to begin the stabilization and moth ball process for 1343 N. Laurel Avenue. The re-roofing project has already started.

At the City Council meeting on Monday, November 4, 2013, she stated the City Council upheld the decision of the Planning Commission to approve the project with no changes, regarding the appeal of Restoration Hardware.

At the City Council meeting on Monday, November 18, 2013, she stated the City Council upheld the decision of the Historic Preservation Commission to deny the historic nomination, regarding the appeal of Tower Records. They also upheld an addendum from the Historic Preservation Commission, which was to seek other alternative means to commemorate the site.

Another item was the formation of an East Side Task Force. The City Council formed the East Side Task Force for the purpose of determining what and how a new governance for that side of town should look like. The Task Force recommended that there be a new Brown Act Working Group, for the purpose of preparing a community plan for the East Side. City Council will be appointing up to fifteen members for that group in January 2014. The purpose of the community plan, the scope of the community plan, will be determined by a community visioning process. It likely will include land use and economic development issues, but it could include many other issues, including public safety, mobility and transportation, and civic engagement.

There was a discussion about the possibility of adding traffic control officers at high volume intersections during peak periods. City Council directed staff to look at a variety of items that might improve traffic flow and an implementation plan.

8. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Commissioner Aghaei stated City Clerk Corey Schaffer will be leaving the city. He thanked him for his years of service and wished him the best.

Commissioner Altschul thanked City Clerk Corey Schaffer for his years of service and wished him the best.

9. CONSENT CALENDAR. None.

10. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

A. West Hollywood Housing Element & Technical Background Report:

The Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider a recommendation to the City Council regarding adoption of the proposed West Hollywood 2013-2021 Housing Element.

Bianca Siegl, Senior Planner introduced Peter Noonan, Rent Stabilization and Housing Manager. She provided an oral presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, November 21, 2013.

The draft Housing Element process incorporated input from a community outreach process and staff incorporated key policy issues that were identified during that process.

The revised draft Housing Element also incorporates comments from the Planning Commission and City Council, which were discussed during the joint study session on June 24, 2013. As a result of that, the revised draft places greater emphasis on universal design and aging in place, carefully exploring the feasibility of alternative housing types for West Hollywood, considering financial rehabilitation incentives for both for-and non-profit housing providers, weatherization of aging housing stock, emphasizing meeting the needs of our existing community, and providing annual updates on community outreach efforts regarding Housing.

Following the joint study session, staff went through a successful review process with State Department of Housing and Community Development. They requested minor clarifications, with no substantive changes. The City of West Hollywood has received an official determination from them that the revised draft Housing Element fully meets state requirements, and can be adopted by the City Council.

Adoption of the Housing Element within the timeframe established by Housing and Community Development will allow the City to complete future updates on an extended eight-year timeline; rather than every four years.

The Planning Commission and City Council will receive annual updates on Housing Element implementation, and these updates will include a particular focus on community outreach activities.

ACTION: 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 13-1058 as presented: "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING CITY COUNCIL APPROVAL OF A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND UPDATE OF THE HOUSING ELEMENT OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD GENERAL PLAN, LOCATED CITYWIDE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA;" and 2) Close Public Hearing Item 10.A. **Moved by Commissioner Altschul, seconded by Commissioner Aghaei and passes; noting Vice-Chair Huebner absent.**

B. Residential Home Remodels:

The Planning Commission held a public hearing to consider a recommendation to the City Council to revise the Zoning Ordinance to streamline the remodel permit process for single-family homes and duplexes.

Georgia Sheridan, Assistant Planner provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, November 21, 2013.

The proposed text changes to the Zoning Ordinance seek to:

- Reduce barriers for property owners of single family homes and duplexes who need to make repairs and upgrades to aging homes;
- Streamline the permit process for single family homes and duplexes so that it is predictable and efficient;
- Promote the conservation and re-use of existing homes by allowing for alterations to improve the structure's livability and comfort; and
- Improve the safety and quality of the City's housing stock by bringing older homes into compliance with today's Building Code standards.

The proposed changes to the Zoning Ordinance seek to implement Land Use Policy 10.7 from the General Plan 2035, which calls to "allow for the reconstruction or replacement of residential buildings.

Staff plans to streamline the permit process for remodel projects *other than* single family homes and duplexes at a later date to implement General Plan Land Use Policies LU-9.5 and LU-1.7.

She stated this change originates from the General Plan, which saw some issues with the way the remodel process was working. The current code language creates barriers to property owners who want to make changes to their homes.

Changing the code will streamline the permitting process, which would make it easier for people to rehabilitate and remodel their homes.

Current Permit Process:

The current permit process outlined in the Zoning Ordinance creates a degree of uncertainty for property owners seeking to make needed repairs and upgrades to single family homes or duplexes. Currently, the code divides remodel projects into two categories: minor and major remodels.

The difference between a minor and major remodel is determined by the 50% threshold, which is defined as "the removal of 50% or more of the exterior wall area or supporting members of a structure.

Major remodel projects are more costly, have a longer review period, and require existing buildings to meet all development standards described in the West Hollywood Municipal Code ("WHMC"). Meeting today's code can be challenging, if not impossible for older homes, as they were designed with different setbacks and parking configurations than required today. This process creates a barrier for property owners of older homes who would like to make significant changes or upgrades to their structure.

Minor remodel projects can be approved the same day at the planning counter, cost between \$88 and \$344, and allow existing buildings to maintain their non-conforming status.

Major remodel projects require a development permit must go to the development review committee, which takes between 6 to 8 months; and costs \$4,426 to \$6,667.

Staff worked with an internal working group; made up of long range planning, current planning, and building and safety staff. Staff also met with architects and design professionals in the community, as well as the Long Range Mobility and Planning Subcommittee, for input.

She described the common scenario's today, which includes: a) delayed upgrades to older single-family homes and duplexes; b) poor construction quality; c) inconsistency; and d) stop work orders.

She detailed and provided working illustrations and comparisons on how the proposed remodel process for single-family houses and duplexes would be implemented.

The current permit process is unpredictable and inefficient and creates a disincentive for property owners of older single family homes and duplexes to upgrade their buildings.

Commissioner Altschul questioned if some kind of consideration was given to incentivizing or restoring unused garages to the current standards.

Georgia Sheridan, Assistant Planner stated that was not considered within the scope of this change.

Commissioner Altschul suggested perhaps this could be looked into.

Commissioner Shink questioned the cost of a certified survey.

Georgia Sheridan, Assistant Planner stated the certified survey ranges from \$1,500 to \$3,500 for a home in the area.

Commissioner Yeber requested clarification regarding the less than and greater than 500 square feet.

Christi Hogin, Assistant City Attorney, explained text in the code would be clarified to read as “more than 500 square feet”.

Commissioner Aghaei requested clarification of the rational of doing a survey for a minor alteration.

Georgia Sheridan, Assistant Planner explained the purpose of the certified survey is to ensure that remodel projects maintain the building envelope (with the exception of minor additions up to 500 square feet) if they wish to maintain their non-conforming status.

Commissioner Shink disclosed for the record she attended the Long Range Planning Projects Subcommittee meeting regarding this subject matter.

Chair DeLuccio requested clarification regarding the survey.

Commissioner Buckner questioned what triggers the requirement to get a remodel permit.

David DeGrazia, Acting Current and Historic Preservation Manager stated any type of work; replacing a front door, changing out windows, changing a fence, et.al would require an over the counter zone clearance permit.

Chair DeLuccio opened the public hearing for Item 10.B.:

JEANNE DOBRIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of staff's recommendation to City Council and commended staff on the presentation.

ACTION: Close public hearing for Item 10.B.: **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Commissioner Aghaei commented and compared the proposed scheme to the currently existing. He stated it seems like we are filling a big gap, but has concerns regarding the very simple remodels and interior remodels, obliging applicants to submit to a survey. He requested confirmation regarding someone changing out windows or altering the exterior, but in a manner consistent with what's already there, requiring a survey.

David DeGrazia, Acting Current and Historic Preservation Manager stated this requirement is not codified, but is listed on the permit and is part of the process.

Commissioner Buckner would like to see staff possibly look into incentivizing unused garage spaces. She spoke and requested clarification of the survey regarding the footprint. She stated her support.

Commissioner Buckner moved to: 1) approve staff's recommendation to City Council.

Seconded by Commissioner Yeber.

Commissioner Yeber spoke in support of the proposed changes and the survey. He had concerns about the changing out the windows and doors. He suggested perhaps photographs would suffice when they are changed out, instead of a survey. He stated the parking (garage) situation needs to be a separate study. We need to understand how people are using or not using their garages.

David DeGrazia, Acting Current and Historic Preservation Manager clarified for the record a certified survey would not be needed to change out windows. He suggested it's possible to put on the application that photographs would be sufficient.

ACTION: 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 13-1059 as presented: "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVE AN AMENDMENT TO THE ZONING ORDINANCE TO STREAMLINE THE REMODEL PERMIT PROCESS FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES AND DUPLEXES, CITYWIDE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA and 2) Close Public Hearing Item 10.B. **Moved by Commissioner Buckner, seconded by Commissioner Yeber and passes; noting Vice-Chair Huebner absent.**

11. NEW BUSINESS.

A. Pedestrian-Bicycle Master Plan Update:

The Planning Commission received an update on the City of West Hollywood's on-going Pedestrian-Bicycle Master Plan. Update.

Georgia Sheridan, Assistant Planner provided an oral and visual presentation and background information as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, November 21, 2013.

She stated West Hollywood is currently updating the City's 2003 Pedestrian & Bicycle Mobility Plan.

The project will build on the success of recent planning efforts that address safety and mobility in the City, including the Bicycle Task Force Report (2011), the General Plan 2035 and Climate Action Plan, and the Avenues Streetscape Master Plan. The Plan Update will assess the City's pedestrian and bicycle network and facilities and develop recommendations to make West Hollywood a more inviting and comfortable place to walk and bike for residents and visitors alike.

Staff has been working with a consultant team, since spring 2013 to update the Plan and develop a set of strategic recommendations that respond to the unique needs of West Hollywood. To gather input for the project, Staff hosted two community workshops (June 15, 2013 and October 26, 2013), and a community walkabout and bike ride (July 20, 2013), interviewed stakeholder groups, visited key Commissions and Boards, and developed a project website with an interactive map and web-survey where community members could share their ideas from the comfort of their home computer or mobile device.

At the last community workshop, held October 26, 2013, the project team presented preliminary recommendations to be included in the Draft Plan, which is anchored by:

1. Five catalytic projects to address major gaps and challenges in the City's network,
2. Location-specific pedestrian and bicycle enhancements throughout the City,
3. A design toolkit to guide improvements to the City's streets, sidewalks, and crossings, and
4. Supportive programs and policies.

She presented maps of the City's existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and outlined proposed improvements. The preliminary recommendations include five catalytic projects to address major gaps and obstacles in the City. These projects include:

1. Santa Monica West Crosswalk Enhancements: Upgrading the mid-block crossings on Santa Monica Blvd (between Doheny and La Cienega) to all have rapid flashing beacons and additional lighting. This area of the City has the most pedestrian activity, as well as pedestrian related accidents.
2. Santa Monica East Super Sharrow: Creating a green-backed sharrow on Santa Monica Blvd (east of Kings) to create a continuous east/west bike facility through the City with wayfinding signage to point cyclists to lower-stress bike routes on parallel streets (such as Willoughby and/or Fountain).
3. Willoughby Neighborhood Greenway: Using traffic calming techniques, sharrows, and wayfinding signage on Willoughby to create a comfortable east/west bike route for cyclists who do not feel comfortable riding on Santa Monica Blvd.

4. Almont Neighborhood Greenway: Using traffic calming techniques, sharrows, and way finding signage on Almont to create a north/south bikeway connection between the bike lanes on Santa Monica Blvd and Burton Way.
5. Fountain Ave Road Diet: Exploring ways to reconfigure Fountain Ave to make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists with wider sidewalks, additional landscaping, and/or bike lanes. There are multiple ways to redesign the street, all of which involve tradeoffs.

The five catalytic projects in the Plan are conceptual and would need to be separately designed and approved by Council to be implemented. In addition to the five catalytic projects discussed, the Plan will include smaller “spot” improvements throughout the City to upgrade bike and pedestrian facilities.

She spoke and detailed existing facilities, bike lanes, sharrows, and rapid flashing beacons, catalytic projects, project build out, Santa Monica (East) Super Sharrow, Fountain Avenue re-design, Willoughby Greenway, Santa Monica (west) crossings, Almont Drive Greenway, additional network enhancements, design toolkit, programs and policies,

In the coming months, the project team will finalize the Draft Plan based on input received from the community, commissions, and boards. Staff plans to have the Draft Pedestrian & Bicycle Mobility Plan Update ready for City Council consideration in spring 2014.

Commissioner Buckner questioned if automobile lanes will be lost due to the implementation of sharrows, and stated her concerns of bicycle safety.

Georgia Sheridan, Assistant Planner clarified they would not be taking away any car lanes. A sharrow is a “share the road sign”. It literally means bicycles and cars can share the same space.

Chair DeLuccio opened the public comment for Item 11.A.:

KAREN O’KEEFE, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the Pedestrian-Bicycle Master Plan Update.

JEANNE DOBRIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD, spoke in support of the Pedestrian-Bicycle Master Plan Update.

ACTION: Close public comment for Item 11.A.: **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Commissioner Shink confirmed she attended the October 26, 2013 community meeting and stated her support of the presentation. She spoke regarding super sharrows, mitigating traffic concerns, pedestrian mobility, and bicycle safety. She expressed her enthusiasm for the east-west corridor, bike corrals, and the rapid flashing beacons. She supports staff's work on this project, stating this is extremely important to the city.

Commissioner Yeber thanked staff for the presentation and outreach to the community.

Chair DeLuccio thanked staff for the presentation.

ACTION: Receive and file. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

B. Planning Commission Meetings December 2013:

ACTION: 1) Cancel the Planning Commission meeting of Thursday, December 5, 2013, and 2) reinstate the meeting of Thursday, December 19, 2013. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

Commissioner Buckner officially announced she will be absent from the meeting of Thursday, December 19, 2013.

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS. None.

13. EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR. None.

14. ITEMS FROM STAFF.

A. Planning Manager's Update.

Melissa Antol, Long Range and Mobility Planning Manager, stated the Long Range and Mobility planning division will be scoping for an East Side Community Plan.

The division will be working with public works to reduce congestion, and develop an implementation plan to institute traffic officers at key intersections during rush hour.

Staff will bring forth an item to require new developments to provide electric vehicle charging stations. It will be a policy development item. Provisions will be looked at to have the developer's dedicate car share facilities as well as providing the infrastructure.

There will be a "Bike Light Giveaway" on Tuesday, December 3, 2013.

She confirmed the City of West Hollywood was rated as one of the most walkable cities in California.

15. PUBLIC COMMENT.

JEANNE DOBRIN, WEST HOLLYWOOD commented on official flags on public property, and the use of traffic control officers at various intersections.

16. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

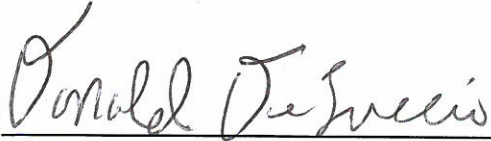
Commissioner Yeber announced it is elections for the American Planning Association (APA) Chapter. He encouraged members to cast their votes.

Commissioner Shink wished everyone a happy holiday.

Chair DeLuccio congratulated John Keho as the newly appointed Assistant Community Development Director. He stated tonight's meeting will adjourn in memory of John Keho's father Cliff Keho.

- 17. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting was adjourned in memory of **Cliff Hutchinson Keho**. Noting the cancellation of the Planning Commission meeting on Thursday, December 5, 2013, the Planning Commission adjourned at 8:05 P.M. to the next regularly scheduled meeting which will be on Thursday, December 19, 2013 beginning at 6:30 P.M. until completion at West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

APPROVED BY A MOTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD ON THIS 19TH DAY OF DECEMBER, 2013.



DONALD DELUCCIO, CHAIRPERSON

ATTEST:



DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY