

REGULAR MEETING OF THE
CULVER CITY
PLANNING COMMISSION
CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA

April 9, 2025
7:00 p.m.

Call to Order & Roll Call

Chair Reilman called the regular meeting of the Culver City Planning Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. in Council Chambers and online.

Present: Andrew Reilman, Chair
Darrel Menthe, Vice Chair
Jen Carter, Commissioner
Stephen Jones, Commissioner
Alexander van Gaalen, Commissioner*

*Commissioner van Gaalen exited the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

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Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Reilman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, reported that no requests to speak had been received.

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Receipt of Correspondence

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, reported that no correspondence had been received.

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Consent Calendar

Item C-1

**Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of
January 22, 2025**

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES AND SECONDED BY VICE CHAIR MENTHE
THAT PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE DRAFT PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 22, 2025.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: CARTER, JONES, MENTHE, REILMAN
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: VAN GAALEN

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Item C-2

**Approval of Draft Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of
February 12, 2025**

MOVED BY COMMISSIONER JONES AND SECONDED BY CHAIR REILMAN
THAT PLANNING COMMISSION APPROVE THE DRAFT PLANNING
COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 12, 2025.

THE MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES: CARTER, JONES, REILMAN
NOES: NONE
ABSTAIN: MENTHE, VAN GAALEN

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Order of the Agenda

No changes were made.

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Action Items

Item A-1

(1) Receive an Update on the Hayden Tract Specific Plan; and (2) Discussion and Comments

Vice Chair Menthe reported that he had been advised to recuse himself as he lives within 500 feet of the Hayden Tract and he exited the dais.

Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager, discussed progress on the Hayden Tract Specific Plan; reasons for having a Specific Plan; he provided an overview of the document; discussed the transitional area; areas covered by the plan; land use and zoning; adding residential to the area; meeting the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA); roads and mobility; continued development of commercial, retail, office, and mixed-use; connections and walkability; improving the mobility experience and parks access; opportunities for new open space; and the potential for height increases in the area.

Susan Ambrosini, AECOM, discussed the guiding framework of the General Plan; getting more specific about buildings and land use; design and development standards; mobility, streets, and sidewalks; public realm standards; parks and public amenities; funding for public improvements; potential for increased height away from the residential neighborhoods; opportunities for more housing along the Creek; community outreach; the timeline; and next steps.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding adjustments necessary to the General Plan to accommodate proposed changes; potential adjustment of the FAR (Floor Area Ratio) with height increases; base height; bonus incentives; setting a different height that DOBI (Density and Other Bonus Incentives) would add to; and industrial mixed-use zoning that allows for multiple uses.

Additional discussion ensued between Susan Ambrosini, staff, and Commissioners regarding community feedback; surveys; response rate; website visits; presentation of data; incorporation of feedback; summarized data included in the staff report; and having a cutoff point.

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission:

Johanna Gullick spoke in support of the Hayden Tract Specific Plan Visioning Process; discussed continuing the feel of the eclectic area; laying out a new vision for the tract; creating a village feel; staff recommendations; the ability to increase density due to the adjacency to transit; massing; support for alternative 2; sensitivity to neighbors abutting the Hayden Tract; support for the affordable housing component; she suggested a requirement to provide 20% affordable housing in the larger projects; noted adjacency to large job centers; discussed minimizing traffic; encouraging a mixed income population in Culver City; appreciation for traffic intrusion measures put in place; and she recommended a cul-de-sac to cut off traffic.

Beth Lane, Rancho Higuera Neighborhood Association Board President, expressed appreciation for the community outreach; discussed participation; reminded the Commission about issues with cut-through traffic going back to 2017; discussed implementation of Phase 1 of the NTMP (Neighborhood Traffic Management Plan) in 2021; Request for Proposals (RFP); analyses in process; number of cars cutting through daily; road rage; bottleneck traffic; transit from the Metro; and she indicated that a cul-de-sac was needed.

Simon Horowitz provided background on himself; discussed cut-through traffic; noise; dangers to pedestrians; a diverter to redirect traffic on to the Hayden Tract; directing traffic away from neighborhood streets; rising traffic volume; concern with plans for further development; the need for further action; he proposed installing a permanent cul-de-sac at the end of Higuera where it meets the Hayden Tract to separate the two fundamentally different zones; discussed ample access from other directions; incompatible uses within the same traffic corridor; and keeping both areas safe and vibrant.

David Hauptman provided background on himself; discussed previous work of the neighborhood to create a 56-foot height limit; concern with the proposal to increase height limits; and he asked that the City Attorney be consulted about the legality of changing the City Charter.

Diana Hauptman expressed concern with potential traffic associated with the proposed development on Higuera Street;

discussed the already highly impacted street; and she proposed installation of a cul-de-sac to mitigate traffic.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the initiative passed in the 1990s to limit heights to 56 feet in certain commercial zones; changes to the zoning code over the years; research indicating that the 56 foot height initiative did not apply to residential or industrial zones; the zoning change from industrial to industrial mixed-use; whether to pursue increasing the height; the base height limit; common misconceptions; legislation that defines where the height limit is; and state law and density bonus incentives that allow going above the 56 foot height limit even where it is defined in Culver City.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding previous traffic control measures and improvements in the Rancho Higuera neighborhood; the traffic study, traffic analysis, and plans for future improvement; making temporary improvements permanent; examination of roadway and street design; coordination between departments; increased traffic with the popularity of Culver City and navigation apps that direct traffic to cut through neighborhoods; blurring the distinction between residential and commercial as the area becomes mixed use; creating a more walkable district where people can work and live in the same place; reducing traffic; the need for a study to require inclusionary housing; and the ability to provide incentives.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding different height alternatives presented; feedback from the development community; affordable housing required in residential development to gain height exceptions; feedback received from stakeholder outreach meetings; encouragement to increase density and go to the maximum rather than gradually increasing heights; the value of parcels based upon what can be built there; building to the maximum height for an office building; concern with buildings that could have been housing; market conditions; support for adding a provision that housing should be included if height is to be increased; support for alternative 2; support for tying height increases to affordable housing; increased traffic with commercial development; the transit stops at either end of the district; the need for improvements to the connection to the bike path and mobility; and concern with the potential of opening up height and less housing ends up being built.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding the need for an amendment to the General Plan to increase height limits; potential implications; the EIR (Environmental Impact Report); clarification that increased density is not being proposed; required minimum density in order to build a 57 foot building; minimum densities established in higher density districts; support for more housing; feedback to understand the market on what would be built for alternative 2; support for investigating the cul-de-sac idea and allowing bicycles and pedestrians through; diverters vs. cul-de-sacs; concern that the previous diverter did not fix the problem; the potential influx of more people; embracing the connection; and providing an amenity for pedestrians.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding a suggestion to focus on connecting Lucerne/Higuera and the Hayden Tract to the Ballona Creek Bike Path and the Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook; providing more crossings on the Creek for pedestrians and bicycles; City-owned property on the south side of the Creek; long-term planning; shared lanes for bikes, pedestrians and cars; roadway design for all uses with shared street environments; use by other cities; the old rail spur; missing middle housing; getting onto the bike path on National; lack of a sidewalk; power poles obstructing sidewalks; embracing transit at either end of the district; providing easier access to transit; the importance of improving pedestrian access and thoroughfares; responsibility for mobility improvements; justified road widths; requiring developers to offer a five foot buffer during redevelopment; the bottleneck at Turning Point; and undergrounding utility districts.

Further discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding support for creative open space and parks; providing a linear park; park dedication; publicly accessible open space; the park at the Platform; the rail spur; and staff acknowledgement that they had received sufficient information.

Vice Chair Menthe returned to the dais.

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**(1) Receive an Update on the Fox Hills Specific Plan; and
(2) Discussion and Comments**

Commissioner van Gaalen reported that he had been advised to recuse himself and exited the meeting.

Troy Evangelho, Advance Planning Manager, provided an update on the Fox Hills Specific Plan; discussed the reason for the plan; plan content; the Housing Element; RHNA; outreach; increased connectivity; park access and amenities; density; the timeline; next steps; and feedback requested from Commissioners.

Shruti Shankar, Studio One Eleven, discussed overlap with the Hayden Tract Specific Plan; plan focus; primary goals; community benefits; providing better amenities; improving connectivity; alignment with community input and the General Plan Update; the timeline; existing conditions; the targeted option date for the plan; outreach; creation of a Vision Statement specific to the Fox Hills neighborhood; design standards; implementation; buildings and land use; mobility and streets; parks and public amenities; community priorities; community feedback focused on protecting the character of the existing neighborhood; greenery and open space; making the area more walkable and safe for pedestrians and cyclists; enhancing access to transit; adding opportunities for local retail and restaurants; preferences for more affordable housing; building on the vision and character areas for the neighborhood; special areas with design guidelines to help development fit the scale of the neighborhood; Bristol Parkway; support for densities that are lower than in the General Plan; concerns with overdevelopment; traffic, parking, change in community character as well as pollution and the need for adequate infrastructure with increased population coming in; support for increased density in certain areas by certain populations; ongoing planning efforts; transit improvements planned; creating a more walkable neighborhood; providing ways for people to connect better throughout the neighborhood with new pedestrian connections; connections to the mall and the Transit Center; support for creating a better pedestrian experience; creativity with shared parking; new park spaces; upgrading existing parks; creation of an open space network; implementation through policies or framework in the Specific Plan; strong support for more and better parks, trails, and

green open spaces as well as upgraded amenities; providing benefits for existing and future residents; preservation of existing mature trees; and next steps.

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

The following member of the public addressed the Commission:

James Vitale, Camelot Condominium Association Board President, expressed appreciation to everyone participating in the planning process; provided background on himself; discussed the work done; appreciation for proposed features and amenities; the well-thought-out review and input process; providing visibility and transparency; and he was looking forward to further participating in the community feedback process in the coming months.

Jack Walter was called to speak, could not be heard, and was encouraged to email his comments.

Discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding mobility; park access; density; the new connections plan; support for making the area more walkable and for keeping the existing trees; ensuring that creation of more public space includes native plants; support for pedestrian connections; the neighborhood built to have walled off, isolated spaces; changing the focus from building havens from the road; providing bikeable surfaces; having density that can support a walkable, bikeable town; the virtual open house that provides examples of pass-through paseos; pedestrian bridges; the current connection between the mall and Fox Hills Drive; concerns with cut-through traffic; connectivity; consistency with other developments; support for requiring connections; connecting density to transit; a suggestion to move the Transit Center; coordination with the Transportation Department through both specific plans; and different options for the Transit Center.

Additional discussion ensued between staff and Commissioners regarding coordination with the Parks Plan; parking issues at the park; use of the parks by people who do not live in the neighborhood; parking at Veterans Park; pedestrian connections that could result in people being more willing to park in other places; renting parking from area businesses; density; support for density around the park; the proposal to put density along Slauson; the feeling that density could work if walkways are committed to; land opportunity; resident

concern with the sheer number of units; ensuring that the density works; design standards; providing an organic feel; supporting businesses that people want on the ground level; access for car-dependent individuals; looking at ideas for Slauson; providing a buffer zone for vehicular traffic; the fact that Playa Vista gave up on Jefferson; topography challenges; the potential community center; privately owned land area in the neighborhood; activating different parts of the neighborhood by providing a different community center other than the mall; opening up the northwest corner of Fox Hills Park; underutilized areas; and redevelopment of the mall.

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Public Comment - Items NOT on the Agenda (Continued)

Chair Reilman invited public comment.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, reported no requests to speak.

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Items from Planning Commissioners/Staff

Emily Stadnicki, Current Planning Manager, reported that the Planning Commission would not be meeting on April 23, 2025 and the draft sign code would be reviewed in May.

Ruth Martin del Campo, Current Planning Secretary, reported that the City Clerk's Office had begun the annual recruitment process to fill vacancies on city-wide Committees, Boards, and Commissions (CBCs) with applications accepted from residents at www.culvercity.org/serve through May 12, 2025; she noted the opportunity for students and residents to participate in advising the City Council on various topics; discussed the open youth position on the Equity and Human Relations Advisory Committee (EHRAC); other open positions; requirements to serve; and noted that additional information was available on the website or by calling (310) 253-5851.

In response to inquiry, Planning and Development Director Mark Muenzer reported receipt of the Housing Innovation Award at the National Planning Conference of the American Planning Association; discussed recognition of General Plan 2045; best

practices; and applications for other awards from professional development organizations.

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Adjournment

There being no further business, at 9:22 p.m., the Culver City Planning Commission adjourned to a regular meeting to be held on May 28, 2025.

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RUTH MARTIN DEL CAMPO
SECRETARY of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION

APPROVED _____

ANDREW REILMAN
CHAIR of the CULVER CITY PLANNING COMMISSION
Culver City, California

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that, on the date below written, these minutes were filed in the Office of the City Clerk, Culver City, California and constitute the Official Minutes of said meeting.

Jeremy Bocchino
CITY CLERK

Date