



City of  
**Santa Monica**<sup>SM</sup>

# MINUTES

## SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF SANTA MONICA

WEDNESDAY, May 10, 2017  
**6:00 P.M.**

CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
ROOM 213, CITY HALL

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1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chairperson Anderson called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**  
Commissioner Fonda-Bonardi led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL:** Present: Amy Anderson, Chairperson  
Mario Fonda-Bonardi  
Nina Fresco  
Jennifer Kennedy  
Richard McKinnon  
Jason Parry

Absent: Leslie Lambert

Also Present: Susan Cola, Deputy City Attorney  
Kyle Ferstead, Commission Secretary  
Cary Fukui, Associate Planner  
Peter James, Principal Planner  
David Martin, Director of Planning & Community  
Development Department  
Steve Mizokami, Senior Planner  
Roxanne Tanemori, AICP, Principal Planner  
Jing Yeo, AICP, Manager, City Planning Division

4. **PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT:**  
Mr. Martin gave the Director's Report. He announced the upcoming Commission meetings on the Downtown Community Plan as follows: May 11 in the Civic Auditorium East Wing; May 17, May 18 and May 31, 2017, all in the Council Chambers and beginning at 6:00 p.m. He reported on the May 9, 2017 City Council hearing which heard a presentation on the Bike Action Plan, Pedestrian Action Plan and Vision Zero target. He encouraged the Commission to review the staff report and watch the Council meeting video.

5. PUBLIC HEARING:

5-A. Downtown Community Plan.

This is the second in a series of Planning Commission public hearings to review the Final Public Hearing Draft of the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) and Final Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse #2013091056). The Planning Commission has established a schedule of deliberation topics to take public comment and discuss all aspects of the DCP. This public hearing will include a discussion on the DCP's core strategies and requirements for Housing, Historic Preservation, Art and Culture, Public Space, and Social Services. The Planning Commission may also discuss any other aspect of the DCP as well as potential associated amendments to the Land Use and Circulation Element, Civic Center Specific Plan, and Zoning Ordinance. The Commission will hear public testimony and provide comments and preliminary recommendations to staff on these topics. Revisions, additions, and/or deletions will ultimately be included as part of the formal Planning Commission recommendation to the City Council for adoption. The public hearing began on April 26, 2017.

Principal Planner Peter James gave a presentation on the following topics: Housing, Public Space, Social Services and Art and Culture. Planning Manager Jing Yeo gave a presentation on Historic Preservation.

The following members of the public addressed the Commission: David Hibbert, Jason Islas, Sara Faulds, Richard Hilton (also spoke for Zina Josephs), Carl Lisberger, Wes Hooker, Kathleen Rawson, Denise Barton, Ken Kutcher, Scott Schoenfeld, Jerry Rubin, Bruria Finkel, John Berley (Landmarks Commissioner), Carl Hansen (Government Affairs, Chamber of Commerce), Rob York, Chris Baca, Dave Rand, Ruthann Lehrer, Jan-Michael Medina, Elizabeth Van Denburgh, Laurence Eubank, Tara Baranskas (Community Corporation of Santa Monica), Leonora Yetter, Nancy Coleman, Paula Larmore, Shawn Landres (Social Services Commissioner), Natalya Zernitskaya, Hannah Levy, and Suzanne Peckels (Director, WISE and Healthy Aging).

One member of the public, Alan Mont, was not present when his name was called.

[The Commission took a break from 8:58 p.m. to 9:17 p.m.]

Housing

The Commission was asked if they support the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) emphasis on housing production through:

- *Floor Area Ratio (FAR) and Height Incentives;*
- *Process Incentives, Mix of Housing Options for Diversity of Income Levels and Household Sizes;*
- *Higher Affordable Housing Requirement than Affordable Housing Production Program (AHPP);*
- *Affordable Housing Distribution based on Housing Element.*

Mr. James introduced the discussion questions. Chair Anderson asked if “incentives” means creating more housing. Mr. James responded that the emphasis would be to add more housing on in-fill sites, such as on portions of Lincoln Boulevard. Chair Anderson asked if this is the time for an in-depth discussion on these topics. Ms. Yeo responded that this meeting is a conceptual discussion and Thursday’s meeting will focus discussion on development standards.

Commissioner Fonda-Bonardi commented that staff’s approach is correct for real incentives and that, despite what is being said by the public, there has been no down-zoning. He also commented that four stories is the best option because if the power goes out one can walk down the stairs.

Commissioner Fresco agreed that staff’s has taken the correct approach in general. She cited several typographical errors in the draft text.

Commissioner Kennedy expressed general agreement with the proposed height and FAR and that the affordable housing incentives are heading in the correct direction. Commissioners McKinnon and Parry concurred with the rest of the Commission on these issues.

Chair Anderson asked staff about the process incentives, specifically whether this would be by Development Review permit or some other permit. Mr. James explained the housing incentives which could be processed under an Administrative Approvals or Development Review permit.

Commissioner Parry commented the basic structure as proposed is consistent with past practice.

Commissioner McKinnon stated the process is sound, but limits are the issue for him. He commented he is not convinced more Administrative Approvals will result in more housing units.

Commissioner Kennedy expressed agreement with the prior comments.

Commissioner Fresco commented that the general structure is good and she likes the Tier 3 threshold. She also commented on the community benefits for different locations.

Commissioner Fonda-Bonardi expressed agreement with the rest of the Commission.

Chair Anderson commented that the process incentive is a strong one and agreed with Commissioner Fresco’s community benefits concerns. She expressed concern that developers will not chose that route and speculated about removing the Development Agreement provision in the transit adjacent area.

The distribution of income levels was discussed with general agreement that there needs to be a distribution of bedroom types as well as income levels in new housing projects. Commissioner Fonda-Bonardi asked what happens when residents exceed the rental rate for their unit over a period of time. Ms. Yeo explained the Deed Restriction process for affordable units and how residents can be relocated to different units. Deputy City Attorney Cola commented that the Housing and Economic Development policy will be provided to the Commission and cited page 198 of the draft DCP.

Commissioner Kennedy expressed concern with Affordability Table 4.5 on page 198 of the draft DCP, specifically how these percentages were determined. Ms. Yeo responded that the percentages are based on the State Housing Law's Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) figures, but can be amended as a policy decision of the Commission and City Council.

Commissioner McKinnon asked to see the formula used and commented that the issue for him is that developers produce more small units and increase the price of the market rate units. He suggested increasing the percentage of extremely low and very low income units with a corresponding decrease in the percentages of low and moderate income units. The rest of the Commission generally agreed with this suggestion.

#### Social Services

The Commission was asked if they support the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) land use regulations and policies:

- *That allow social service providers to locate Downtown to enhance community wellbeing?*

Mr. James introduced the discussion question on Social Services and commented on the letter from Mr. Landres and the Social Services Commission. Commissioner McKinnon asked Mr. James if staff has any issues with the policy recommendations from the letter. Mr. James responded that some of the recommendations are more specific than would normally be included in the Plan and the only potentially problematic issue would be requiring dedicated space for social services. Ms. Yeo noted that such space has been required in some Development Agreement projects and could possibly be included in other developments providing analysis supported a nexus. Mr. James stated that such space would be limited mostly to the upper floors, or rear of the property and at the ground floor for mid-block properties in the Neighborhood Village area.

Commissioner Fonda-Bonardi expressed concern with the proposed placement of social services within 500-feet of the freeway and that notes this could be a health and safety issue meriting reconsideration.

Commissioner Kennedy expressed general support for the proposal, but stated she

needed to review the written comments. She stated it is important such services are accessible from public space.

Chair Anderson commented on the Social Services Commission's recommendations regarding accessibility from public right-of-way and that it should comply with American's with Disability Act (ADA) requirements.

Commissioner Parry asked staff about making motions and voting on issues. Ms. Yeo explained the meeting process does not include formal votes until the last public hearing, just "straw" votes. Commissioner Kennedy made a motion for a straw poll to include the recommendations from the Social Services Commission, excluding Policy 2 and clarifying the accessibility to public space to mean access from a fully public access way, right-of-way, or elevator, in the final discussion. The Commission unanimously agreed. Commissioner Lambert was absent.

### Public Space

The Commission was asked if they support the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) core objective to enhance Downtown's Public Space offerings through:

- *Negotiated Projects that Allow Public Access;*
- *Partnerships to Revitalize Privately-Owned Public Spaces (POPs);*
- *Investments in Upgrades to Existing Public Spaces*
- *Building Setbacks to Create Outdoor Activity;*
- *New Streetscapes*

Commissioner Parry commented on the public testimony regarding using the Fourth/Fifth/ Arizona site for green open space and asked why this is not reflected in the DCP. Mr. James explained that based on years of outreach and work with the site developer, consensus on the development of the site has not been fully determined. Ms. Yeo noted that the DCP is looking at a broad strategy for the Plan area, not specific projects proposed for Downtown. DCA Cola stated that the land was purchased with redevelopment funds with a specific purpose and the project is both very old and has a request for proposal issued.

Commissioner Parry asked about the public's request for "plants" Downtown and where this is addressed in the Plan. Mr. James cited the Pathways and Public Space section on page 77 of the Draft Plan as well as in the Design Guidelines on pages 213 and 217. Commissioner Parry commented on the positive impact of greenery on the environment. Mr. James suggested this can be addressed more fully in the district descriptions. Ms. Yeo commented that the City has recently adopted a new Urban Forest Master Plan, which may address these concerns.

Commissioner McKinnon commented on existing privately owned public courtyards which are unfriendly and should not be permitted in the future. Mr. James agreed that past failures should not be repeated. He stated that the Downtown Santa Monica Inc. Ambassadors will be working with property owners of these buildings.

Commissioner Kennedy commented on open space attached to private commercial buildings and the need to also consider alleys. Mr. James responded that alleys are already serving a vital need for trash disposal and deliveries for businesses on the Third Street Promenade. He agreed that alleys could use better lighting, surveillance for safety and aesthetics. Commissioner Kennedy commented on the need for protected bike lanes Downtown.

Commissioner Fresco commented on allowing taller, thinner buildings for negotiated projects to provide more open space. She also commented favorably on POPs and suggested “guidelines” be moved to the narrative with smaller square footage, such as 650sf for exempt structure. She expressed opposition to widening the Wilshire Boulevard sidewalk. Commissioner Fresco proposed changing the fifteen-foot model to fourteen-feet with a four-foot parkway and having a suspended sidewalk which would allow street tree roots to grow laterally. She expressed a desire to maintain a consistent, historic street wall along Second and Fourth Streets.

The Commission generally supported using setbacks to create outdoor activity and supported fourteen-foot setbacks on Second Street between Santa Monica Boulevard and Broadway and on Fourth Street between Broadway and Wilshire Boulevard in order to maintain the existing streetscape character of the historic core. It was also agreed to add “green walls” to the design guidelines.

#### Historic Preservation

The Commission was asked if they support the Downtown Community Plan’s step approach to Historic Preservation through:

- *Expand the Bayside Conservation District;*
- *Reduced height for Bayside Conservation District;*
- *Additional oversight in the demolition process;*
- *Submission of the HRI to the State Office of Historic Preservation;*
- *New incentives for preserving landmarks and resources;*
- *Creation of a Neighborhood Conservation overlay District;*
- *Re-evaluation of the Landmark Ordinance’s Structure of Merit requirements.*

Chair Anderson asked staff if they had reviewed the letter from the Santa Monica Conservancy and their proposed changes. Ms. Yeo responded that staff has not made a thorough review at this time. The Commission discussed various provision of the Historic Preservation chapter, particularly incentives and requests to amend or remove Action HP2.3B and amend Policy HP2.4.

The Commission generally supports the six-step approach and asked staff to review the Santa Monica Conservancy’s comments on incentives to determine what can be incorporated.

#### Arts and Culture

The Commission was asked if they support the Downtown Community Plan direction to provide more:

- *Events, public art, cultural institutions, and nighttime activities*
- *Land Use regulations for theater, performance spaces, nighttime activities*

Chair Anderson asked staff about the public's assertion that the emphasis on cinemas was removed. Mr. James explained that the narrative was changed and the prior iteration of the draft Plan contained a paragraph on providing for new cinemas Downtown. He stated that goal and policies that encourage cinemas are found on page 55, Goal CCP-6 and on Policy CC6.2 and Action CCP6.2A cite new cinemas. He also stated that the cinema language can be reinstated from the prior draft.

The Commission discussed the viability of cinemas, provisions for additional height, and whether the prior language should be reinstated.

The Commission generally supported the approach to providing more art and culture in the Downtown, but expressed interest in including text on new cinemas. They recommended modifying the text on page 45 to demonstrate the "new" cinemas should be pursued by the City.

There being no other chapters agendaized for this meeting, Mr. James stated the next meeting will be the discussion on Development Standards, including urban design strategies and moving on to more specific topics such as building heights on May 17, 2017.

**6. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Anderson adjourned the hearing at 11:53 p.m. to Thursday, May 11, 2017, 6:00 p.m. in the Civic Auditorium East Wing.

**APPROVED AS AMENDED: JULY 19, 2017**