



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

Virtual Meeting
Albany, CA 94706

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021

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4 **1. CALL TO ORDER**

5
6 Chair Watty called the regular meeting of the Planning and Zoning Commission to order
7 at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 23, 2021.
8

9 **2. ROLL CALL**

10 Present: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty
11 Absent: None
12 Staff Present: Planning Manager Anne Hersch
13 Associate Planner Christopher Tan
14 Community Development Director Jeff Bond
15
16

17 **3. EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS**

18
19 None
20

21 **4. CONSENT CALENDAR**

22
23 **4-1. Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting Minutes May 26, 2021**

24
25 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
26 review and approve the meeting minutes.
27

28 Commissioner MacLeod corrected page 8, line 34 to "commercial uses on upper floors
29 are not acceptable."
30

31 **Motion to approve** the meeting minutes of May 26, 2021 as amended. Donaldson
32 Seconded by Pilch

33 AYES: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch

34 NAYES: None

35 ABSTAIN: Watty

36 ABSENT: None

37 **Motion passed, 4-0-1-0**
38

39 **4-2. PA21-037 Design Review & Conditional Use Permit for a Second-Story**
40 **Addition at 801 Madison Street** – The applicant is seeking Design Review and
41 Conditional Use Permit approval for a second-story addition at 801 Madison Street.
42 The subject property is a 5,000-sq.-ft. corner lot with a 3-bedroom, 1-bathroom,
43 1,899-sq.-ft. house built in 1916. The project scope includes building a new 840-
44 sq.-ft. second-story addition on top of the existing home. The addition is proposed



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1 to accommodate 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. The exterior of the addition is
2 proposed to be clad in painted horizontal lap siding with a gable roof form. The
3 existing Mission Revival style of the home is proposed to change to traditional in
4 appearance. This will result in a 4-bedroom, 3-bathroom, 2,716-sq.-ft. home with
5 a maximum height of 27'-9". Two off-street parking spaces are provided in the
6 existing garage and driveway. A Conditional Use Permit is required to extend the
7 existing non-conforming north wall located 3.8 ft. where 5 ft. is required.
8

9 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
10 review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and
11 Conditions of Approval.
12

13 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303
14 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.
15

- 16 **4-3. PA21-038 Conditional Use Permit for Carbon Health at 1080 Monroe Street**
17 **(University Village)** – The applicant is seeking a Conditional Use Permit for a new
18 medical clinic (Carbon Health) at 1080 Monroe Street (Suite #120). The subject
19 tenant space is 2,376-sq.-ft. and is located in the UC Village Shopping Center. The
20 project scope includes interior tenant improvements to accommodate a new urgent
21 care medical clinic. Carbon Health is proposed to operate 7 days a week from 8:30
22 am to 9:30 pm. A maximum of 15 employees and 8 patients are proposed on site.
23 A Conditional Use Permit is required for all hospitals and clinics proposed in the
24 SPC Zoning District. Off-street parking is provided in the existing parking lot of the
25 shopping center. No exterior modifications are proposed to the existing building
26 under this project scope.
27

28 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
29 review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and
30 Conditions of Approval.
31

32 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15332
33 "In-Fill Development Projects" of the CEQA Guidelines.
34

- 35 **4-4. PA21-039 Design Review for a Two-Level Addition at 907 Ramona Avenue** –
36 The applicant is seeking Design Review approval for a two-level addition at 907
37 Ramona Avenue. The subject property is a 4,400-sq.-ft. lot with a 2-bedroom, 1-
38 bathroom, 1,264-sq.-ft. house built in 1920. The project scope includes building a
39 minor addition on the ground floor to accommodate a new staircase and a new
40 718-sq.-ft. second-story addition. The second-story addition is proposed to
41 accommodate 2 bedrooms, 1 bathroom and a craft room. A new deck is proposed
42 at the front of the second-story addition. The exterior of the addition is proposed to
43 be clad in painted cement plaster siding with a parapet roof to match the existing
44 home. The existing Spanish Revival style of the home is proposed to remain. This



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1 will result in a 4-bedroom, 2-bathroom, 1,993-sq.-ft. house with a maximum height
2 of 26'-3". Two off-street parking spaces are provided in the existing driveway.
3

4 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
5 review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and
6 Conditions of Approval.
7

8 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15303
9 "New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" of the CEQA Guidelines.
10

- 11 **4-5. PA21-041 Conditional Use Permit and Parking Waiver for Quintara**
12 **Biosciences at 636 San Pablo Avenue** – The applicant is seeking Conditional
13 Use Permit and Parking Waiver approval for a new biochemistry laboratory at 636
14 San Pablo Avenue. The subject property is a 5,007- sq.-ft. lot located in the SPC
15 (San Pablo Commercial) Zoning District with an existing 5,000-sq.-ft. commercial
16 building built in 1968. The applicant is proposing a new biochemical laboratory that
17 will provide DNA sequencing and molecular biology services. This same business
18 was previously located at this site in 2010. The main business hours are Monday-
19 Friday from 9 am-6 pm. Some services are expected to run Monday through Friday
20 5 pm to 1 am. A maximum of 10 employees are anticipated on site. Outside visitors
21 are not anticipated on site. A Conditional Use Permit is required for all commercial
22 research and development uses in the SPC Zoning District. There is no available
23 off-street parking provided on-site. A Parking Waiver is requested to waive 12.5
24 off-street parking spaces required by the proposed business use.
25

26 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
27 review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and
28 Conditions of Approval.
29

30 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15332
31 "In-Fill Development Projects" of the CEQA Guidelines.
32

- 33 **4-6. PA21-043 Conditional Use Permit for Massage Services at 1398 Solano**
34 **Avenue** – The applicant is seeking a Conditional Use Permit for a new massage
35 studio at 1398 Solano Avenue. The subject site is a 3,998-sq.-ft. lot with 2,140-sq.-
36 ft. office building built in 1927. The applicant is proposing to lease a 240-sq.-ft.
37 suite to be used as a massage studio from 10 am-8 pm seven (7) days a week.
38 Two massage therapists will be on-site for services during business hours. Off-
39 street parking is provided on an uncovered parking pad on Carmel Avenue.
40

41 **Recommendation:** Staff recommends that the Planning & Zoning Commission
42 review and approve the proposed project subject to the attached findings and
43 Conditions of Approval.
44



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1 **CEQA:** The project is Categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to Section 15332
2 “In-Fill Development Projects” of the CEQA Guidelines.

3
4 **Motion to approve** Items 4-2 through 4-6 of the consent calendar. Donaldson
5 Seconded by Pilch

6 AYES: Donaldson, MacLeod, Momin, Pilch, Watty

7 NAYES: None

8 RECUSED: None

9 ABSENT: Watty

10 **Motion passed, 5-0-0-0**

11
12 Chair Watty noted the appeal period.

13 14 **5. ANNOUNCEMENTS/COMMUNICATIONS**

15
16 None

17 18 **6. PUBLIC COMMENT**

19
20 **Clay Larson** inquired whether any Commissioners submitted written comments
21 regarding the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan following the prior two meetings. He
22 requested clarification of Ms. Hersch's statement in February 2021 that written comments
23 from Commissioners would no longer be posted to the website or included in
24 Commissioner packets in light of her suggestion on May 26, 2021 for Commissioners to
25 submit their comments in writing.

26
27 Planning Manager Anne Hersch indicated there are no Commissioner comments
28 associated with the current study session. Comments, including Mr. Larson's, have been
29 posted.

30 31 **7. DISCUSSION & POSSIBLE ACTION ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING** 32 **ITEMS:**

33
34 None

35 36 **8. NEW BUSINESS**

- 37
38 **8-1. **Study Session**- San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan – Objective Design**
39 **Standards** – The Planning & Zoning Commission will receive a presentation on
40 the San Pablo Avenue Specific Plan project regarding draft objective design
41 standards and provide feedback on the policies presented or additional ideas
42 generated during the discussion.



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1 **Recommendation:** Provide feedback on the policies presented or additional ideas
2 generated during the discussion.

3
4 **CEQA:** Staff is working with a CEQA consultant on a proper analysis of
5 environmental impacts.
6

7 Jean Eisberg, Lexington Planning, and Jane Lin, Urban Field Studio, presented the staff
8 report dated June 23, 2021.

9
10 Chair Watty indicated that the draft Guiding Design Principles are good. The individual
11 guidelines and standards will contain the details. Public Realm should note that any
12 residential units on the ground floor require special design attention, including raised
13 stoops and landscaping, to provide a buffer to the public right-of-way and to create an
14 attractive ground floor. Perhaps Design Variety could be revised to Design Quality and
15 Variety and include "high quality" in "memorable, attractive, and identifiable design."
16

17 Commissioner Pilch preferred to retain the 1993 San Pablo Avenue design guidelines,
18 even if they seem subjective. Corridors that develop organically are eclectic, and they
19 are valuable because they are eclectic. A guideline promoting consistent design should
20 be deleted. Including examples of preferred designs in the guidelines would be good.
21 The City's height limit constrains the height of retail spaces. The purpose and value of
22 nodes need clarification. Developments on San Pablo Avenue should provide public
23 spaces. Because of high traffic volume, San Pablo Avenue probably cannot support
24 parklets and outdoor dining, but alleyways or cutout spaces in buildings that are set back
25 from the street may be a way to provide public space.
26

27 Commissioner Momin supported the draft Guiding Design Principles and revising Design
28 Variety to Design Quality and Variety. Design Variety could encourage identifiable design
29 features where neighborhood streets meet San Pablo Avenue to make people aware of
30 San Pablo Avenue and create a nice view down neighborhood streets. The Guiding
31 Design Principles would be the right place to add sustainable development for multifamily
32 projects, onsite stormwater treatment such as use of rainwater and recycled rainwater,
33 and additional features that would be voluntary.
34

35 Commissioner Donaldson noted Mixed Use Boulevard is different from the 1993 design
36 guidelines and the 1997 San Pablo Avenue Vision Plan. Some mixed-use development
37 should be added to San Pablo Avenue but not too much. Because there are too many
38 small lots, too many lots do not extend to Kains and Adams, and there is no practical way
39 to consolidate lots, large mixed-used developments will probably not occur along San
40 Pablo. Ground-Floor Pedestrian Environment is a good policy. He supported measures
41 to create a better pedestrian environment. Converting San Pablo Avenue to a true
42 boulevard is a prerequisite for success along San Pablo Avenue. He supported Public
43 Realm and Transitions generally. Transitions are applicable to three-story buildings but
44 not to taller buildings. Therefore, transitions will be very important in the Specific Plan.



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1 The neighborhood street character of Kains and Adams must necessarily be the character
2 of a transitioning neighborhood with a pattern of mixed residential densities. One should
3 not assume that single-family homes along Kains and Adams will necessarily disappear.
4 The values of those properties are too high for lot consolidation or for mixed-use
5 developments. Of particular interest is the possibility of pushing overflow parking from
6 development along San Pablo into the adjoining neighborhoods, which would be harmful
7 to the character of those neighborhoods. Chair Watty's suggestions for Design Variety
8 are good.

9
10 Commissioner MacLeod believed Guiding Design Principles may not be the right title
11 because they are not principles, but he supported the concepts. Individualizing ground-
12 floor commercial space is important. Big, blank, sterile buildings with no character, relief,
13 or variation are not preferable. The Guiding Design Principles have to refer to multiple
14 colors, multiple textures, multiples planes, and multiple materials so that the principle is
15 objective but not overly limiting. There may need to be some proscription of flat facades
16 or continuous glass storefronts. He supported a ground-floor, walkable environment.
17 Implementing a road diet to create more space for pedestrians and bicycles would be
18 great and needs to be part of a long-term vision for San Pablo. Transit-oriented
19 development is key to a better streetscape. Parking lots should not be located on street
20 fronts. Openings or spaces between buildings should be pedestrian plazas, café plazas,
21 or restaurant plazas. He supported step-backs because a daylight plane is too limiting.
22 Anything that limits or constrains housing should be removed from the Specific Plan. All
23 blocks located along San Pablo and zoned R-3 could be rezoned to San Pablo
24 Commercial (SPC) so that the street is the transition to lower-zoned buildings.
25 Maximizing housing production should be the goal of the Specific Plan. Neighborhood
26 Street Character is vague.

27
28 Commissioner Pilch related that transitions have to be thoughtful so that units can be
29 maximized without affecting adjacent buildings. If the Specific Plan is good enough, it will
30 provide economic incentives for lot consolidation.

31
32 PUBLIC HEARING OPENED

33
34 **Clay Larson** inquired whether the Commission will be given specific options to select
35 from, requested the status of 3-D models, and inquired about the CEQA analysis.

36
37 **Bryan Marten** believed housing should be located on San Pablo Avenue with thoughtful
38 transitions to adjacent homes. Buildings could be bigger where there are natural buffers
39 such as streets and sidewalks. Discussions need to differentiate parcels extending
40 through blocks and commercial parcels abutting residential parcels. To maximize
41 housing, the Commission needs to review Measure D, Measure K, and zoning throughout
42 the City.

43



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1 **Amy Smolens** encouraged Commissioners to use their expertise to ensure buildings are
2 varied and have character.

3
4 **Nico Nagle**, Housing Action Coalition, suggested setting design standards too low is a
5 mistake and Commissioners study large buildings to provide flexibility. Walkable
6 neighborhoods have shops and safety features.

7 PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED

8
9
10 Commissioner Pilch related that looking at other cities' design standards is important to
11 ensure developers can meet them and they are effective. Hopefully, staff can craft design
12 standards that cause developers to provide open space that is available to the public,
13 businesses, and residents. Street trees are important.

14
15 Commissioner Donaldson noted the Complete Streets Plan calls for a landscaped median
16 in San Pablo. The San Pablo/Solano corner is a critical location, deserves special
17 treatment, and should be a node. Nodes should concentrate retail activity in a walkable
18 environment. There should not be any 100% residential projects in nodes. Open space
19 is likely to be quasi-public. Creek trails can be made more attractive, and connections
20 between the trails and San Pablo Avenue can be improved. The Specific Plan needs to
21 describe visual integration of the Gill Tract into the community. Private open space should
22 be required in all new development, and the Commission needs to resist pressure to
23 reduce the open space requirement. Outdoor seating areas should be protected to some
24 degree from traffic noise. The 1993 guidelines provide good directions for street
25 character, silhouette, massing and height if revised to address buildings with more than
26 three stories, facade composition, signage if revised to consider residential units above
27 the ground floor, building illumination, color, site design, parking guidelines if updated,
28 and service areas. He proposed limiting commercial signage to monument signs only,
29 eliminating billboards at Solano and San Pablo, and limiting the number of billboards
30 along other areas of San Pablo. He requested staff review pedestrian detailing for San
31 Pablo Avenue and Solano Avenue. The Commission may need a new finding that allows
32 the Commission to grant exceptions for density bonus projects.

33
34 Chair Watty advised that the guidelines should discourage use of certain materials;
35 describe glazing for rear facades that face R-3 parcels; continue standards for punched
36 window openings, window recesses, and 3-D muntin; require stacked height along San
37 Pablo; require modulation of developments having a specific frontage width; require or
38 incentivize an inset of a building to provide public open space; require public art for large,
39 blank walls; require art on buildings or in public rights-of-way in the San Pablo/Solano
40 node; require a plan for trees; encourage restaurants to use outdoor spaces for dining;
41 restrict business signs for mixed-use buildings to being located below the windowsill of
42 the lowest residential level; and encourage up-lighting for trees and downlighting for
43 business signage.

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1 Commissioner MacLeod concurred with Chair Watty's comments except comments
2 regarding glazing for rear facades facing lower-density houses. He wanted to review
3 design guidelines adopted by other cities. Some of the 1993 guidelines may be retained
4 after some study. Requiring a window recess for large buildings may be difficult. Creating
5 a node is difficult because they typically occur organically. All the nodes have to be 100%
6 mixed use. He supported mixed use along the entire street and building to the street
7 edge generally and opposed parking along street edges. Respecting the street edge
8 makes better urban space. The goal of the Specific Plan is to streamline housing
9 approvals. He requested staff research and report regarding the ability to implement
10 subjective standards after January 2020.

11
12 Commissioner Pilch believed privacy is a factor in considering glazing and stepping back
13 facades facing R-3 parcels. Stepping back street facades reduces the number of housing
14 units but improves the pedestrian space. There should not be any up-lighting. The only
15 purpose of a node seems to be increasing the height limit. He questioned the rationale
16 for R-3 parcels abutting SPC parcels and suggested rezoning R-3 parcels to SPC could
17 facilitate lot consolidation.

18
19 Commissioner MacLeod agreed with the comment to review rezoning R-3 parcels to SPC
20 as an option.

21
22 Commissioner Donaldson recalled the circumstances for development of the SPC
23 boundaries in 2004.

24
25 Commissioner Momin concurred with the Commission studying R-3 and SPC zoning.
26 One option is to rezone R-3 parcels to SPC, but it will exacerbate the transition issue if
27 parcels on the other sides of Kains and Adams are not rezoned. Nodes are important
28 and occur organically. The intersection of San Pablo and Solano is already a node.
29 Nodes should be subject to special landscape treatments. The Commission may want to
30 increase setbacks to incentivize privately owned public space in the major activity nodes.
31 He questioned whether the City or private developers would pay for improvements in the
32 public right-of-way.

33
34 Commissioner Pilch concurred with comments regarding architectural treatments for
35 nodes.

36
37 **9. NEXT MEETING – July 14, 2021**, City Hall Council Chambers, 1000 San Pablo Avenue
38 or virtual meeting pursuant to state and county guidance

40 **10. ADJOURNMENT**

41
42 The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.
43
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Submitted by: Anne Hersch, Planning Manager

Jeff Bond, Community Development Director