



City of Santa Barbara

PLANNING COMMISSION

MINUTES

MAY 21, 2026

1:00 P.M.
City Hall, Council Chambers
735 Anacapa Street
SantaBarbaraCA.gov

COMMISSION MEMBERS:

Lucille Boss, *Chair*
Donald DeLuccio, *Vice Chair*
Brian Barnwell
John M. Baucke
Benjamin Peterson
Devon Wardlow
Lesley Wiscomb

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON:

Mike Jordan

STAFF:

Tava Ostrenger, Chief Assistant City Attorney
Megan Arciniega, Senior Planner
Jasper Carman, Commission Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Boss called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Lucille Boss, Vice Chair Donald DeLuccio, Commissioners Brian Barnwell, John M. Baucke, Devon Wardlow, and Lesley Wiscomb

Absent: Commissioner Benjamin Peterson

STAFF PRESENT

Tava Ostrenger, Chief Assistant City Attorney
Anthony Valdez, Deputy City Administrator
Tess Harris, State Street Master Planner
Megan Arciniega, Senior Planner
Christopher Bell, City TV Production Supervisor
Janet Ahern, City TV Production Specialist
Jasper Carman, Commission Secretary

II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

A. Requests for continuances, withdrawals, postponements, or addition of ex-agenda items:

No requests.

B. Announcements and appeals:

No announcements.

- C. Review, consideration, and action on the following draft Planning Commission minutes and resolutions:

1. April 9, 2026 Planning Commission Minutes
2. April 16, 2026 Planning Commission Minutes

MOTION: Baucke / DeLuccio

Approve the April 9, 2026 Minutes as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Peterson)

MOTION: Baucke / DeLuccio

Approve the April 16, 2026 Minutes as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Peterson)

- D. Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda:

Public comment opened at 1:03 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

III. DISCUSSION ITEM

ACTUAL TIME: 1:04 P.M.:

DRAFT STATE STREET MASTER PLAN

Application Number: CITY2026-00012

Applicant: Tess Harris / City of Santa Barbara

During the April 28, 2026 City Council meeting, the City Council reviewed and advanced the Draft State Street Master Plan, directing staff to submit it to the Planning Commission and other Commissions and Committees for review and comment before returning to Council with the Final State Street Master Plan. The Planning Commission's comments on the Draft State Street Master Plan will be forwarded to the City Council in coordination with Council's review of the Final State Street Master Plan document. The comments received will also be incorporated into the Plan where feasible.

Tess Harris, State Street Master Planner and Stefanos Polyzoides, Moule & Polyzoides, gave the Staff presentation. Anthony Valdez, Deputy City Administrator and Chris Allaire, Moule & Polyzoides, were available to answer questions.

Public comment opened at 2:03 p.m., and the following individuals spoke:

1. Sarah Iannarone
2. Barry Remis (Donated time to Sarah Iannarone)
3. Sullivan Israel

Written correspondence from Kevin Heim, Bruce Caron, Aaron Richter, Strong Towns Santa Barbara, Nick, Brett Rietveld, Christian Lietzow, and Lily Heidger was acknowledged.

Public comment closed at 2:12 p.m.

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 3:51 TO 4:05 P.M. ***

Commission Comments

Policy Direction regarding Vision and Guiding Principles:

- The Commission endorses the flexible, pedestrian first State Street Paseo vision as the framework for the Plan.
- Commissioners Baucke, Barnwell, and Wiscomb emphasize that pedestrian modes of transportation should be the safest and most comfortable method of transit in the Plan.
- Commissioner Wardlow appreciates all of the applicant's work to address adaptability for the future.

Policy Direction regarding Design Approach:

- The Commission supports the flexible design approach with 30-foot sidewalks and a 20-foot travel lane/emergency access area.
- Commissioners Wardlow and Baucke encourage staff to consider raised intersections to create more of a sense of arrival.
- Commissioner Baucke states a need for further discussion about the rolled curb.
- Chair Boss states that there is a need for some curbing, particularly for Storm Water Management Program (SWMP) requirements and for transit access.
- Commissioner Barnwell:
 - States that it needs to be emphasized that this Plan will require detailed design and engineering work and additional details will unfold during this process.
 - Would lean more toward a pedestrian promenade rather than a vehicle corridor.
- Commissioner Wiscomb states that the vehicle access hours, once they are established by City Council, should be adaptable to change and provide enough flexibility to change if they are not achieving the desired results. She encourages implementing the vehicular appointment system for service and deliveries outside of hours where vehicles are permitted, as referenced in the Plan, as soon as possible to get feedback on whether the hours need adjustment outside of the proposed window.

Policy Direction regarding District Differentiation:

- The Commission supports the Civic and Commercial District (700-900 blocks) as the first-priority investment zone, with differentiated paving and a signature plaza design suitable for year-round markets, festivals, and civic events.
- The Commission feels that the 400 block requires a specific focus because it has not previously had the same investment or attention as other State Street blocks, has the most vacancies, and is the link between the downtown core and the waterfront. A gateway design concept is encouraged, not including a physical arch, but through street treatments, sidewalks, and plantings. It is necessary to make State Street better today.
- Commissioners Boss, DeLuccio, and Wardlow are in support of involving the Chumash in the Plan, including naming the districts, specifically the Civic District, as suggested by Mayor Pro Tem Sneddon.
- Commissioners DeLuccio, Wardlow, and Wiscomb emphasize that De La Guerra Plaza is the historic core of downtown, but its development has taken a backseat to this Plan, and it

should be developed in conjunction with the Civic District as there is so much that could be done with it.

- Commissioner Wiscomb emphasizes that the Civic District is adjacent to the area with the most potential for housing which makes it additionally critical.
- Commissioner Barnwell encourages development of a timeline for the general public to refer to for implementation.
- Chair Boss supports prioritizing the Civic District as long as it doesn't preclude events happening on other blocks.
- Vice Chair DeLuccio encourages consideration of a fountain, as suggested by Mayor Pro Tem Sneddon in this District, by De La Guerra and State Street.
- Commissioner Baucke states that all proposed redevelopment should be driven by the design of the infrastructure, starting with the underground and working backwards to visible development, to maintain economic feasibility.
- Commissioner Wardlow:
 - Agrees that the Civic District should be the first priority, especially through the lens of SWMP, as this is a long-term investment.
 - Feels that the Civic District color scheme should be more bold, likes the color schemes for the Entertainment and Arts Districts, but not moved by how the Civic District is coming together. A lot more could be done to create a community feel and a review of different colors could be helpful.
 - Finds the sandstone option on page 209 to be a beautiful option.
 - Trees and lighting structures will be the differentiating points between the districts.
 - Encourages infrastructure for people watching, somewhere for people to sit, enjoy, and create community without having to go into a restaurant.
 - Encourages a safe space for kids but believes that could be prioritized in the Arts District.
 - Sees the value in a stadium style seating arrangement or concert area.
 - Supports Mayor Pro Tem Sneddon's suggestion of the name "Corazon."

Policy Direction regarding Housing and Redevelopment:

- The Commission supports incorporating 1,000-2,000 new housing units in the Master Plan area (toward the City's 8,001-unit RHNA allocation), including redevelopment of City-owned surface parking lots with housing above retained parking.
- The Commission has requested a full inventory of City-owned property as the Suitable Sites Inventory doesn't include Paseo Nuevo, City parking lots, or other City-owned parcels. The Commission suggests staff review parcels that may have parts that are underutilized and could be developed into housing, such as the Fire Department property on Chapala Street.
- Commissioners Barnwell, DeLuccio, and Wardlow feel that the Adaptive Reuse Ordinance needs to be a component of the Plan as many buildings are suitable for the ordinance and anything that can be done to make it easier to use the Adaptive Reuse Ordinance should be done.
- Commissioners Baucke and Wiscomb feel that the amount of housing proposed should be the minimum incorporated with the potential for much more.
- Commissioners Boss and Wardlow request consideration of how mixed-use structures with commercial businesses and affordable housing for local employees can be further incorporated downtown.
- Commissioner Barnwell:
 - Feels that there is not enough discussion about spaces for kids which is necessary if housing is being increased.

- Two-way streets will be necessary to accommodate traffic patterns if housing is increased downtown.
- The Inclusionary Housing and In-Lieu Fee Ordinance should be a component of the Plan.
- A discussion about livability needs to be included in the larger discussion of housing.
- Chair Boss requests review of both what can be streamlined and what density could be increased to in the downtown core as 3,000 more units are needed for locals who work downtown. Having those who work downtown also live in the area could reduce parking needs while boosting local life.
- Vice Chair DeLuccio states that circulation studies need to be further analyzed and formalized especially if streets will be opened up to two-way traffic.
- Commissioner Wardlow:
 - Housing is critical to the future of downtown and this Plan is contingent on us delivering meaningful housing, which is amplified when we realize that less than 1% of our Multi-Family Housing and only 3% of our overall housing stock is downtown.
 - Encouraged by how many times the surface parking lots were brought up in the Plan, but feels that these efforts need to begin in Phase 1 instead of Phase 2.
 - Committed to identifying an ongoing funding stream for the Housing Trust Fund as it is critical for our ability to continue to develop.
 - Supports many of the recommendations in Appendix F to reduce barriers to development specifically and only in the downtown corridor.
 - Consider reducing Open Yard requirements in the downtown core only.
 - Review permit fees and see if they could be reduced or eliminated.
 - Review potentially reducing property taxes.
 - Review all legal options to ensure that any housing that is built goes towards locals and is a part of Phase 1 of the Plan.

Policy Direction regarding Implementation:

- The Commission agrees with the action items listed in the Implementation chapter of the Draft Master Plan (chapter 6).
- The Commission agrees that the SWMP requirements and the utility infrastructure plan should be the first priority. It is critical that the maximum density for the downtown core is determined and the infrastructure is designed to accommodate that amount.
- The Commission encourages review and development of zoning policy changes that would allow and encourage housing in the desired zones the districts are in. This should begin in Phase 1 of the Plan and run concurrently throughout its execution due to the length of time needed to implement policy changes.
- Commissioner Baucke commends staff for identifying all funding sources.
- Vice Chair Deluccio states that the monitoring page with metric goals will be the score card for how the Plan is progressing and what adjustments need to be made.
- Chair Boss states that development of suitable sites and City-owned parcels should be prioritized to the extent possible.
- Commissioner Wiscomb suggests that the matrix be organized by immediate short-term, medium-term, and long-term goals, and adding which phases they belong in, to make it more clear.
- Commissioner Wardlow:
 - Policy development to support housing goals needs to be incorporated into the Plan and must begin in Phase 1 to provide ample time to complete the necessary research.
 - Storefront activation and business recruitment to support small businesses throughout the construction should begin in Phase 1 and continue throughout.

- Conversion of City parking lots should begin in Phase 1 instead of Phase 2 due to the length of time required.
- Staff should be going after every tool possible to get financing finalized.
- A realistic timeline should be created regarding the permit process.
- Any policy updates needed to facilitate lot splits of long corridor buildings should be reviewed in Phase 1.

Policy Direction regarding other elements of the Draft Master Plan that the Commission would like to see explored further before finalizing the Plan or during the detailed design and engineering stage:

- The Commission would like to see a commitment to public services such as restrooms, water fountains, and benches.
- Commissioners Baucke, Boss, and Wiscomb state that the 1300 block needs to be designed well as an anchor because it hosts the Arlington Theater and the block needs to maintain 2-way traffic.
- Commissioners Wardlow and Boss reinforced that there needs to be a focus on density, what it could potentially be, the impact state law can have on those goals, and the housing and policy work that needs to be done.
- Commissioners Wardlow and Boss request the study of permit streamlining policies to implement in conjunction with the Plan.
- Vice Chair DeLuccio:
 - E-bike enforcement needs to be fleshed out.
 - Any pavement that could slow down bike traffic should be considered.
 - Need closure on the flexibility of openness to vehicular traffic.
- Commissioner Baucke emphasizes a separate operational plan is necessary for this project.
- Commissioner Wardlow:
 - Review design of bike lanes so it doesn't give the appearance that it is one large bike lane. Focus where the bikes will be and how enforcement of them will work.
 - Excited to dive more into lighting and texture as the zones are differentiated.
 - Review incorporating playgrounds or kid spaces into the Plan.
 - Would like to learn more about the Downtown Development Authority.
 - Concerned about moving utilities and believes a larger conversation about the cost and disruption of it needs to occur.
 - Consider adding an economic development department or person to address concerns from the Downtown Santa Barbara Improvement Association about vacancies as it could make a substantial difference and most cities of a similar size have one.
- Commissioner Wiscomb:
 - Consider signage that announces current events at all of the venues in the Arts District.
 - Concerned with current shrubbery and ground cover maintenance, feels a firm maintenance plan will need to be established with the new Plan.
 - Study in detail the 16 paseo entrances along State Street for lighting, art, and security, to integrate with the specific districts.
 - Consider signage about where to find parking for each district.
 - Consider a special feature or landscaping for the ground floor offices on the 700-900 blocks to alleviate their diminished vitality.
 - No frosted glass on ground floor windows.
- Commissioner Barnwell:
 - Reconsider the plan for parades on State Street.
 - Review the promenade component and restudy the bike lanes.

- The City should be involved in bus transit planning.
- Parking will be needed downtown with increased housing, staff should review zoning options that could provide for more.
- Review how paseos can be encouraged.
- Consider signage on the backside of buildings to indicate which stores are located on State Street.
- Incorporate more art into the design.
- Chair Boss:
 - Study and include other communities with long main streets or promenades in appendices.
 - Provide more detailed funding and financing strategies.
 - Consider a commercial vacancy tax.
 - Supports a downtown shuttle trolley in lieu of shuttle golf carts.
 - Consider partnerships with places like the Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens, other nonprofits, or community organizations.
 - Demonstrate a commitment to increasing the housing supply downtown.
 - The Suitable Sites Inventory should involve discussions with property owners.
 - Perform an employment analysis to determine how many jobs are downtown.

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

ACTUAL TIME: 5:20 P.M.

A. Committee and Liaison Reports:

1. Staff Hearing Officer Liaison Report

No report.

2. Other Committee and Liaison Reports

No reports.

B. Discussion on Subcommittees and Workshops

No discussion held.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Boss adjourned the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

Submitted by,



Jasper Carman, Commission Secretary