City of Santa Barbara

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
MAY 1, 2025

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

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

CITY COUNCIL LIAISON:
Mike Jordan

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Devon Wardlow, Vice Chair Lucille Boss, Commissioners Brian Barnwell, Donald DeLuccio, Bejamin Peterson, and Lesley Wiscomb

Absent: Commissioner John M. Baucke

STAFF PRESENT

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Daniel Gullett, Acting City Planner
Megan Arciniega, Senior Planner
Jessica Grant, Supervising Transportation Planner
Kathleen Kennedy, Project Planner
Barbara Burkhart, Project Planner
Eric Goodall, Supervising Engineer
Beth Anna Cornett, 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:

Ms. Arciniega announced that the City issued an emergency Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for the October 2024 sewage spill by the Goleta Water Sanitary District at the Santa Barbara Airport property. The project will have a follow up CDP that will be reviewed by the Planning Commission.

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

1. April 3, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes

2. April 17, 2025 Planning Commission Minutes

MOTION: DeLuccio / Wiscomb
Approve the minutes as presented.

The motion carried by the following vote:
Ayes: 6 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Baucke)

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

Public comment opened at 1:02 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

Written correspondence from Kathleen Stinnett was acknowledged.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL HEARING

ACTUAL TIME: 1:03 P.M.

LOS PATOS UNDERPASS REMOVAL PROJECT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Assessor's Parcel Number:	017-010-079, ROW-001-628
Zoning Designation:	HRC-2/S-D-3, P-R/S-D-3
Application Number:	PLN2019-00591
Applicant:	Eric Goodall / Public Works Department
Owner:	Southern Pac Co

The project would consist of the removal of the Los Patos Rail Bridge, owned and operated by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR); installation of new fill material and ballast; and the placement of new tracks on that fill. The project would also include the construction of temporary railroad tracks (commonly referred to as shoofly tracks) to maintain rail operations while work on the main track takes place. While the proposal is a distinct City project, it is closely related to other separate approved projects in the area: the Los Patos/Cabrillo Roundabout and the UPRR Bridge Replacement Project (Cabrillo/UPRR Bridge Project), along with the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) U.S. 101 High Occupancy Vehicle and Widening Project's 4E North Segment Project (US 101 HOV Project).

The purpose of this hearing is to receive comments from the Planning Commission on the adequacy and completeness of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Los Patos Underpass Removal Project. All comments on the Draft EIR will be responded to in the Final EIR. No action on the Draft EIR or project approval will be taken at this hearing.

Staff Contact: Beth Anna Cornett, Senior Planner
BCornett@SantaBarbaraCA.gov, (805) 564-5537

Eric Goodall, Supervising Engineer and Beth Anna Cornett, Senior Planner gave the Staff presentation. Eric VonBerg, Rincon Consultants, was available to answer questions.

Public comment opened at 1:17 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

Written correspondence from Paulina Conn was acknowledged.

<u>Commissioner comments:</u>

Commissioner Barnwell:

- Emphasizes the importance of selecting replacement sites for trees even though final numbers on how many will be removed has not been determined. Encourages consideration of empty tree wells on Milpas Street or sites where the City's shade study has indicated need.
- Believes that part of negotiations with UPRR should be for City ownership of the historic steel and sandstone as UPRR would have no use for it. In conjunction with this, the EIR should be specific in how the historic steel and sandstone will be repurposed, potentially involving Jeff Shelton's brother David, who is locally famous for his metalwork.
- Would like staff to consider other uses of the land that is designated to be a driveway as he believes the lot has value and could be a potential restaurant or housing project.
- Thanks and compliments staff for the work completed so far.

Commissioner Wiscomb:

- Agrees with Commissioner Barnwell on repurposing the sandstone and steel but very concerned about coordination with UPRR as the Commission might struggle to comment on a Final EIR without input from them about all aspects of the report.
- Would like the interpretive display to be reviewed by the Historic Landmarks Commission again before it returns to Planning Commission.
- Agrees with Commissioner Barnwell regarding tree replacement and encourages staff to work with the Urban Forester and review the City's shade study despite its age. Believes this could be a golden opportunity to populate neighborhoods that are lacking with some much needed shade.
- The time of year for construction is important and wildlife studies are imperative as the area has a lot of wildlife.
- Emphasizes the importance of an equipment staging area as it would be a detriment to have the heavy machinery in such close proximity to the bird refuge, and very important to not be on street or in parking area.
- Appreciates the study, believes the team worked well together and did a great job.

Commissioner DeLuccio:

- Would like to see a mitigation monitoring schedule at the next review.

- In support of leaving documentation methods and interpretive display designs up to the HLC, making sure to communicate with UPRR to make the display successful.

Commissioner Peterson:

- Thanks all for their efforts and for answering questions both in this hearing and at the site visit.
- Echoes fellow Commissioners comments on environmental impacts, especially regarding trees and wildlife given that it is a sensitive area.
- Echoes fellow Commissioners comments on the removal of historic structures, especially the train bridge.
- Feels strongly in agreement with Commissioner Wiscomb's comment about coordination with UPRR regarding the repurposing of historic materials and input on the EIR.
- Supportive of the idea of thinking beyond the traditional box in terms of affordable housing sites and encourages staff to evaluate this site as a potential option for housing.

Chair Wardlow:

- Thanks staff for their time in preparing the report, acknowledging that it was a significant effort.
- Echoes previous Commissioner comments in regard to the trees that will be affected by this project. Agrees with Commissioner Wiscomb's comment about selecting sites that could be beneficial based off of the shade study, she feels that this is an important opportunity to maximize benefit by planning the replacement in a positive and thoughtful way.
- Hopeful that when the Final EIR returns to the Planning Commission there are more details around the tree concept as that is part of what makes Santa Barbara special and is an important factor for both the Commission and the Community.
- Agrees with Commissioner Wiscomb on the importance of the equipment staging being thoughtful to mitigate the impact of construction on the community and nearby recreation space.
- Thanks staff for answering all of the Commission's questions and looks forward to the next review.

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 1:58 TO 2:09 P.M. ***

IV. NEW ITEM

ACTUAL TIME: 2:09 P.M.

102 W DE LA GUERRA ST

Assessor's Parcel Number:	037-042-038
Zoning Designation:	C-G
Application Number:	PLN2024-00246
Applicant:	Greg Reitz / ReThink Development
Owner:	Greg Reitz / 101 CP LLC

The 25,595-square-foot site is currently developed with a 77-space parking lot. The existing parcel would be subdivided into two lots. Proposed Lot 1 would be 18,318.46 square feet in area and would be developed with a 74,791-square-foot, 4-story self- storage facility with basement.

Proposed Lot 2 would be 7,269.83 square feet in area and would be developed with a 5-story, 44-unit (including 2 moderate- and 2 very-low-income) residential apartment building. In addition, 10 parking lot and 2 front setback trees would be removed. One podocarpus tree would be protected in place and retained, and 10 replacement trees are proposed. The residential apartment building would include 44 long-term bicycle parking spaces, and the self-storage facility would include 2 short-term bicycle parking spaces. The project proposes to comply with all measures and recommendations of the Phase II Archaeological Resources Excavation Report prepared by Provenience Group, Inc. dated November 2024; the Phase I Environmental Site Assessment prepared by Padre Associates, Inc. dated December 2024; the Soil and Soil Vapor Assessment Activities Report of Findings prepared by Padre Associates, Inc. dated January 2025; and the Tree Assessment and Protection Plan prepared by Bill Spiewak Consulting Arborist, dated November 18, 2024.

The site is located within the Priority Housing Overlay and Central Business District. The project would utilize Assembly Bill 2097 (AB-2097), the Average Unit-Size Density (AUD) Program, and State Density Bonus Law (SDBL). A waiver for height restrictions and open yard standards, and a concession to waive story pole requirements, as allowed under SDBL is requested.

The discretionary applications under the jurisdiction of the Planning Commission at this hearing are:

A. A Development Plan to allow the construction of 31,000 square feet of net new nonresidential development (SBMC Chapter 30.230);

B. A Development Plan for a Transfer of Existing Development Rights Permit to transfer 44,518 square feet of nonresidential floor area from a sending site(s) to the project site (SBMC Chapter 30.270);

C. A Tentative Subdivision Map to allow the division of one lot into two lots with one of the lots proposed for commercial development and the other for multi-unit residential development (SBMC Chapter 27.07); and

D. Confirm the Environmental Analyst's determination that the project is exempt from further environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines Section 15332, [In-Fill Development Projects] and SBMC Chapter 22.100.

Project Design Approval and Final Design Approval by the Architectural Board of Review (ABR) will be required for the project at a later date, if the Planning Commission approves the project (SBMC Chapter 30.220).

Density Bonus Approval by the Community Development Director will also be required for the project.

Staff Contact: Barbara Burkhart, Project Planner
BBurkhart@SantaBarbaraCA.gov, (805) 560-7587

EX PARTE COMMUNICATIONS: Commissioners DeLuccio, Wardlow and Wiscomb disclosed communications with the applicant team regarding the project overview.

Barbara Burkhart, Project Planner, gave the Staff presentation. Daniel Gullett, Acting City Planner and Jessica Grant, Supervising Transportation Planner were available to answer questions.

Lauren Anderson, Chair of the Architectural Board of Review (ABR), gave an overview of the ABR's comments on the project from previous ABR hearings and was available to answer questions.

Greg Reitz, ReThink Development; Brian Cearnal, Cearnal Collective; and Bob Cunningham, Arcadia Studio gave the Applicant presentation, and were joined by Crosby Slaught, Investec Real Estate Companies.

Public comment opened at 2:40 p.m., and the following individuals spoke:

1. Ron Robertson
2. Steve Johnson

Written correspondence from Elizabeth Corden, Steve Johnson and Cheryl Rawlings was acknowledged.

Public comment closed at 2:43 p.m.

MOTION: Wiscomb / DeLuccio **Assigned Resolution No. 002-25**
Approve the project, making the findings for the CEQA exemption, Tentative Map, Development Plan, and Transfer of Existing Development Rights as outlined in the Staff Report dated April 24, 2025, subject to the Conditions of Approval as outlined in the Staff Report, with the following revisions to the Conditions of Approval:

1. To the legal extent possible the storage facility and housing component are to be built together and not separately to avoid just the storage portion getting built.
2. The Commission encourages the applicant to consider adding two more deed restricted affordable units.
3. The Commission encourages the applicant to consider offering discounts on the storage units to the renters of the micro units.

The motion carried by the following vote:
Ayes: 5 Noes: 1 (Boss) Abstain: 0 Absent: 1 (Baucke)

Vice Chair Boss opposed for the following reasons:

1. Regarding the Development Plan, specifically consistency with the principles of sound community planning
   a. The 1988 Council Agenda Report details and related policy documents define sound community planning as prioritization of housing and residential density.
   b. She is concerned about the site location being in the core of the Central Business District and Housing Priority Overlay which are critical factors.
   c. She expressed that if the Commission truly cared about the housing crisis, a housing site that did not reach maximum residential density would not be approved.
   d. She is concerned about the storage needs assessment.
2. Regarding the Transfer of Existing Development Rights
   a. She is concerned about the Sending Sites as she is unsure that they will all agree to the conditions of the developer.
   b. The project does not appear to meet the goals of the nonresidential growth management program which prioritizes the use of limited resources for affordable and community benefit housing.

The ten calendar day appeal period was announced.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

ACTUAL TIME: 4:26 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.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Wardlow adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

Submitted by,

Jasper Carman

Jasper Carman, Commission Secretary