City of Santa Barbara

PLANNING COMMISSION
MINUTES
JULY 6, 2023

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

COMMISSION MEMBERS:
Roxana Bonderson, Chair
John M. Baucke, Vice Chair
Lucille Boss
Donald DeLuccio
Sheila Lodge
Devon Wardlow
Lesley Wiscomb

STAFF:
Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Kira Esparza, Commission Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bonderson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Chair Roxana Bonderson, Vice Chair John M. Baucke, Commissioners Lucille Boss, Donald DeLuccio, Sheila Lodge, Devon Wardlow, and Lesley Wiscomb

Absent: None

STAFF PRESENT

Tava Ostrenger, Assistant City Attorney
Allison DeBusk, Senior Planner
Christopher Bell, City TV Production Supervisor
Janet Ahern, City TV Production Specialist
Dan Gullett, Interim City Planner
Rosie Dyste, Project Planner
Brenda Beltz, Project Planner
Dana Falk, Project Planner
Kira Esparza, 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. June 15, 2023 Planning Commission Minutes

MOTION: Wiscomb / DeLuccio
Approve the minutes as presented.

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

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

Public comment opened at 1:04 p.m., and as no one wished to speak, it closed.

III. NEW ITEM

ACTUAL TIME: 1:04 P.M.

OBJECTIVE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

Reference Number: PLN2022-00390

The Planning Commission will receive a presentation on the Draft Objective Design and Development Standards (ODDS), receive public comment, hold a discussion, and provide initial feedback to staff.

Rosie Dyste, Project Planner, City of Santa Barbara, gave the presentation with Stephan Pellegrini and Tony Perez, Opticos Design Inc., Consulting. Dan Gullett, Interim City Planner; Brenda Beltz, Project Planner; and Dana Falk, Project Planner were available to answer questions.

Public comment opened at 1:45 p.m., and the following individuals spoke:

1. Fred Sweeney
2. Noah Boland
3. Steve Johnson
4. Dennis Whelan

Written correspondence from Steve Johnson and Pat Saley was acknowledged.

Public comment closed at 1:57 p.m.

Commissioner comments:

Commissioner Wiscomb:

- Suggests considering consolidating some chapters, as it is a cumbersome document.
- The top-of-bank is subjective and should be addressed.
- Recommends simplifying Title 30 number references as they may change.
- An executive summary highlighting chapters may be an important addition either in the documents itself or as a handout.
- Believes the 5-zone palette is appropriate.
- Appreciates the attention to the transitions.
- Suggests gathering public input on the Haley-Milpas corridor before going the 3-style route.
- Suggests presenting the draft to the ABR and HLC again.
- The major entry points into Santa Barbara and mountain views should be Mediterranean style.
- Suggests that staff look into the comments made by Fred Sweeney regarding De La Vina Street.
- Agrees that the Funk Zone being noted as the downtown edge is too intense.
- Intrigued by the comment that the Downtown core should be called something else as it might apply to other areas. For example, in the Haley-Milpas corridor there is intense development, so that could also be considered a core area.
- The Mesa is a mixed-use corridor.
- There are areas in the City that are defined in the Local Coastal Program as being an Industrial Zone. The Funk Zone has the industrial look. Consider that this is not just contemporary, but also industrial style. There are areas of the City where that architecture would match perfectly with the feel of the area.
- More neighborhood outreach should be done in places like the Haley-Milpas corridor to see if industrial/contemporary fits there.
- Believes more flexibility is appropriate for open yard areas. Appreciates the requirement for public open spaces for the larger projects.
- It may fit the scale of the City better if 3-acre Large Sites standards are required for 2 acre parcels.
- Most parcel areas that have smaller lot sizes are worthy of consideration. The 6,000 square foot lot is constraining. The more flexibility there is to provide housing the better.
- Thanks to staff, Opticos, and the work group. This is a highly complex document, but the presentation and discussion today has been encouraging. Looks forward to the next iteration.
- Supportive of the standards for new infill adjacent to smaller/historic resources.

Commissioner Lodge:

- Would like to see private open yard requirements.
- Would like to see contemporary style go away. The City Charter for ABR says, “shall be guided by approving any permit by the protection and preservation of the natural charm and beauty of the area of which the city is located and the historical style and qualities and characteristics, the building structures, and architectural details associated with and established by its long and illustrious and distinguished past.” This doesn’t mean that every building has to be white stucco and red tiled roof. Good architecture doesn’t cost more than bad. Architecture should have the grace and timeless quality that has been established as the Santa Barbara tradition.
- The images on the cover do not represent what she wants to see in Santa Barbara.
- Cannot support this document as it is currently written.

Commissioner Boss:

- It would be beneficial to have community engagement focused on the East and West Sides. The current survey was mostly homeowners, but including renters could be beneficial.
- Victorian styles should be reconsidered.
- Understands that it is part of El Pueblo Viejo district but worries that in focusing on “pretty” or classic Santa Barbara in the Mediterranean style, it is focused where wealthier people live or frequent. Questions how that might impact the areas outside of the El Pueblo Viejo district.
- Commends staff for their hard work and making all information online and accessible to the community. Makes this draft concise and as objective as possible.

Commissioner Wardlow:

- Agrees that East Side neighborhood associations should be engaged with and made aware of the different types of styles on Milpas.
- Appreciates staff’s work.
- Objectiveness is important to streamline but it brings some concerns.
- Supports many of the comments made by fellow Commissioners.

Commissioner DeLuccio:

- Commends staff for the document and feels like it is almost complete.
- Needs more input from the public and a larger radius, especially on Milpas.
- In some areas, there is the 45ft height limit. Not opposed to higher heights, but when the height ceiling is raised, applicants may start requesting even more height.
- The document should go before the Work Group again.
- Appreciated design standards where it is more laid out.
- Concerned about how historic resources will be respected with how new buildings are built out.
- Appreciated the open spaces in general and larger projects having 10% set aside for open yard spaces.
- Suggests looking at the architectural styles on the Haley-Milpas corridor and De La Vina Street.
- Allowing for duplexes in the R2 zone is a worthy endeavor in the spirit of trying to create more housing in our City.

Vice Chair Baucke:

- The state of California is declaring an attack on our design process through its legislation. This is a document that will be used to ensure that the community continues to have architecture at the standard that Santa Barbarians are used to. Unfortunately, the discretionary process in the City Charter is under attack from the state legislature because of the lack of production of housing. Because of this what is acceptable from a design standpoint for the community needs to be clearly defined. If it is not defined in a very detailed way the building community will not create quality housing. Their business model is to do the least possible to make as much profit in return. This is where the friction is between the public realm and what is seen in the community. The more detailed and prescription the standards can be, the better.
- There are some styles that have been dropped but understands the limitations of the document.
- Contemporary is an architectural style that is found in the community, but he suggests it be removed as a design option or limited significantly. Developers will opt to do contemporary styles as it can be less expensive to produce, but it is not contextual to the community except for in some areas such as La Cumbre Plaza.
- There needs to be a discussion if certain area classifications should be restudied, such as Milpas, which is currently a mixed-use corridor, but might be better suited as Downtown Edge. There are projects that are already approved in the area, such as 701 Milpas St, that would better fit the Downtown Edge intensity. There shouldn't be inconsistencies between the type of projects being approved in the area through the regular process and the ODDS process.
- For Large Sites, smaller block dimensions are better from a walkability and livability standpoint.
- Shade structure dimensions need to be clarified. There could be confusion on whether dimensions are lumber dimensions or actual size.
- La Cumbre Plaza should be given greater intensity than what is being proposed because it is going to be an open process and is one of the places in which the most impact can be made on housing needs. The amount of intensity that can be handled at that location is high and can address a number of other issues such as the school issues.
- The Downtown Edge designation is too intense for the Funk Zone. It should have been given the Mixed-Use Corridor designation.
- Questions why the Haley and Milpas corridors would have lower intensity designation currently being proposed. It should be higher to be consistent with some of the recent proposals in the area, especially on Milpas. The project at 701 Milpas St being an example.
- The Mesa might need Mixed-Use Corridor designation on both sides of Cliff, similar to Coast Village Road. These two areas are quite similar, and at least their future should be fairly similar in intensity.
- Consider renaming the districts, especially upping the intensity of the Milpas corridor. Consider core term or neighborhood center or some other term. There are a number of terms that can be used. Just using the name "core" or "downtown" sort of leads you to believe that it has to be next to downtown.
- As to the architectural styles map, very concerned with the areas on the Milpas and Haley corridors and the extent that contemporary style should be allowed. Believes that if an applicant wants to have a contemporary project in these areas, they need to go through the normal design review process and should not be able to use this process for that.

- Need to be very cautious on any allowance for the contemporary style. It will be the developer's default style since it is easier to construct, design, and build and it costs less. It should be an exception, not the rule. And what we should be putting into the context of the ODDS is the rule, not the exception.
- The adjacent standards for new infill projects have proposed a best practice methodology. The Architectural Board of Review and Historic Landmarks Commission may have more details on that. This is how to address that particular concern and the ODDS has outlined it as well as possible.
- The ground floor nonresidential is appropriate and should be the default and what we expect in the Downtown Core. If an applicant wants to do something different than that, then they should go through the other processes. The point is to activate the street, and other ground floor uses could have the opposite effect.
- Should consider working on the open yard calculations which would be more flexible in how its calculated, and could include upper story open areas.
- In the staff report there is a question asking if there are situations in which increased density should be allowed, and the answer to that is yes, when deed restricted affordable housing is proposed, it should be allowed.
- In the staff report there is a question asking if new residential and mixed-use projects in the Downtown Core (i.e., State Street from Highway 101 to Sola) should allow unlimited density, no open yard, and no parking. The elimination of parking should be tied to increased affordable housing. Failure to tie the elimination of parking to affordability is simply a gift to the landowner and it just increases the land residual value in its selling price, and it is not in the public interest to simply make that gift without giving the affordable housing in return.
- In the staff report there is a question asking if the ODDS should allow for more duplexes in the R-2 zone than is currently allowed by the Zoning Ordinance. There could be support for going to smaller sizes for duplex lot provisions, but it should be clear about how the properties are accessed, whether its front or rear loaded or whether it's stacked or side by side. Currently the ODDS has side by side and stacked, but it does not tie those two to access, so there may be an "A" and "B" option that could be added that would allow for smaller lot sizes.
- Would like to see a discussion of how multigenerational houses could be incorporated as a building type. It could really clearly be used on the East and West Sides, and it could do a lot for our affordable housing by allowing that with these ODDS standards.
- Commends staff for their work.

Chair Bonderson:

- Thanks the members of the workgroup, specifically Vice Chair Baucke, who represents the Planning Commission, and also Richard Six and David Black from ABR, Robert Ooley and Dennis Doordan, from HLC, and Cass Ensberg and Detty Peikert from AIA. Their comments are in the staff report and that was where a lot of time was spent referencing and going back and forth. Their comments addressed many of her personal comments and it was very helpful to include that in the staff report.
- Commends staff, knowing it was not a single-handed effort and it's been a big project. Thanks to staff and Opticos team for the large work effort.
- Requests that once the document has been adopted, to include something like Table 1 from the staff report on the website. A chart like this would help any homeowner or any applicant to know where their starting point is and where they need to go.

- Commends the effort of creating a new Title, Title 25, and is thrilled to see the development of this Title 25.
- Other agencies have documents like this already, so there is not a lot of room for confusion. If you have a project in that area, you use their municipal code, their land-use development code and you have your design guidelines side by side. It is exciting to be headed in the direction to be able to refer to a document that hopefully is clear.
- Echoes other sentiments, that it is a shame not to have language added for different architectural style options and pathways addressed. It feels like it is an incomplete document, and we shouldn't limit our community to three styles for no other reason than running out of time. If it's three because the want is three, that's fine, but if it's three because we didn't have time to evaluate the other options, that's concerning.
- Appreciates chapter 9, the exceptions section, and appreciate the opportunity for a project to opt out completely and if they don't want to follow these guidelines, they can take their chances in discretionary review.
- Requests to see ranges on block sizes and walkability with something that is very specific to the Santa Barbara community. Not every neighborhood may be the same, so there may need to be an analysis added.
- Supports the mixed-use design in the Downtown Core but would also be open to reducing the 14-ft ceiling height to 12-ft to help reduce height or to use the height in different ways and not making it a hard 14-ft requirement.
- Supports providing flexibility on intensive projects to allow a developer to provide increased housing stock.
- Does not have an issue with zone names and designations. It is disappointing that we cannot have more styles demonstrated. However, it doesn't mean that achieving another design style is not possible, it just means you leave this document and go to a different process.
- Appreciates and agrees with Commissioner Lodge's comment about timeless architecture, design, and quality of the traditional Santa Barbara style.
- Understands that contemporary style is not everyone's preference. It is not applicable in our EPV area, or the downtown core of State Street, but there is room for it if we look at the zones one by one. It goes back to neighborhood compatibility, which there is already language for.
- Agrees that the cover images might want to be reconsidered.
- Appreciates how the standards for infill adjacent to smaller historic resources is approached. Appreciates the options, the diagrams, and as a practitioner it is very helpful to have the guidance and the descriptions that give a variety of approaches, and it also demonstrates best practices.
- Supports the ground floor mixed use requirement. It activates the street, encourages people to spend time on that street, making it more viable for walking, public access, increase spending, improve the economy, employment, and standard of living.
- There is an opportunity with Title 25 to encourage the use of the ODDS. Providing more flexibility would encourage the use of this document. It would encourage the applicant to follow the guidelines because they want the flexibility instead of going to discretionary review and lose that advantage.
- Upper floor public spaces should be considered open yard. If that could be counted, it would encourage more open space even if it is not on the ground level.
- Concerned about losing all parking spaces when following the state mandated direction of reducing required parking. It runs the risk of losing people who may need support, maybe the elderly, the disabled, people with families who may need a vehicle. As Vice

Chair Baucke mentioned, reduced parking goes hand in hand with certain types of housing developments.

- Appreciates the efforts and excited to see how much of the comments helps the next iteration.

*** THE COMMISSION RECESSED FROM 3:06 TO 3:19 P.M. ***

IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

ACTUAL TIME: 4:37 P.M.

A. Committee and Liaison Reports:

1. Staff Hearing Officer Liaison Report

   No report.

2. Other Committee and Liaison Reports

   a. Commissioner Bonderson reported on the Architectural Board of Review meeting of May 30, 2023 and June 26, 2023.
   b. Commissioner Lodge reported on the June 29, 2023 meeting of the Earthquake Centenary Group.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bonderson adjourned the meeting at 4:42 p.m.

Submitted by,

Kira Esparza

Kira Esparza, Commission Secretary