



# City of Sunnyvale

## Meeting Minutes - Final Planning Commission

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Monday, October 10, 2022

7:00 PM

Telepresence Meeting: City Web Stream |  
Comcast Channel 15 | AT&T Channel 99

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**Special Meeting: Study Session - Canceled | Public Hearing - 7:00 PM**

### **7 P.M. PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

Pursuant to Government Code Subdivision 54953(e), the meeting was conducted telephonically; pursuant to state law, the City Council made the necessary findings by adopting Resolution No. 1089-21, reaffirmed on September 27, 2022.

Chair Pyne called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

#### **ROLL CALL**

**Present:** 7 - Chair Martin Pyne  
Vice Chair Nathan Iglesias  
Commissioner Daniel Howard  
Commissioner John Howe  
Commissioner Michael Serrone  
Commissioner Neela Shukla  
Commissioner Carol Weiss

#### **PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS**

3.      [22-0115](#)      **Peery Park Specific Plan Amendment Initiation Requests**  
Two applications in the Peery Park Specific Plan (PPSP) area with requests to increase the allowable office/industrial square footage and to study housing on one of the housing opportunity sites (HOS) (not currently permitted in the plan).  
**File:**                      2020-7814  
**Location:**      **840 W. California Avenue** (APNs: 165-26-011, 165-26-009, 165-26-010, 165-26-012, 165-26-013, 165-26-014, 165-26-016, 165-26-018, and 165-26-020)  
**Proposed Project:** **Peery Park Specific Plan Amendment Initiation**  
Request to initiate a study to consider 1,027 housing units on the western 13.1 acres of the property (79 dwelling units per acre (du/acre) and a

net increase of 487,000 square feet of office/industrial on the remaining 16.2 acres of the property for a total of 1,111,134 square feet (157% floor area ratio [FAR]). The site is currently known as the Sunnyvale Business Park and is developed with ten office/R&D buildings totaling 623,456 square feet (49% FAR) and the Libby Water Tower, a Sunnyvale Local Landmark. The site currently only allows for office/industrial uses up to 100% FAR.

**Applicant / Owner:** Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill LLP (applicant) / Steelwave LLC (owner)

**File:** 2021-7022

**Location:** 505 & 525 Almanor Avenue (APNs 165-44-001, 165-44,002, and 165-44-003)

**Proposed Project: Peery Park Specific Plan Amendment Initiation**

Request to initiate a study to consider merging the parcels (7.2 acres) and allowing a new 135,000 square foot office building and parking structure for a total of 311,858 square feet (99% FAR). The parcels are currently developed with a 166,300 square foot (56% FAR) office building with surface parking. The site currently allows up to 100% FAR with provisions of community benefits; however, the additional 135,000 square feet of office space requires an increase to the Development Reserve.

**Applicant / Owner:** RMW Architecture & Interiors (applicant) / Invesco Advisors, Inc (owner)

**Zoning (both sites):** PPSP - Innovation Edge (PPSP-IE)

**Environmental Review:** The decision to initiate a Specific Plan Amendment (SPA) study does not require environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) because the initiation of a study does not constitute a project with the meaning of CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378 (a) as it has no potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment. If initiated, the proposed SPA would be subject to the provisions of CEQA.

**Project Planner:** Amber Blizinski, [ablizinski@sunnyvale.ca.gov](mailto:ablizinski@sunnyvale.ca.gov), (408) 730-2723

Principal Planner Amber Blizinski presented the staff report with a slide presentation.

Principal Planner Blizinski explained to Commissioner Weiss why an increase to the

development capacity is necessary.

When Commissioner Howe asked Principal Planner Blizinski how long the additional development capacity would last, she replied that the net new square feet of office/industrial space should last at least five years, but that it depends on the market. They also discussed the costs associated with the Special Plan Amendment (SPA) process and who would be responsible for those costs.

Commissioner Serrone thanked Principal Planner Blizinski for her excellent and comprehensive report. They discussed the floor area ratio (FAR) for the proposed project sites relative to the FAR of the Moffett Park Specific Plan (MPSP). Principal Planner Blizinski advised that some members of the public may provide comments on the FAR of the proposed projects. Principal Planner Blizinski confirmed that the development capacity for the original Peery Park Specific Plan (PPSP) were analyzed in 2016 under an Environmental Impact Report.

Commissioner Serrone spoke of his concerns regarding the possibility of delaying the study for the California Avenue site by waiting for the MPSP to be completed and including the other parcels. He also received clarification from Principal Planner Blizinski about the zoning designation for the four parcels on Hermosa Court.

Regarding the relocation of the Libby Water Tower, Principal Planner Blizinski assured Commissioner Serrone that the applicants would need to provide additional information on a feasibility study for moving the heritage landmark and the entire proposal would be heard by the Heritage Preservation Commission.

Vice Chair Iglesias felt that the proximity of the California Avenue site to transit might warrant a higher FAR and questioned staff's recommendation for the study of 120% FAR. Principal Planner Blizinski explained staff's perspective for their recommendations and why 157% FAR might not be appropriate for the site. She also suggested that the Planning Commissioners may recommend an alternative FAR to the City Council if desired.

Vice Chair Iglesias asked whether the conceptual site plan for 400-840 W. California Avenue in staff's slide presentation was based on an FAR of up to 120%. Principal Planner Blizinski stated that the site plan presented is the one proposed by the applicants and that they would have to redesign the site if a lower FAR is studied.

Chair Pyne confirmed with Principal Planner Blizinski that if the land use designation

for the 840 W. California Avenue site will allow residential development, the proposed project at that site would be subject to objective standards outlined by both the state and the City requirements.

Chair Pyne opened the Public Hearing.

Mark Schwettmann (architect and planner at Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill LLP) and Benjamin Yu (representative of Steelwave LLC) presented the project at 840 W. California Avenue including additional images and information.

Commissioner Howard discussed with Principal Planner Blizinski the relationship between density bonus and the number of affordable dwelling units for the proposed project. Principal Planner Blizinski also advised that the Planning Commissioners may set parameters for the housing density that is studied if it differs from staff's recommendation.

At Vice Chair Iglesias' request, Mr. Schwettmann and Principal Planner Blizinski explained plans for both commercial and residential development at the proposed project site as well as the FAR and density allocated for both development types.

Chair Pyne discussed with Mr. Schwettmann and Principal Planner Blizinski the percentage by which the applicant may consider increasing the density bonus for the proposed project site.

Russ Nichols, architect at RMW Architecture & Interiors, presented the project at 505 and 525 Almanor Avenue including additional images and information.

David Lowe, Sunnyvale resident, spoke against the proposed project at 840 W. California Avenue and emphasized the negative impact it will have on existing traffic and parking issues – particularly at the intersection of Mathilda Avenue and California Avenue. He noted that an increase in the number of vehicles on the road will have a negative impact on climate as well.

Humberto Nava, field representative for Carpenters Local 405, advised that the proposed projects serve as a great opportunity to create good paying jobs with health benefits for those in the workforce and their families. He also stressed the importance of creating affordable housing.

Patrick M., Sunnyvale resident, echoed concerns raised by Mr. Lowe regarding

existing parking and traffic issues that will worsen with the approval of the proposed projects. He added that nearby schools may become impacted with the creation of additional residential developments as well.

Mr. Schwettmann and Mr. Yu presented the project at 840 W. California Avenue including additional information.

Based on discussion and concerns in the public comment portion of the item, Principal Planner Blizinski informed the Planning Commission that Assembly Bill (AB) 2097 will eliminate parking minimum requirements for both residential and commercial sites that are within a half mile of public transit which includes the California Avenue site.

Mr. Nichols presented the project at 505 and 525 Almanor Avenue including additional information.

Chair Pyne closed the Public Hearing.

Chair Pyne discussed with Principal Planner Blizinski the traffic analysis that would be conducted as part of the Specific Plan Amendment and the proposed projects and what it would entail.

Commissioner Howard initiated a discussion on a potential motion and explained his reasoning.

At Vice Chair Iglesias' request, Commissioner Howard explained why he proposed a density maximum of R-5 for the proposed project at 840 W. California Avenue.

Commissioner Serrone received clarification from Principal Planner Blizinski regarding the elimination of parking requirements associated with AB 2097 and the designation of an activity center on Hermosa Court.

Principal Planner Blizinski reiterated that the Planning Commissioners may set parameters for the FAR that is studied.

Commissioner Shukla revealed that she is supportive of a greater FAR than 120% as well as a density maximum of R-5 for the proposed project at 840 W. California Avenue.

MOTION: Commissioner Howard moved and Commissioner Shukla seconded the motion to approve Alternatives 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 to the City Council with the following modification to Alternative 1a:

1a.) Initiate a Specific Plan Amendment study to consider increasing the PPSP development capacity to allow up to 120% FAR of office/industrial square feet (222,672 net new square feet) and up to 928 housing units at a density no higher than R-5.

Commissioner Howard reiterated his reasons for proposing a maximum of R-5 density for the proposed project at 840 W. California Avenue. He explained his aim to maximize residential development near public transit.

Commissioner Shukla spoke in overall support of the motion.

Chair Pyne echoed comments made by Commissioner Howard regarding the importance of including residential development at the 840 W. California Avenue proposed project site since it will be close to transit. He added that he was pleased to find that the existing open space and walking path on the site will be preserved. Lastly, he stated that while the proposed project at 505 and 525 Almanor Avenue conforms to existing standards, he may provide additional comments on the proposed project design at a later time.

Vice Chair Iglesias voiced his support of the motion, the adjacency of residential development to public transit at the 840 W. California Avenue proposed project site, and gathering additional information from the study that will take place.

Commissioner Serrone stated that he is not in support of the motion in part due to the low FAR proposed for the 840 W. California Avenue site and the rise in parking concerns that the proposed project at that site may cause.

Commissioner Weiss shared her support of the motion, a maximum of R-5 density for the proposed project at 840 W. California Avenue, and placement of residential development close to public transit. She added that she hopes that the Libby Water Tower, a national and civic treasure, will be relocated appropriately.

Chair Pyne agreed with comments made by Commissioner Weiss regarding the Libby Water Tower.

The motion carried by the following vote:

- Yes: 6 -** Chair Pyne  
Vice Chair Iglesias  
Commissioner Howard  
Commissioner Howe  
Commissioner Shukla  
Commissioner Weiss
- No: 1 -** Commissioner Serrone

This recommendation will be forwarded to the City Council for consideration at the November 1, 2022 meeting.