



City of Sunnyvale

Meeting Minutes Planning Commission

Monday, April 28, 2025

7:00 PM

Online and Council Chambers, City Hall,
456 W. Olive Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94086

No Study Session | Public Hearing - 7:00 PM

NO STUDY SESSION

7 P.M. PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

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

SALUTE TO THE FLAG

Chair Iglesias led the salute to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Chair Nathan Iglesias
Vice Chair Galen Kim Davis
Commissioner Chris Figone
Commissioner Martin Pyne
Commissioner Michael Serrone
Commissioner Neela Shukla
Commissioner Ilan Sigura

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

Girl Scouts Troop 60506 presented on the negative impacts of light pollution and the importance of implementing a Dark Sky Ordinance.

Lisa McManis, Sunnyvale resident, shared her concerns regarding the encroachment permit that allows PG&E to demolish a large portion of City sidewalks when restoring them. She explained that a smaller sidewalk repair is consistent with the City's climate and zero waste goals.

Rani Fischer, Chair of the Environmental Action Committee for the Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance, spoke in solidarity with the Girl Scouts and encouraged the creation of a Dark Sky Ordinance for the City.

Tim Kirby, City Manager, introduced himself to the Planning Commission and provided a brief overview of various City projects that are ongoing or upcoming.

Daniel Alvarez began to share comments regarding the proposed project located at 777 Sunnyvale Saratoga Road, but Chair Iglesias advised him to reserve his comments until the item is called up for review later in the meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

There were no public speakers for this agenda item.

MOTION: Vice Chair Davis moved and Commissioner Shukla seconded the motion to approve the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Chair Iglesias
Vice Chair Davis
Commissioner Figone
Commissioner Serrone
Commissioner Shukla
Commissioner Sigura

No: 0

Abstained: 1 - Commissioner Pyne

1. [25-0543](#) Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2025

Approve Planning Commission Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2025 as submitted.

PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS

2. [25-0513](#) **Proposed Project:** Related applications on a 5.24-acre site:
SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PERMIT: to redevelop a commercial site into a 242-unit multi-family development (80 townhomes and 162 apartment units) and 2,050 square feet commercial; and,
TENTATIVE MAP: to subdivide the existing lot into 31 lots and create 80 condominiums.
Location: 777 Sunnyvale Saratoga Road (APN: 201-36-002)
File #: PLNG-2023-0807
Zoning: ECR-MU54 (El Camino Real Specific Plan - Mixed Use)
Applicant / Owner: Valley Oak Partners, LLC (applicant) / Mardit

Properties, LP (owner)

Environmental Review: Environmental impacts of the project are addressed in the El Camino Real Specific Plan (ECRSP) Environmental Impact Report (EIR). No additional review required as per CEQA Guidelines 15183.

Project Planner: Momo Ishijima, (408) 730-7532,
mishijima@sunnyvale.ca.gov

Senior Planner Momo Ishijima presented the staff report with a slide presentation.

Vice Chair Davis confirmed with Senior Planner Ishijima that since the proposed project is located near a major transit stop, it is not subject to minimum parking requirements.

Vice Chair Davis received an explanation from Senior Planner Ishijima about how the proposed project may apply waivers and concessions from development standards under the State Density Bonus Law since 15% of its units are Below Market Rate (BMR).

At Commissioner Serrone's request, Planning Officer Shaunn Mendrin explained that once the proposed project is approved, approval of its Alternative Compliance Plan will be considered by the Housing and Human Services Commission and then by the City Council. He added that, per BMR requirements, approval of the proposed project must precede approval of its Alternative Compliance Plan.

Commissioner Serrone asked whether approval of the proposed project would still be valid if the major transit stop it is near is later removed. Senior Planner Ishijima explained that its approval would be subject to conditions at the time of approval. Principal Planner Noren Caliva-Lepe added that if the proposed project is approved under current conditions, it would not be subject to the minimum parking requirements even if the major transit stop near it is later removed. Senior Assistant City Attorney Sandra Lee provided additional clarification on this matter.

Commissioner Serrone and Senior Planner Ishijima discussed the allocation of parking spots for the proposed project's townhomes and apartments. Senior Planner Ishijima noted the proposed project's Parking Management Plan requirement in the conditions of approval and the Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs) for the townhomes will include the Parking Management Plan.

Commissioner Serrone received an explanation from Principal Transportation Engineer Lillian Tsang regarding the need for a local traffic study to be conducted

for the proposed project.

Commissioner Serrone confirmed with Principal Transportation Engineer Tsang that the location of the proposed project's hawk light will be determined when developer provides actual design plans of the proposed project's roadway.

Commissioner Serrone confirmed with Senior Planner Ishijima that the proposed project includes a pedestrian walkway to the proposed project's northwest driveway.

At Commissioner Serrone's request, Senior Planner Ishijima explained that the lot size of the proposed project was reduced due to street dedications.

Commissioner Serrone confirmed with Principal Transportation Engineer Tsang that while the proposed project does not include any improvements to the bicycle lane on Mathilda Avenue, improvements to the bicycle lane on Sunnyvale Saratoga Road will be made when the median on that road is built.

Commissioner Pyne confirmed with Principal Planner Caliva-Lepe that if the proposed project is approved by the Planning Commission, it may still be appealed or called up for review by the City Council within fifteen days.

Commissioner Shukla asked about the next steps for the proposed project once it is approved by the Planning Commission. Planning Officer Mendrin explained that upon its approval, its Alternative Compliance Plan will be considered by the Housing and Human Services Commission and then by the City Council.

Commissioner Shukla shared her concerns regarding the noise levels within the proposed project's courtyards. Senior Planner Ishijima responded that Attachment 14 to the staff report addresses this matter, and the applicant's presentation may provide additional details.

Commissioner Figone questioned whether the cost for the proposed project's rental units will be lower since there will be fewer parking spaces. Planning Officer Mendrin answered that the affordability of these units will be determined by the proposed project's Alternative Compliance Plan and acknowledged that the proposed project will still include parking spaces.

Chair Iglesias confirmed with Principal Transportation Engineer Tsang that a midblock crosswalk coupled with a hawk light will be incorporated to allow

pedestrians from the proposed development to safely cross the intersection and visit the retail developments on the other side of Sunnyvale Saratoga Road.

Chair Iglesias received clarification from Senior Planner Ishijima about how the definition of a major transit stop under Assembly Bill 2553 released the proposed project from minimum parking requirements. Still, Chair Iglesias questioned why this bill would apply when it was adopted after the submittal of the proposed project's Senate Bill 330 (SB 330) formal application. Principal Planner Caliva-Lepe and Senior Assistant City Attorney Lee confirmed that the project may utilize AB 2553 and that parking requirements do not apply.

Commissioner Pyne confirmed with Senior Assistant City Attorney Lee that state legislature can amend SB 330 to change the way it applies to relevant projects.

Chair Iglesias opened the Public Hearing.

Doug Rich (Entitlements at Valley Oak Partners) and Chek Tang (President at Studio T-Square) presented additional information on the proposed project.

Commissioner Pyne confirmed with the applicant team that the width of the proposed project's pedestrian walkways will all be appropriately sized.

Commissioner Pyne and Mr. Rich discussed the balance between the number of parking spaces offered by the proposed project and the number of cars owned by potential residents. Mr. Rich stated that since the proposed project is located near a major transit station, the aim is to encourage residents to use public transportation.

Commissioner Pyne expressed his concerns about the negative impacts of the elimination of minimum parking requirements, namely overflowing street parking and the use of adjacent lots. He noted that government regulations must be created to mitigate these impacts.

Commissioner Pyne highlighted some positive features of the proposed project, including its bicycle parking, pedestrian connectivity, and hawk light.

Commissioner Pyne asked whether the proposed project's walkways will be adequately lit. Mr. Rich responded that photometric studies were conducted for the proposed project to ensure that its walkways will be well-lit, accessible, and safe.

Commissioner Serrone noted that, compared to similar projects, the proposed project's parking does not reflect its projected occupancy as closely. He asked whether the proposed developments' units are intended to cater to those who do not have a car or those who are not in need of one. Mr. Rich responded that a decline in parking spaces coincides with current trends in the decrease of driver's license applications, state laws eliminating minimum parking requirements, and the rise of automated vehicles.

Commissioner Sigura stated that the proposed project's townhomes may lack a view or ample natural light because they will be adjacent to a tall building. He added that this may negatively impact their resale value. Mr. Rich responded that these issues were addressed by increasing the setbacks for the proposed developments.

Commissioner Sigura asked whether the proposed project's landscaping on the north and south sides of Mathilda Avenue may be reduced to increase the width of the sidewalk. Mr. Rich answered that the proposed sidewalk width will remain as such to disincentivize pedestrians from using the back alley since it is intended mainly for Emergency Vehicular Access (EVA).

Vice Chair Davis asked why the proposed project does not include the maximum number of units permitted by the State Density Bonus Law for that site. Mr. Rich explained that due to constraints from fire codes and structural requirements, this maximum number of units could not be met.

Vice Chair Davis confirmed with Mr. Rich that the proposed project's townhomes will be ownership units.

Vice Chair Davis asked about the kind of networking that the proposed project's units will be wired with, but Mr. Rich was unable to provide an answer.

At Commissioner Shukla's request, Mr. Tang provided the distinction between the proposed project's community play area and its courtyard. Commissioner Shukla asked whether anything could be done to mitigate noise levels for these areas.

Commissioner Shukla and Mr. Rich discussed the vision for the proposed project's retail space.

Commissioner Shukla suggested that a partnership be formed so that residents of the proposed project's developments may use parking spaces in adjacent lots.

Commissioner Figone asked about the types of businesses that would allow this area to thrive. Mr. Rich noted that the area is already thriving but shared his preference for Topgolf in particular.

Chair Iglesias asked whether the exterior materials for the proposed project's courtyard can absorb sound. Mr. Rich explained that consideration was given to the material for and the landscaping around the courtyard to minimize noise levels there.

Chair Iglesias confirmed with Mr. Rich that residents of the proposed project's townhomes will not have access to the amenities available to residents of the proposed project's apartments.

Chair Iglesias suggested that although not required, additional consideration be given to increasing the amount of parking spaces for the proposed project.

Daniel Alvarez, field representative for Nor Cal Carpenters Local Union 405, spoke of the proposed project as an opportunity for Valley Oak Partners to hire responsible contractors from accredited apprenticeship programs who are skilled and live locally.

Larry M. questioned whether any consideration was given to the environmental impact of the proposed project's exclusion of recessed windows. He also suggested that the Planning Commission approve Alternative 3 since solutions to the issues that will result from a lack of parking spaces have not been provided.

Kim, Sunnyvale resident, highlighted her concerns regarding several aspects of the proposed project including its height, the imbalance between the number of its parking spaces and residential units, and its appearance. She encouraged City leaders and staff to stand up for their rights and suggested that the proposed project be put on pause until these concerns are addressed.

Arati Gerdes, Sunnyvale resident, shared her apprehensions regarding the proposed project's lack of parking, retail, and recreational spaces. She offered solutions to these concerns and advocated for a more accessible path on Mathilda Avenue for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Stephen Meier spoke in favor of state laws that allow the proposed project to move

forward, commended the proposed developments, and encouraged the Planning Commission to address local impacts of the proposed project and improve accessibility for pedestrians and bicyclists by inserting midblock crossings, extending the City's shuttle system to this area, and considering speed reductions on roads like Sunnyvale Saratoga Road.

Yelena Martynov, Sunnyvale resident, shared comments regarding the existing traffic congestion on Mathilda Avenue and El Camino Real and noted that traffic there will only worsen with the addition of the proposed development. She added that the proposed development will negatively impact the look, feel, and culture of the existing neighborhood and suggested that it be built closer to a Caltrain station.

Chair Iglesias closed the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Pyne confirmed with Planning Officer Mendrin that story poles were previously required for single-family developments for a short period of time. Planning Officer Mendrin added that story poles for a seven-story development would be challenging to do.

Vice Chair Davis confirmed with Planning Officer Mendrin that it is the proposed project's exterior windows that will be recessed and that their recession will have no impact to interior window treatments such as blinds or curtains.

MOTION: Commissioner Pyne moved and Commissioner Shukla seconded the motion to approve Alternative 1 – Make the required findings to approve the CEQA determination that the project is consistent with the ECRSP EIR and no additional environmental review is required pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183 and approve the Special Development Permit based on the Recommended Findings in Attachment 3 and Recommended Conditions of Approval in Attachment 4.

Commissioner Pyne emphasized that the Planning Commission has limited discretion to deny the proposed project under existing state laws and recognized that the proposed project offers much-needed housing, is close to transit, retail, and resources, and is accessible to pedestrians and bicyclists. He also advocated for incentivizing community amenities, retail spaces, and the use of public transportation to increase livability throughout the City. He concluded that the proposed project, and other ones like it, make great additions to the City.

Commissioner Shukla spoke in agreement with comments made by Commissioner

Pyne. She also applauded the proposed project for its ability to provide housing opportunities, open space, and accessible pathways.

Commissioner Serrone voiced his support of the motion and the proposed project. He also spoke in favor of the proposed project's proximity to amenities and transit and its provision of potentially affordable rental and ownership housing opportunities. He expressed his hope that transit in the area will improve over time, the surrounding retail developments will thrive with the addition of more residents, residents of the proposed project will avoid parking in adjacent streets and lots, and the proposed project's hawk light will be visible enough to promote the safety of crossing pedestrians and bicyclists.

Commissioner Figone sympathized with concerns raised by the public and encouraged members of the public to continue voicing their concerns at the state level. He also noted that the proposed development is great.

Vice Chair Davis spoke of the housing and affordability crisis and emphasized the importance of making the City more affordable and livable. He commended the proposed project's developers for their thoughtful proposal and its compliance with City and state guidelines. Lastly, he confirmed his support of the proposed project.

Chair Iglesias stated his support of the proposed project and recognized the positive relationship between the developer and City staff. He also encouraged incentivizing public interests and noted that the proposed project is a solution to an area that needs improvement.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Chair Iglesias
Vice Chair Davis
Commissioner Figone
Commissioner Pyne
Commissioner Serrone
Commissioner Shukla
Commissioner Sigura

No: 0

This decision is final unless appealed or called up for review by the City Council by

5:00 PM on Tuesday, May 13, 2025. The Alternative Compliance Plan for the proposed project will be considered by the Housing and Human Services Commission in May 2025 and again in June 2025 by the City Council.

STANDING ITEM: CONSIDERATION OF POTENTIAL STUDY ISSUES

None.

NON-AGENDA ITEMS AND COMMENTS

-Commissioner Comments

Vice Chair Davis confirmed with Planning Officer Shaunn Mendrin that a special Planning Commission meeting will be held on June 16, 2025, and it will replace the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on June 9, 2025. Vice Chair Davis stated that he is unable to attend the special meeting since he will be out of the country and will not return until June 27, 2025. Chair Iglesias noted that since he will be out of the country on June 23, 2025, the Commission's Chair and Vice Chair will not be present for the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on June 23, 2025. Chair Iglesias asked whether the Planning Commission meeting on June 23, 2025 may be canceled instead of the one on June 9, 2025. Planning Officer Mendrin responded that he will consider other options and present them to the Planning Commission soon.

Commissioner Sigura shared that he will be out of the country for the entire month of July.

Commissioner Figone confirmed with Planning Officer Mendrin that the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on June 9, 2025, will be canceled.

-Staff Comments

Planning Officer Shaunn Mendrin informed the Planning Commissioners that staff did not receive any General Plan initiations for this quarter.

INFORMATION ONLY REPORTS/ITEMS

None.

3. [25-0544](#) Planning Commission Proposed Study Issues, Calendar Year: 2026
(Information Only)

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Iglesias adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM.