



**PLANNING COMMISSION
SUMMARY ACTION MINUTES
Regular Meeting
May 15, 2025**

West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers
625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California

THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD HAS ADOPTED BRIEF SUMMARY AND ACTION MEETING MINUTES, WHICH PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN AND POINTS OF DISCUSSION ONLY. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS OR INDIVIDUAL DISCUSSIONS REGARDING ANY ITEM SUMMARIZED IN THESE MINUTES MAY BE OBTAINED BY VIEWING THE ARCHIVED VIDEOS OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS AT www.weho.org/weho-tv/other-city-meetings

Land Acknowledgment: “The West Hollywood Planning Commission acknowledges that the land on which we gather and that is currently known as the City of West Hollywood is the occupied, unceded, seized territory of the Gabrieleño Tongva and Gabrieleño Kizh peoples.”

1. **CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Lombardi called the meeting of the Planning Commission to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE.** Commissioner Hoopingarner led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **ROLL CALL:**

Commissioners Present: Hoopingarner, Matos, Solomon, Vice-Chair Gregoire, Chair Lombardi.

Commissioners Absent: Carvalheiro, Jones.

Staff Present: Paige Portwood, Associate Planner, Tahirah Farris, Senior Planner, , Francisco Contreras, Long Range Planning Manager, Jennifer Alkire, Acting Director, Community Development Department, Isaac Rosen, Deputy Legal Counsel, and David Gillig, Commission Secretary.

4. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA.**

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission agenda for Thursday May 15, 2025, as presented. **Moved by Vice Chair Gregoire, seconded by Commissioner Matos and passes, noting Commissioner’s Carvalheiro and Jones absent.**

5. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES.**

A. **May 1, 2025**

ACTION: Approve the Planning Commission minutes for Thursday, May 1, 2025, as presented. **Moved by Commissioner Matos, seconded by Vice Chair Gregoire and passes, noting Commissioner’s Carvalheiro and Jones absent and Chair Lombardi abstained.**

ITEM 5.A.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT. None.

7. DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Jennifer Alkire, Acting Director, Community Development Department, stated at the City Council meeting on Monday, May 5, 2025, City Council approved three sustainability related items: 1) authorized staff to issue an RFP (Request for Proposals) for a consultant to explore options for emissions control device requirements to improve local air quality; 2) they received a presentation regarding equitable building performance standards, which relates to a pro-active program to bring buildings into alignment with the climate action goals, and 3) they received an update to the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan implementation progress.

The City Council also passed a zone text amendment establishing a Ministerial Housing Permit Process.

City Council also directed staff to explore raising the threshold for director level review of housing projects, and to explore making the same type of housing projects ministerial in the future. These changes would require zone text amendments and would come back before the Planning Commission before moving on to council.

She announced the West Hollywood Metro K Line Extension First Last Mile Early Assessment Plan has been selected to receive an APLA Planning Award of Merit in the transportation category.

Commissioner Hoopingarner informed staff the Permit Info Map on the West Hollywood website appears to not be properly working and requested an update.

Jennifer Alkire, Acting Director, Community Development Department, stated that best way to access that information is through the online Permit Portal. She stated staff will go in and make sure that link to the Info Map is working, and if it's not, the link will be updated.

8. CONSENT CALENDAR. None.

**9. PUBLIC HEARINGS SECTION I:
PROJECTS SUBJECT TO THE HOUSING ACCOUNTABILITY ACT.** None.

**10. PUBLIC HEARINGS, SECTION II:
OTHER ITEMS THAT REQUIRE A PUBLIC HEARING UNDER THE LAW.**

A. ZONE TEXT AMENDMENT

APPROVAL PROCESS FOR ACCESSORY BUSINESS USES:

Paige Portwood, Associate Planner, provided a verbal presentation and background information, as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, May 15, 2025.

She stated the Planning Commission will consider a zone text amendment to simplify the approval process for Accessory Business Uses (ABUs) and Incidental Business Activities, fostering innovation, adaptability, and a broader mix of creative business models. The proposed zone text amendment aligns with the goals and objectives of the West Hollywood Small Business Initiative.

She provided a history of the request, noting on October 19, 2020, the City Council directed staff to work with the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce on policies, programs, and partnerships in the Small Business Initiative that can be implemented more rapidly to specifically help attract small businesses to the City of West Hollywood.

Several implementation measures have already been adopted to increase flexibility and offer creativity in businesses' operations, including an amendment to enhance and clarify the special events process.

Consistent with recommendations to streamline permitting processes and reduce regulatory barriers, the proposed ABU zone text amendment allows businesses to diversify revenue streams without undergoing extensive zoning changes or approvals. Clarifying operational permissions and increasing flexibility will help local businesses innovate, stay competitive, and better serve the community. The proposed ABU zone text amendment aligns with the City's goals and priorities by empowering businesses to incorporate complementary activities that can strengthen long-term financial sustainability.

She provided a broader spectrum of this item, stating the overall intent of the zone text amendment is to provide flexibility in the permitting process to encourage creativity and economic vitality among local and small businesses within the City of West Hollywood.

She provided clarity and detailed the terms of the zone text amendment references: i.e. primary use, accessory business use, incidental business activities and supplemental activities. She provided hypothetical examples.

The text amendment includes modifications to the regulations of both accessory business uses and incidental business activities. She provided an overview of the Accessory Business Uses, stating, ABUs' combined floor area not to exceed 1,200 square feet or 25 percent of the total floor area of the primary use. It also allows only minor external evidence of accessory business uses.

She spoke regarding the proposed changes to the accessory business uses; stating they can be complementary to primary use, allows flexibility of external evidence of accessory business use, increase the combined floor area to less than 50 percent of the total floor area, and allow accessory business uses that are permitted in the proposed designated commercial zoning districts to be permitted with the same as the primary use.

She clarified the sections that regulate incidental business activities; stating incidental activities are incorporated into code sections alongside accessory business uses, which causes some confusion about the differentiation between the two terms, and incidental activities are permitted only up to twice weekly.

She spoke regarding the proposed changes to the incidental business activities, featured food beverage or wine tastings, workshops, podcast studios and film screenings. Staff proposed to eliminate the conditional use permit and minor conditional use permit requirement for incidental business activity based on their frequency, rather all incidental business activities could be permitted through an administrative permit.

She also clarified prohibited activities with refined language for certain activities and stated they have added an ambient music definition to the code.

She referenced other municipal code sections that are still to be followed, including special event permits and entertainment activities.

There were no official disclosures.

Chair Lombardi opened public comments for Item 10.A.

There were no public speakers.

ACTION: Close public comment portion of the public hearing for Item 10.A.
Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.

The commission requested clarification regarding the definitions regarding accessory business uses and incidental activity spaces, and questioned primary uses versus incidental uses and the percentage of space usage. The commission further questioned and requested clarification regarding development standards for outside promoters.

The commission questioned several hypothetical situations and how that would affect the current process, and asked about admission fees and cover charges.

The commission supports staff's proposal. However, they had concerns and discussed different hypothetical situations regarding admission fees and cover charges, and questioned if the city should be regulating how businesses should charge for incidental activities. Pros and cons were discussed regarding businesses needing to recover their costs.

The commission had concerns regarding the physical space concept language relayed in Sections j, j, and l and suggested perhaps it could be removed or revised. They spoke and discussed the concept of 50% of the total floor area, with the possibility of amending the percentages and language.

Francisco J, Contreras, Long Range Planning Manager suggested the following language changes to the resolution based on the discussion:

Resolution No. PC 25-1604, page 7

B. Incidental Business Activities

i. ~~coworking spaces or in~~ designated remote working areas including workstations, meeting rooms, and Wi-Fi access within cafes or restaurants.

j. live podcast recording ~~studios~~ sessions within cafes, restaurants, or bars, allowing audience participation where customers can interact with hosts and guests.

k. Film screenings and discussions within sSmall theater style areas rooms ~~within inside~~ cafes, restaurants, or retail spaces for film screenings and discussions; and

4. c. Outside Promoters. Incidental activities shall be organized and operated by the primary business ~~use~~ and shall not be sponsored or managed by an outside promoter. Activities benefiting non-profit organizations engaged in civic or charitable efforts may be permitted, provided the primary business retains operational control

d. Admission Charges. No admission fees, cover charges, or other payments shall be required for entry or participation in incidental activities, except for fees to cover material costs (~~e.g. workshop supplies~~), as approved by the review authority

Commissioner Hoopingarner moved to: 1) approve staff's recommendations with the changes as read into the record by staff.

Seconded by Vice Chair Gregoire.

ACTION: 1) Adopt Resolution No. PC 25-1604 as amended: a) amend the following subsections under Section B Incidental Business Activities.

b) i. ~~coworking spaces or in~~ designated remote working areas including workstations, meeting rooms, and Wi-Fi access within cafes or restaurants;
c) j. live podcast recording ~~studios~~ sessions within cafes, restaurants, or bars, allowing audience participation where customers can interact with hosts and guests;

d) k. *Film screenings and discussions within sSmall theater style areas rooms within inside cafes, restaurants, or retail spaces for film screenings and discussions; and e) 4.c. Outside Promoters. Incidental activities shall be organized and operated by the primary business use and shall not be sponsored or managed by an outside promoter. Activities benefiting non-profit organizations engaged in civic or charitable efforts may be permitted, provided the primary business retains operational control; f) 4.d. Admission Charges. No admission fees, cover charges, or other payments shall be required for entry or participation in incidental activities, except for fees to cover material costs (e.g. workshop supplies), as approved by the review authority. 2) "A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF WEST HOLLYWOOD, RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL ADOPT AN ORDINANCE AMENDING TITLE 19, ZONING ORDINANCE OF THE WEST HOLLYWOOD MUNICIPAL CODE, TO STREAMLINE THE REGULATIONS AND APPROVAL OF ACCESSORY BUSINESS USES AND INCIDENTAL BUSINESS ACTIVITIES, AND FINDING SUCH ACTION DOES NOT QUALIFY AS A PROJECT SUBJECT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT AND IS OTHERWISE EXEMPT UNDER STATE CEQA GUIDELINES SECTIONS §15061(B)(3) AND 15378(B)(5), WEST HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA;" and 3) Close the Public Hearing for Item 10.A. **Moved by Commissioner Hoopingarner, seconded by Vice Chair Gregoire and passes, noting Commissioner Carvalho and Jones absent.***

11. NEW BUSINESS:

A. GENERAL PLAN AND HOUSING ELEMENT ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORTS FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2024.

Tahirah Farris, Senior Planner, provided a verbal presentation and background information, as presented in the staff report dated Thursday, May 15, 2025.

She stated the General Plan Annual Progress Report is a state mandated requirement which monitors the city's progress on implementing the West Hollywood General Plan 2035, which includes the 6th Cycle Housing Element.

Government Code sections §65400 and §65700 require that local jurisdictions present the report at a public hearing of their legislative bodies before submitting it to the Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation (LCI) (formally known as the Office of Planning and Research) and HCD by April 1st each year.

The report serves as a vehicle to provide transparency to community members regarding the services and activities the City is undertaking to further the goals and policies of the General Plan.

The General Plan Annual Progress Report was presented to the City Council on March 17, 2025, and submitted to HCD and LCI on March 21, 2025. This item is being presented to the Planning Commission for informational purposes only and requires no action by the Commission.

Founded on ten guiding principles and adopted as a comprehensive update in 2011, West Hollywood's General Plan is the basis for decision-making on funding priorities and work programs by establishing the City's vision for managing its physical, social, and economic resources.

She stated the General Plan is a forward-thinking document that recognizes and builds upon existing challenges and opportunities, reflects the diverse visions of the community, and provides for future generations. It contains eleven chapters and an appendix, meeting the minimum seven state-required elements of a General Plan. As permitted (and sometimes required) by state law, the General Plan has undergone several amendments since its original adoption due to updated state legislation or through the impetus of the city to ensure that the General Plan consistently reflects its original principles. For this reason, the General Plan Annual Progress Report demonstrates how the city has advanced the General Plan and updated it as necessary in the form of ordinances or new initiatives each year.

The most recent update was to the Safety and Noise Element in which the city updated its Local Hazard and Mitigation Plan in October 2024.

The Implementation Chapter of the General Plan consists of a matrix identifying one-time actions that mobilize and execute specific policies. The General Plan Annual Progress Report reports progress on these implementation measures and, while not exhaustive of all City activities, highlights the milestones taken to promote goals and policies of the General Plan.

The Housing Element is a required element of the General Plan that establishes the City's goals and programs for housing. Each jurisdiction in California updates its Housing Element every eight years in compliance with the state planning cycles. The current planning cycle is the 6th Cycle and covers the period of 2021 through 2029. West Hollywood's current Housing Element was adopted by the City Council on February 21, 2023, and certified by the State on April 28, 2023.

HCD requires all jurisdictions in the State to complete a Housing Element Annual Progress Report (HE APR) as part of the General Plan Annual Progress Report and submit it to HCD and LCI by April 1st of each year. West Hollywood's HE APR for 2024 is attached as Attachment A to the General Plan Annual Progress Report.

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is a regulatory tool of the Housing Element Update process that results in an assigned number of total units, and units at every affordability level, by jurisdiction. It is the jurisdiction's responsibility to demonstrate capacity in reaching its RHNA through the various programs and projects of its adopted Housing Element. This progress is captured and summarized to HCD through the City's submittal of Annual Progress Reports (APRs). Whether housing units get proposed and constructed depends largely upon private market forces working in conjunction with City requirements, incentives, and subsidies. If a city shows insufficient progress in permitting enough housing units to meet its RHNA, various regulatory mechanisms may be triggered for a jurisdiction (such as Senate Bill 35 and Senate Bill 423, which require expedited and limited reviews for housing development projects). While the City of West Hollywood is one of the few jurisdictions in the State that is not currently subject to these legislative consequences, forecasts estimate that the city is not on track to meet its RHNA by 2029.

Thirty-nine new housing units were proposed in 2024, showing a significant decline in development (compared to 1,294 units proposed in 2023). Additionally, 19 affordable units received planning entitlements across three housing developments, representing 13% of (141) multifamily units and 12% of all (155) units entitled in 2024.

The Housing Element includes six goals, and 31 programs developed through an extensive and inclusive community engagement process. The City's housing programs intend to meet West Hollywood's needs over the 2021 – 2029 Housing Element planning cycle. In addition to reporting housing production and progress toward the RHNA, the 2024 HE APR provides an update on West Hollywood's 31 housing implementation programs, some of which will support additional capacity for housing development throughout the City as well as the removal of zoning and regulatory barriers to housing production.

The commission questioned if the city tracks its "zoned capacity". and commented on inclusionary zoning, mixed-use bonuses, current housing vacancies, RHNA allocations and goals, building permits, and certificate of occupancy.

ACTION: Receive and file. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS. None.

12. EXCLUDED CONSENT CALENDAR. None.

13. ITEMS FROM STAFF.

A. Planning Manager's Update.

Francisco Contreras, Long Range Planning Manager provided an update of tentative items scheduled for upcoming Planning Commission meetings.

He stated the upcoming meetings on Thursday, June 19, 2025, and July 3, 2025, will both be cancelled due to official holidays.

He stated Chair and Vice Chair elections are lenitively scheduled for Thursday, July 17, 2025, and subcommittee appointments by the new Chair will be Thursday, August 7, 2025.

Subcommittee Management.

Francisco Contreras, Long Range Planning Manager provided an update of tentative items scheduled for Design Review Subcommittee, Sunset Arts and Advertising Subcommittee and Long-Range Planning Projects Subcommittee meetings.

14. PUBLIC COMMENT. None.

15. ITEMS FROM COMMISSIONERS.

Chair Lombardi thanked Vice Chair Gregoire for chairing the last meeting in his absence.

ADJOURMENT. The Planning Commission adjourned at 8:05 p.m. to a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, June 5, 2025, beginning at 6:30 p.m. until completion at West Hollywood Park Public Meeting Room – Council Chambers, 625 N. San Vicente Boulevard, West Hollywood, California. **Motion carried by consensus of the Commission.**

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Planning Commission of the City of West Hollywood at a regular meeting held on this 5th day of June, 2025 by the following vote:

AYES: Commissioner:

NOES: Commissioner:

ABSENT: Commissioner:

ABSTAIN: Commissioner:

MICHAEL A. LOMBARDI, MIES LC LEED AP BD+C
CHAIRPERSON, PLANNING COMMISSION

ATTEST:

DAVID K. GILLIG, COMMISSION SECRETARY