



REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION MONDAY, AUGUST 10, 2026 - MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER - The Regular Planning Commission Meeting was called to order by Chair Harlan at 6:00 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG - Chair Harlan led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Jeffrey Harlan, Vice Chair Jon Zich, Commissioner Angely Andrade, Commissioner Robert Dickson (arrived 6:08 p.m.), Commissioner Karen Klepack, Commissioner David Martinez (remotely)

Absent: Commissioner Johnny Rojas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA: None.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Commissioner Klepack welcomed the members of the public in attendance and expressed appreciation for the strong turnout. She emphasized the importance of public participation and thanked attendees for taking the time to participate in the Planning Commission meeting.

Commissioner Andrade echoed Commissioner Klepack's comments, welcomed the members of the public to the Planning Commission meeting, and stated that she looked forward to hearing their comments and perspectives.

Commissioner Martinez thanked the members of the public for attending the meeting and provided the following announcements:

- The City's GIS Strategic Plan Survey was scheduled to close on August 11, 2026. He encouraged interested members of the community to participate and provide input regarding GIS and its relationship to various City functions.
- A free Symphony on the Go performance was scheduled for August 11, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at Heller Park. He noted that additional performances were expected to take place at other City parks in the following weeks.

Vice Chair Zich thanked the members of the public for attending and encouraged them to participate when the opportunity for public comment was provided. He emphasized the importance of hearing directly from community members regarding the matters before the Commission. He also requested that the Consent Calendar item be pulled for discussion.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. JULY 27, 2026 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

Vice Chair Zich requested discussion regarding the July 27, 2026, unofficial Planning Commission meeting minutes.

Vice Chair Zich expressed concern regarding the summary of his comments pertaining to the 15-unit development considered at the previous meeting. After reviewing the meeting recording, he stated that several comments attributed to him in the draft minutes did not accurately reflect his statements.

Specifically, Vice Chair Zich stated that he had not commented about "activating" the property or characterized the site as having been underutilized for years. He noted that those statements may have represented opinions regarding the property but were not comments he had made during the meeting.

Vice Chair Zich requested that staff review the meeting recording and revise the minutes to accurately reflect his comments.

Commissioner Andrade also requested a minor correction on page 15 regarding the pronoun used in the summary of her comments.

MOVED/SECOND: ZICH/ANDRADE

MOTION: Moved to continue consideration of the July 27, 2026, meeting minutes to the next Planning Commission meeting to allow staff to review the recording and make the requested corrections.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez

Nays: None

Absent: Commissioner Dickson and Commissioner Rojas

Recused: None

Motion carried: 5-0

ACTION: The Planning Commission continued consideration of the July 27, 2026, meeting minutes to the next Planning Commission meeting to allow staff to review the recording and make the requested corrections.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. FAIRVIEW DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN (PCTY-25-0003)

Presentation by Principal Planner Melinda Dacey; PlaceWorks consultants Karen Gulley, Jennifer Kelley, and Paul Hermann; and additional City staff members.

Commissioner Dickson arrived at the meeting during the beginning of staff's presentation.

Commission Questions and Discussion:

Commissioner Dickson asked whether staff had reviewed the SAFER letter and its concerns regarding the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Staff confirmed that the letter was reviewed and determined that it did not introduce new information or change the EIR's previously identified environmental impacts. Staff explained that revisions to the Final EIR were limited to minor refinements and corrections and did not require recirculation under CEQA.

Staff also addressed comments from California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), noting that City staff met with Cal OES and the Department of General Services to discuss their concerns. Certain operational and regulatory matters, including issues related to the Emergency Operations Center, would continue to be addressed during the future entitlement process through conditions of approval, regulatory agreements, or other appropriate measures.

Vice Chair Zich asked whether comments received on the EIR introduced new information that would alter the previously identified environmental impacts. Staff confirmed that the comments did not change the EIR's conclusions or require recirculation.

Vice Chair Zich also requested clarification regarding the timing of the secondary access road. Staff explained that the Specific Plan requires the secondary access once development reaches 2,300 units, although it could be constructed earlier. The specific timing could be negotiated with a future developer through a development agreement.

Lastly, Vice Chair Zich asked about the lease affecting Merrimac Way, and staff confirmed that the current lease expires in December 2036.

Commissioner Andrade asked questions regarding traffic, open space, financial feasibility, project timing, and the consequences of delaying the Specific Plan. Staff explained that traffic is projected to operate at Level of Service (LOS) B during the morning peak and LOS D during the evening peak, with LOS D meeting the City's minimum acceptable standard.

Regarding open space, staff explained that reducing the number of units could create opportunities for additional open space, although the Specific Plan allows flexibility in how open space is provided. Staff also confirmed that higher unit counts were generally considered more financially feasible based on analysis and consultation with affordable and market-rate housing developers.

Staff estimated that full buildout could take 12 to 20 years, with approximately 18 years considered likely, emphasizing the long-term nature of the planning effort.

Lastly, Commissioner Andrade asked about the consequences of delaying action. Staff explained that the FDC property is a designated Housing Element site necessary for Housing Element certification and that continued delays could result in further legal proceedings. Staff also noted that the City's agreement with the State, which included \$3.5 million for planning and community outreach, extends through December 2026. Because the property is State-owned, failure to complete the local planning process could potentially result in the State pursuing its own process for the property resulting in the loss of local control for the site.

Chair Harlan requested clarification regarding the litigation filed by the California Attorney General and the referenced 120-day period for the City to address its Housing Element requirements. He emphasized the importance of clarifying for the public whether the City was currently subject to a court-ordered deadline.

Assistant City Attorney Tarquin Preziosi confirmed that the City is not currently under a court order and that the litigation has not yet been adjudicated. Although a court order may ultimately result from the litigation, there is presently no pending court order requiring the City to take action within the referenced 120-day period.

Commissioner Martinez asked about the overall project timeline and responsibility for maintaining utility infrastructure. Staff explained that the Specific Plan is a long-range planning document that could remain in effect for approximately 25 years, with development anticipated to occur over 12 to 20 years and approximately 18 years estimated for full buildout.

Commissioner Martinez also requested clarification regarding maintenance of the project's water and sewer systems. City Engineer Seung Yang explained that maintenance responsibility would rest with the agency that owns the infrastructure. Mesa Water District would maintain water facilities under its ownership, while the

Costa Mesa Sanitary District would maintain sewer facilities it owns, rather than the City.

Commissioner Martinez thanked staff for incorporating his previous comments and noted that many of his questions had already been addressed at the prior meeting.

Commissioner Dickson requested clarification regarding the conceptual site plan, emphasizing that it represents only one possible development scenario and does not establish the final location or design of buildings, recreational facilities, parking areas, or other site features.

Staff confirmed that the plan is conceptual and represents the City's best estimate of how the property could potentially develop based on the proposed roadway infrastructure, walkability goals, and overall framework of the Specific Plan.

Commissioner Klepack asked staff to clarify the approximately \$5 million financing gap associated with the 3,450-unit development scenario. Staff explained that the gap represents the additional funding needed for the project to achieve the anticipated financial return and could potentially be addressed through minor revisions to the projects, tax credits, State assistance, bridge financing, additional developer investment, or other financing mechanisms.

Staff noted that increasing the project to approximately 3,500 units or changing to unit mix or type (i.e. rental vs for sale) could potentially eliminate the financing gap. Financial feasibility could also vary depending on the housing mix, including the amount of for-sale housing.

Staff emphasized that the analysis represents the City's best estimate based on current information and that the actual financial performance would depend on a future developer's financing structure, housing mix, costs, and expected returns.

Commissioner Andrade asked whether the project would be subject to the City's Community Workforce Agreement and whether workforce requirements could be incorporated to create employment opportunities for Costa Mesa residents.

Staff explained that the project would not be covered by the current Community Workforce Agreement because it would be a private development. However, affordable housing components utilizing Low-Income Housing Tax Credit financing would likely be subject to applicable skilled and trained workforce requirements.

Commissioner Dickson asked whether park in-lieu fees associated with the Fairview Developmental Center project would be restricted to improvements within the Specific Plan area or could be used elsewhere in the City.

Staff explained that a nexus study would determine the applicable fees for the future master developer. Park in-lieu fees could potentially fund improvements within or outside the Specific Plan area, provided there is an appropriate connection to the needs created by the new development.

Staff noted that the ultimate use of the funds would be based on identified community needs through the City's parks planning process.

Public comments:

A College Park resident expressed frustration that community concerns had not been adequately addressed and raised concerns regarding public awareness, building heights, and the proposed 4,000 units. He requested greater transparency and urged the Commission to represent the interests of existing residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

Scott Grady, a Costa Mesa property owner and commercial real estate executive, discussed Merrimac Way as a potential secondary access point, noting that historical records may indicate a public easement. He urged the City Attorney to further review the Harbor Village lease and work with the State to explore Merrimac Way as an alternative access route.

Tim Cromwell, a Costa Mesa resident, expressed concerns regarding the proposed density, impacts to the golf course, and traffic. While supporting affordable housing, he encouraged lower-scale development and consideration of potential impacts to surrounding neighborhoods, businesses, and City tax revenue.

Perry Clifro expressed support for the Specific Plan, emphasizing the need to address the housing shortage and rising costs. He noted that many working-class residents are being priced out of Southern California and encouraged the Commission to consider the project's potential to provide housing opportunities for future residents and families.

Speaker five, stated he has experience in master-planned community development, supported housing but expressed concerns regarding secondary access, traffic, and impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. They encouraged the City to explore Merrimac Way as an alternative access route and consider more cost-effective affordable housing options.

Scott Tarnow, a Costa Mesa resident, teacher, and high school golf coach, expressed concern that the proposed secondary access road could impact Mesa Linda Golf Course and youth golf programs. While not opposed to development,

he urged the City to consider alternative access routes that would preserve the golf course and recreational opportunities.

An Affordable Housing Organization representative supported the Specific Plan, emphasizing the need for additional affordable housing. The speaker encouraged the City to maximize affordable and permanent supportive housing and urged the Planning Commission to recommend approval of the draft Specific Plan.

Natalie King, a longtime Costa Mesa resident, expressed concerns regarding limited access, school capacity, and recreational opportunities. She encouraged the City to provide additional recreational space and adequately plan for the needs of future residents and youth sports programs.

Aaron Clem, a Westside Costa Mesa resident, supported the Specific Plan, emphasizing the importance of Housing Element compliance and maintaining local land-use control. He encouraged expanding housing opportunities citywide and stated that increased housing could benefit future generations and provide additional City revenue.

Steve Smith opposed the Specific Plan as proposed, citing unresolved concerns regarding traffic, schools, water, and infrastructure. He urged the Commission to consider revisions that would result in a better project for Costa Mesa.

Maryann Plunkett, a 26-year Mesa Verde resident and homeowner, expressed opposition to the project and concerns regarding the proposed amount of extremely low-income housing and potential impacts associated with a large residential development. She specifically questioned whether the proposed housing mix could place additional demands on the Costa Mesa Police Department and other public services.

Kevin Fitzgerald, Director of Public Affairs for the Southern California Golf Association, expressed concern regarding the proposed secondary access road through the golf course, citing potential costs and operational impacts. He urged the City to explore alternative access routes and preserve the 36-hole golf course.

Christine Nolf, a 50-year Costa Mesa resident, local pastor, and member of the Costa Mesa Affordable Housing Coalition, supported the Specific Plan and praised the City's community outreach. She emphasized the need for affordable housing and encouraged creative solutions to balance project challenges with housing needs.

Kevin Krone expressed concerns regarding the project's financial feasibility, traffic, public safety, commercial space, and long-term impacts. He requested greater transparency regarding the financial analysis and further evaluation of traffic,

emergency response times, and commercial needs. He encouraged the City to carefully consider the project's overall long-term impacts and return on investment.

Mary Hannah, a 58-year-old Costa Mesa resident, opposed the project and questioned the City's ability to manage a development of this scale. Citing concerns from a previous Fairview Park project, she urged the City to reevaluate the proposal before proceeding.

Michael Jacobs, assistant coach for the Newport Harbor High School golf teams, urged the City to preserve Mesa Linda Golf Course and pursue an alternative secondary access route. He emphasized the course's importance to youth golf programs and the community.

John Rice, a 26-year Mesa Verde resident, opposed the Specific Plan as proposed, citing concerns regarding the 4,000-unit density, public awareness, and limited recreational facilities. While recognizing the need for affordable housing, he encouraged a compromise that would reduce density and provide additional sports fields and recreational opportunities.

Marilyn Packer, a College Park resident, opposed the project as proposed, citing concerns regarding construction impacts, traffic, limited access, and demands on public safety services. She encouraged the City to reduce the number of units and consider the cumulative impacts of other planned development.

Kathy Esfahani, a lifelong Costa Mesa resident, supported the Specific Plan and proposed 4,000 units, emphasizing the need for affordable housing for working residents, families, and seniors. She acknowledged concerns regarding recreational space and encouraged creative solutions while urging approval of the plan.

Diane Russell supported moving the Specific Plan forward, emphasizing the need for market-rate and affordable housing. She urged the City to secure the proposed 40% affordable housing requirement through the future development agreement and ensure its timely implementation.

Betsy Densmore, a retired Costa Mesa business owner and resident, supported the project, emphasizing the need for workforce and affordable housing. She also noted the extensive public outreach and stated that some project details could be addressed during later planning and development stages.

Reverend Dr. Monica Corsaro supported moving the project forward, emphasizing the need for affordable housing for working residents. She believed the City could

balance housing with the golf course, parks, and recreation while addressing traffic and other challenges throughout the development process.

A Costa Mesa resident expressed support for welcoming new families but raised concerns regarding limited green space, recreational opportunities, school capacity, and traffic impacts associated with the FDC project.

Forest Flaherty, a Cornerstone resident, expressed concerns about traffic, neighborhood access, and public safety, noting that existing congestion at Harbor Boulevard and Fair Drive already makes it difficult for residents to exit the area. He feared additional project traffic could further restrict access. He urged the City to consider community requests for more open space and fewer housing units.

Bob Abbott, a Mesa Verde resident, expressed concern that the planning process was placing too much emphasis on financial feasibility and developer returns rather than the overall benefit to Costa Mesa. While recognizing the need for affordable housing, he urged the Commission to prioritize the interests of the City, surrounding neighborhoods, and existing residents when determining the appropriate number of housing units.

Steve McNally, a Costa Mesa resident and member of the Orange County Behavioral Health Advisory Board speaking in his individual capacity, requested greater clarity regarding the project's housing mix, financial feasibility, and developer interest. He questioned whether the proposal represented the best use of the property and expressed concerns regarding the overall planning process.

Steve Dzida, a longtime Mesa Verde resident, expressed strong support for maximizing housing and affordable housing within the Fairview Developmental Center project. While acknowledging the importance of preserving the City's golf courses, he believed housing for younger generations, teachers, first responders, and service workers should be a higher priority. He described the project as a significant opportunity to address local housing affordability and encouraged the Commission to approve as many residential and affordable units as feasible.

Erica DiCioccio, a Costa Mesa resident and Newport-Mesa Unified School District facility planning coordinator speaking in her individual capacity, emphasized that school fields and recreational facilities are already heavily used for school programs, athletics, after-school activities, and community recreation. She encouraged the City to recognize existing demand and limitations when considering school fields as additional recreational space for the project.

Maria Dzida, a 40-year-old Mesa Verde resident, whose home backs onto the golf course, expressed strong support for using the FDC property to address Costa Mesa's affordable housing needs. She acknowledged the concerns regarding the

golf course, parks, sports fields, and traffic. She described the FDC property as a rare opportunity to provide housing for current and future residents, particularly those who work in Costa Mesa but cannot afford to live there.

Jack Forte, a lifelong Costa Mesa resident, acknowledged the need for additional housing and described the difficulty younger residents face in being able to afford to remain in the City. However, he expressed concerns regarding traffic and the concentration of a large amount of development at the FDC site. Mr. Forte questioned whether housing growth could be distributed throughout the City and encouraged careful planning to create a sustainable community that addresses housing needs while considering long-term impacts on future generations.

Cynthia McDonald, a Costa Mesa resident, acknowledged the need for affordable housing but expressed concern that the Specific Plan prioritized housing density over a balanced community. She encouraged the City to consider alternatives that provide housing while addressing parks, recreation, community facilities, transportation, open space, and impacts on City services.

Jim Bowlinger, a College Park homeowner, expressed concerns regarding the number of vehicles and traffic that could be generated by up to 4,000 residential units. He questioned whether sufficient parking and access would be provided given the site's limited ingress and egress points. Mr. Bowlinger also raised concerns about increased congestion on Harbor Boulevard and Fair Drive and stated that the additional vehicle traffic could negatively affect the surrounding community and Costa Mesa.

Speaker 33 (via Zoom) expressed concern that the Specific Plan focused heavily on housing without adequately addressing the elements of a complete community. While supporting affordable housing, the speaker raised concerns regarding its long-term commitment, traffic impacts, and uncertainty surrounding the project's final design. The speaker urged the City to develop a more comprehensive plan that better reflects the community's vision.

Speaker 34 (via Zoom) expressed concern that State priorities had taken precedence over community interests and cited significant environmental and traffic impacts identified in the EIR. While supporting affordable housing and recent outreach efforts, she urged the City to conduct additional analysis and review before moving the project forward.

Jen Tanaka, a Costa Mesa resident, expressed concerns regarding the number of housing units needed for financial feasibility and potential impacts to the golf course. She encouraged the City to explore alternatives that balance housing, open space, recreation, and preservation of community assets before moving the Specific Plan forward.

Continued Commission questions:

Following closing public comments, the Commission asked staff additional questions regarding State Density Bonus Law, parking, site access, and potential impacts to the golf course.

Commissioner Dickson asked how establishing a maximum of 2,300 units in the Specific Plan would affect the potential number of units permitted under State Density Bonus Law. Staff explained that 2,300 units would establish the base density and that, given the required affordable housing component, a future developer could potentially obtain a density increase of approximately 40 to 50 percent or more. Staff noted that physical and financial constraints could limit the site's practical capacity to approximately 4,000 units. Staff further stated that if the Specific Plan did not provide a financially feasible development option, a future developer would likely utilize State Density Bonus Law to achieve a financially feasible unit count.

Chair Harlan requested clarification regarding the City's ability to control a project developed under State Density Bonus Law. Staff explained that the law significantly limits the City's discretion and requires approval of qualifying concessions and waivers unless the City can demonstrate adverse health or safety impacts. Staff and the Assistant City Attorney Mr. Preziosi emphasized that State law establishes a high threshold for denying such requests and places the burden of proof on the City.

Chair Harlan also asked whether use of State Density Bonus Law could reduce the City's negotiating ability through a development agreement, including its ability to obtain community benefits. Staff explained that while a developer might still seek a development agreement for matters such as project phasing and entitlement duration, the City's ability to negotiate certain development standards could be reduced because the developer could instead utilize concessions and waivers available under State law.

Commissioner Dickson also asked about residential parking requirements, particularly for the affordable housing units. He noted that the City does not require residential parking minimums and questioned whether a developer could provide little or no parking for affordable units as part of making the project financially feasible. Staff confirmed that this was a possibility.

Commissioner Andrade asked whether Merrimac Way could be considered as an alternative access point once the existing lease becomes available for renegotiation. Staff confirmed that language had been added to the Specific Plan

identifying Merrimac Way as a potential alternative access point if future lease negotiations with the State allowed such access.

Commissioner Andrade also requested confirmation regarding the proposed secondary access road and its potential effect on the golf course. Staff confirmed that a golf course design expert had evaluated the concept and that the proposed approach would reconfigure or relocate golf holes rather than reduce the total number of holes.

Commissioner Dickson subsequently asked whether staff had determined if a public access easement existed on Merrimac Way. Staff stated that, to their knowledge, no public access easement existed and that Merrimac Way was currently private.

MOVED/SECOND: ANDRADE/MARTINEZ

MOTION: Move staff's recommendation presented at the hearing.

Commission comments after the motion:

Commissioner Andrade expressed support for the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan, emphasizing its importance in addressing Costa Mesa's housing needs, particularly affordable rental and first-time homebuyer opportunities for working residents. She acknowledged community concerns regarding traffic, access, parks, and schools and encouraged further exploration of a third access point that could minimize impacts to the golf course.

Commissioner Andrade also supported providing additional parks and recreational opportunities, including expanded joint use of school facilities. She concluded that, given limited opportunities for affordable housing elsewhere in the City, the FDC property represented an important opportunity to provide housing for current and future residents.

Commissioner Martinez expressed support for the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan, emphasizing the need to address Costa Mesa's long-term housing affordability challenges. He noted that insufficient housing production over many years had contributed to rising costs and acknowledged that concentrating significant housing development at one location may not be ideal but reflected the City's current circumstances.

Commissioner Martinez thanked staff and consultants for their work and highlighted provisions addressing mobility, open space, public safety, and housing. He emphasized that the project would be implemented over approximately 20 years, allowing continued planning and refinement as development occurs. He concluded that the project would provide needed

housing, including affordable housing, for future generations and working residents and stated his support for the plan.

Commissioner Dickson made a substitute motion.

MOVED/SECOND: DICKSON/ZICH

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: To postpone adoption of the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan to allow additional analysis and public engagement. His motion included direction to:

- re-engage with the State and the Department of General Services (DGS) regarding the appropriate percentage of affordable housing for the site;
- re-engage the community through additional public participation and outreach;
- reassess the applicability and feasibility of the proposed 40% affordable housing requirement, particularly in relation to the 2,300-unit baseline and potentially higher overall unit counts;
- evaluate the cumulative impacts of potential Measure K buildout scenarios; and
- further evaluate mobility and traffic impacts, particularly intersections projected to operate at unacceptable levels of service.

Commissioner Dickson acknowledged the significant work completed by staff and consultants but believed the planning process needed additional time and analysis. He emphasized that, given the project's lengthy implementation period, the City should take additional time to address these issues before adopting the Specific Plan.

Vice Chair Zich expressed support for postponing the Specific Plan, emphasizing that the FDC property represented a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that should be carefully planned. He believed the current proposal did not adequately reflect community priorities regarding housing density, affordable housing, preservation of the golf course, parks and open space, traffic, and environmental impacts.

Vice Chair Zich questioned the financial feasibility assumptions supporting the 4,000-unit capacity and favored a lower base density, potentially allowing additional units through State Density Bonus Law. He also called for further evaluation of Merrimac Way as an alternative access point and expressed concern about insufficient parkland and significant environmental and traffic impacts. He concluded that additional work was necessary to develop a plan that better balanced housing with the long-term needs of the community.

Chair Harlan acknowledged Commissioner Dickson's desire for additional time to refine the Specific Plan but stated that he would not support the substitute motion. He emphasized that the Planning Commission's role was to provide a recommendation to the City Council rather than develop a final or perfect plan.

Chair Harlan recognized the competing community interests regarding housing and affordable housing, traffic, parking, open space, and preservation of the golf course, as well as the City Council's priorities related to housing, environmental sustainability, and fiscal health. Given the many uncertainties surrounding future development, he believed the most practical approach was to forward a recommendation to the City Council and allow the Council to determine whether additional review or time was necessary.

Commissioner Dickson expressed concern that the Specific Plan contained unresolved issues and potential vulnerabilities that could leave it open to legal challenge. He questioned several assumptions underlying the plan, including affordable housing requirements, access issues involving Merrimac Way, and the basis for certain policy decisions.

Commissioner Dickson emphasized that his substitute motion was intended to provide additional time to address outstanding questions before forwarding the plan to the City Council, stating that he did not believe the Specific Plan was ready to move forward in its current form.

The motion failed by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Dickson

Absent: Commissioner Rojas

Nays: Chair Harlan, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez

Recused: None

Motion failed: 2-4

The substitute motion failed so the Commission voted on the original motion.

MOVED/SECOND: ANDRADE/MARTINEZ

MOTION: Move staff's recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Harlan, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez

Nays: Vice Chair Zich and Commissioner Dickson

Absent: Commissioner Rojas

Recused: None

Motion carried: 4-2

ACTION: The Planning Commission:

1. Adopted a resolution recommending that the City Council incorporate the August 10, 2026, Memorandum to the Planning Commission and take the following actions, including:

- a. CEQA: Certify the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR), and adopt the Findings of Fact, Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP);
- b. General Plan Amendment: Adopt a Resolution to amend the General Plan Land Use Element to change the Land Use Designation of the project site from "Multi-use Center" to "FDCSP" and other updates to implement the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan (FDCSP); and
- c. Zoning Code Amendments: Adopt an Ordinance amending Title 13 of the Costa Mesa Municipal Code (Zoning Code) to adopt the Fairview Development Center Specific Plan (FDCSP), update the Zoning Map to change the zoning designation of the 95 acres of the 110-acre site located at 2501 Harbor Boulevard from "Institutional and Recreational Multi-use (I&R-MLT)" to "FDCSP" and change the remaining 15 acres to "Institutional and Recreational" zoning designation, and make other associated updates to the Zoning Code to implement the FDCSP.

2. CITY OF COSTA MESA SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE (PCTY-25-0002), CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN (PCTY-25-0009), AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY REVIEW (PCTY-26-0002)

Presentation by Contract Planning Manager Amber Gregg and Advanced Planning Manager Anna McGill.

Commission Questions and Discussion:

Vice Chair Zich asked how the State identifies Environmental Justice (EJ) communities, how the City would know when a census tract no longer qualifies, and whether the State reviews the City's EJ policies for adequacy. Staff explained that EJ designations are established by the State and generally updated annually by California Environmental Protection Agency, with the City planning to update its maps accordingly. Staff also noted that State law is not highly prescriptive regarding how EJ topics must be addressed and that HCD could provide additional comments when reviewing, as EJ policies are included as an implementation program of the City's Housing Element.

Vice Chair Zich also questioned why the City developed a Climate Action & Adaptation Plan (CAAP) when it is not required by State law, how the CAAP's greenhouse-gas reduction and extreme-heat goals would be measured, and why the City approves housing-only projects when mixed-use development is identified as a strategy for reducing transportation emissions. Staff explained that the CAAP is encouraged as a local roadmap that coordinates climate, safety, hazard mitigation, and EJ efforts; its goal is to reduce emissions and prepare for

climate impacts. Staff further explained that State housing laws can limit the City's ability to require mixed-use development, although the City can employ incentives and mechanisms to encourage it. Finally, staff confirmed that reducing building emissions includes transitioning from natural gas to electricity-based appliances.

Commissioner Klepack asked how the City would support and encourage building electrification, including whether incentive programs would be offered. Staff explained that the City would promote existing State and utility rebate programs and help residents access available incentives rather than providing City-funded rebates. Commissioner Klepack also suggested providing residents with information on local contractors and installers experienced with electrification projects, such as heat-pump water heaters.

Commissioner Dickson asked how the CAAP's 106 actions would be implemented and whether they could result in regulatory requirements or additional costs for residents and developers without further public review. He also questioned the need for a City-specific CAAP and expressed concern that its aspirational policies could eventually become burdensome requirements.

Staff clarified that the CAAP has regulatory requirements for the municipality (i.e. the City), but it is intended to be incentive-based for the broader community rather than regulatory, consistent with City Council direction. Staff stated that projects would not be denied for failing to fully electrify or meet individual CAAP measures. Instead, applicants would be encouraged to demonstrate consistency with the CAAP through various options. Staff also explained that implementation would be reviewed annually, providing opportunities for further review and refinement.

No public comments.

Commissioner questions and discussion continued:

Commissioner Andrade asked whether the Climate Action & Adaptation Plan was grant funded and whether its measures would apply only to Environmental Justice (EJ) areas or citywide. Staff confirmed that the City received some grant funding for the CAAP and explained that CAAP measures apply citywide. The City also received grant funding (REAP) for EJ policies that are incorporated into the General Plan with additional priority given to identified EJ areas.

Commissioner Andrade emphasized the importance of expanding green space, providing cooling centers and shaded areas, improving pedestrian and bicycle safety, and increasing access to affordable, healthy and nutritious food, particularly in neighborhoods where residents may lack air conditioning or convenient access to grocery stores. She stated that these efforts would help build a healthier City and improve residents' overall quality of life. Staff also clarified that EJ census tracts

were identified using State criteria, with community outreach used to gather residents' concerns, priorities, and objectives.

The Chair reopened public comment:

The speaker (on Zoom) thanked the Planning Commission and staff for their work and reflected on the community planning process that began in 2024. The speaker acknowledged the value of the public input received and emphasized the importance of understanding the State's requirements and what the City can realistically accomplish in response.

Commissioner questions and discussion continued:

Commissioner Martinez asked when Appendix F of the CAAP, which contains the fiscal analysis, would be available. Staff explained that it is still being prepared and will evaluate implementation costs and potential grant opportunities before being presented to the City Council.

Commissioner Martinez also asked how changes to Environmental Justice (EJ) community designations would be communicated. Staff stated that updated EJ maps and information would be maintained on the City's website.

Lastly, Commissioner Martinez sought clarification regarding Safety Element policies requiring two ingress and egress routes. Staff confirmed that these policies apply to neighborhood access, rather than individual buildings, while noting that the Fire Department has separate access requirements for certain buildings based on factors such as size and unit count.

Commissioner Comments after the motion:

Commissioner Andrade thanked staff for their work and acknowledged the community outreach and public input incorporated into the plans. She also appreciated the redline formatting, which clearly identified the proposed changes, and recognized the involvement of key stakeholders and experts in the process.

Commissioner Martinez expressed support for the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan, updated Safety Element, and Environmental Justice policies, stating that they would help the City address climate change and support environmental justice communities. He emphasized that the CAAP's implementation measures are recommendations rather than mandates and would require further discussion before implementation. He highlighted mixed-use development, reduced vehicle travel, and active transportation as strategies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and noted that the CAAP complements the City's other transportation and pedestrian plans.

MOVED/SECOND: ANDRADE/MARTINEZ

MOTION: Move staff's recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez

Nays: Commissioner Dickson

Absent: Commissioner Rojas

Recused: None

Motion carried: 5-1

ACTION: The Planning Commission:

1. Found that the proposed Safety Element Update and Environmental Justice Policy Update are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3); and
2. Adopted a Resolution recommending that the City Council amend the General Plan to update the Safety Element and incorporate Environmental Justice Policy Update.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: None.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

1. PUBLIC WORKS REPORT - None.

2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT - Ms. McGill announced that a special Planning Commission meeting would be held the following Monday. She stated that staff would present a Housing Element Amendment and conduct a study session on the Neighborhoods Where We All Belong (NWWAB) initiative.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:

1. CITY ATTORNEY REPORT - None.

ADJOURNMENT AT 10:37 p.m.

Submitted by:

CARRIE TAI, SECRETARY
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION

DRAFT