REGULAR PLANNING COMMISSION
MONDAY, JULY 27, 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 - Vice Chair Zich led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Jeffrey Harlan, Vice Chair Jon Zich, Commissioner Angely Andrade, Commissioner Robert Dickson, Commissioner Karen Klepack, Commissioner David Martinez, and Commissioner Johnny Rojas

Absent: None.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA:

Liz Parker, President of Coast Community College District Board of Trustees, requested that the City consider redesignating district-owned property on Adams Avenue from institutional to high density residential. She explained that the property has historically been used for administrative purposes rather than instructional use and that the district has no plans to develop student housing on the site. Ms. Parker stated the property is well suited for residential development due to its proximity to existing multi-family housing, public transportation, bicycle facilities, and Orange Coast College. She noted that redesignating the property could support the City's housing needs and allow the site to be considered as part of the Housing Element.

PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Commissioner Martinez announced several upcoming community events, including the final Concerts in the Park, the Majestic Cycling Tournament, National Night Out, and the Motor Home Madness Demolition Derby benefiting Children's Hospital of Orange County. He also encouraged residents to participate in the City's GIS Strategic Plan survey to provide input on mapping and location-based services. Commissioner Martinez advised that he would attend the August 10 Planning Commission meeting

remotely due to work obligations and apologized for missing the recent Fairview Developmental Center community event because of illness.

Commissioner Andrade recognized the Costa Mesa Alliance for Better Streets for hosting a free bicycle repair event at Lions Park and commended the volunteers and community organizations that participated. She also encouraged residents to attend National Night Out, noting it provides an opportunity to strengthen relationships between the community and the Costa Mesa Police Department.

Vice Chair Zich advised the Coast Community College District to formally submit its rezoning request to the Community Development Director and City Council. He noted that inclusion of the property in the City's Housing Element would require the site to be developed for housing. He also encouraged residents to subscribe to the City's e-notification system to stay informed about Planning Commission meetings, City Council meetings, City news, and community events.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. JULY 13, 2026 UNOFFICIAL MEETING MINUTES

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/DICKSON
MOTION: Move to approve.
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas
Nays: None
Absent: None
Recused: None
Motion carried: 7-0

ACTION:
Planning Commission approved the minutes.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

1. TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP 2026-129 (PTPM-26-0006), AND DEVELOPMENT REVIEW FOR A 4-UNIT COMMON INTEREST DEVELOPMENT AT 215 AND 223 MESA DRIVE

Presentation by Senior Planner, Chris Yeager.

Josh Martinez, Obsidian Development representative, stated he has reviewed and agreed to the conditions of approval.

No public comments.

Commission comments:

Vice Chair Zich expressed support for the project, describing it as a well-designed development that would provide much-needed ownership housing within the City.

Commissioner Dickson commended the thoughtful site design, noting that locating the garages behind the homes created a more attractive streetscape while preserving landscaping and open space. He observed that the project reflected the continued evolution of residential development along Mesa Drive and expressed confidence that it would be a successful addition to the neighborhood.

Commissioner Martinez proposed a friendly amendment to update references within the Conditions of Approval from "Development Services" to "Community Development," which was accepted by the maker of the motion. He stated that while he supported the project because it provided additional housing opportunities, he remained concerned that current parking requirements dedicated substantial site area to vehicle storage that could otherwise accommodate additional housing or open space.

MOVED/SECOND: ZICH/DICKSON
MOTION: Move staff's recommendation.
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas
Nays: None
Absent: None
Recused: None
Motion carried: 7-0

ACTION:
The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

1. Find the project categorically exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15315 (Minor Land Divisions) and 15332 (Infill Development); and
2. Approve Tentative Parcel Map No. 2026-129; and Development Review, subject to the Conditions of Approval, as amended to update references from Development Services to Community Development.

2. DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PDVR-25-0013, TENTATIVE TRACT MAP NO. 19458, AND DENSITY BONUS FOR A 15-UNIT RESIDENTIAL COMMON INTEREST DEVELOPMENT AT 2075 HARBOR BOULEVARD

Four ex-parte communications: Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Martinez, and Chair Harlan each disclosed that they had previously met with the applicant regarding the proposed project.

Presentation by Senior Planner, Victor Mendez.

Brian Cunningham, The Olson Company representative, stated that he had reviewed and agreed to the conditions of approval.

Public comments:

A member of the public who resides near the project site expressed support for the proposed development. The speaker stated that limiting Harbor Boulevard to an exit-only driveway would improve neighborhood circulation and safety because Harbor Boulevard experiences heavy traffic.

A second speaker expressed support for redevelopment of the vacant commercial property and the inclusion of affordable housing. The speaker asked whether the homes could incorporate rooftop solar panels to improve long-term affordability for future homeowners.

Kathy Esfahani (on Zoom), representing the Costa Mesa Affordable Housing Coalition, expressed support for the inclusion of affordable ownership units. She requested clarification regarding the duration of the affordability covenant, noting the importance of maintaining affordability over the long term. Ms. Esfahani also commented that while the community's greatest need remains lower-income rental housing, the proposed affordable ownership units represented a positive addition to the City's housing supply.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Dickson expressed strong support for the project, describing it as well designed and appropriate for the challenging site. He noted that the development would complement the previously approved nearby project, which had initially been contentious but ultimately proved successful. He appreciated the project's affordable housing provisions and the thoughtful design features used to make the development work within the constraints of the property. Although the project required several exemptions, he believed the overall design was successful and appropriately addressed the site's limitations.

Commissioner Dickson also highlighted the importance of providing adequate on-site parking due to limited surrounding street parking. He recognized additional amenities, including bicycle parking, common areas, and usable private backyards, noting that the backyard areas appeared more functional upon closer

review. He concluded that the project would help address Costa Mesa's housing needs, was particularly well suited for Harbor Boulevard, and thanked the applicant for bringing the development forward. He expressed hope that the project would be successful.

Commissioner Andrade expressed support for the project and praised the inclusion of affordable first-time homebuyer opportunities, emphasizing the importance of providing homeownership opportunities within the community and especially within the district where the project would be located.

She stressed the need for the City to prioritize affordable housing opportunities whenever possible, noting that developers do not frequently propose projects that include affordable homeownership options. She expressed appreciation to the applicant for incorporating affordable housing into the project.

Vice Chair Zich expressed support for the project, noting that the proposal was consistent with discussions held in March. He acknowledged that the site presented significant development challenges and that certain aspects, including the driveway configuration and aesthetics, were not ideal, but stated that the applicant had developed a strong design given the site constraints.

He indicated that additional residential development to the south would have been beneficial but recognized that the adjacent property owner was unwilling or unable to participate. He supported the proposed exit-only access onto Harbor Boulevard as a practical approach given existing and anticipated traffic conditions.

Vice Chair Zich raised one concern regarding the gate near Harbor Boulevard, noting that drivers could mistakenly turn into the driveway, encounter the gate, and have difficulty backing out. He suggested adding appropriate signage to clearly indicate that vehicles should not turn into that area.

Chair Harlan expressed support for the project and stated that it demonstrated the intent of Measure K by providing additional housing along a major corridor. He acknowledged that the site presented significant development challenges and commended the applicant for designing a project that provided needed housing while addressing circulation concerns.

Chair Harlan mentioned the applicant's restraint in utilizing the density bonus, noting that the project could have included substantially more units. He stated that the applicant's previous experience in Costa Mesa demonstrated an understanding of the community and its housing needs.

He also recognized that the project provided more parking than required and believed the proposal successfully addressed several important planning

considerations. He concluded that the development was a high-quality project and welcomed the applicant's continued investment in Costa Mesa.

Commissioner Andrade provided additional comments regarding circulation and limited access to the development. She suggested that additional crosswalks, stop signs, or traffic signals along Harbor Boulevard could help slow traffic and improve pedestrian accessibility, particularly with nearby commercial uses such as Starbucks. She emphasized that traffic speed should not be the sole reason for limiting accessibility to the development. She concluded by praising the project's inclusion of green space and private backyard areas.

MOVED/SECOND: DICKSON/ANDRADE
MOTION: Move staff's recommendation.
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas
Nays: None
Absent: None
Recused: None
Motion carried: 7-0

ACTION:
The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

1. Find that the project is exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Public Resources Code Section 21080.66 (Assembly Bill 130); and,
2. Adopted a Resolution taking the following actions:
    a. Development Review: Approve the Development Review for the development of the project including 15 dwelling units with a maximum height of 3 stories/38 feet, six inches;
    b. Tentative Tract Map No. 19458: Approve the Tentative Tract Map to subdivide the property into a residential common interest development; and
    c. Density Bonus: Approve the density bonus request which will provide two moderate income units.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. CLIMATE ACTION AND ADAPTATION PLAN (CAAP), SAFETY ELEMENT UPDATE, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE POLICY UPDATE - PCTY-25-0009, PCTY-25-0002, AND PCTY-26-000X

Planning Manager Anna McGill introduced the study session item and presented members of the project team, including Contract Project Manager Amber Gregg, Energy and Sustainability Services Manager Charles Springer, consultant Jennifer Reid of Dudek, and consultant Kurt Nagel of Interwest. She explained that the team would provide an overview of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan (CAAP), Safety Element Update, and Environmental Justice Policy Update, all of which had been prepared concurrently because they share common technical analyses, community outreach efforts, and policy objectives.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioners asked questions regarding the public review process, community outreach and survey results, the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan's relationship to CEQA, greenhouse gas reduction targets and implementation strategies, updates to the Safety Element, Environmental Justice policies, and how implementation measures and greenhouse gas reductions would be monitored and quantified. Commissioners also provided recommendations to strengthen the proposed documents, including additional emphasis on native landscaping, urban greening, climate resilience, environmental education, healthy food access, and public outreach. Staff responded to the commissioners' questions and clarified the proposed implementation approach.

No public comments.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Martinez expressed support for the overall direction of the Climate Action and Adaptation Plan but encouraged staff to clearly identify measurable greenhouse gas reductions associated with each implementation action rather than relying on broad or exploratory policy language. He also recommended periodic public reporting to monitor implementation progress and suggested including electric bicycles among municipal fleet transportation options.

Staff responded that Appendix D quantifies greenhouse gas reductions for each implementation measure and explained that annual monitoring would allow implementation strategies to be adjusted over time while maintaining progress toward the City's emissions reduction targets.

Vice Chair Zich thanked staff for the presentation and requested additional information regarding implementation responsibilities, long-term costs, and how Environmental Justice policies would be incorporated into future General Plan updates. He also requested additional discussion regarding the Climate Action

and Adaptation Plan during the formal adoption hearing to better understand how the document would guide future City actions.

Chair Harlan agreed with Commissioner Martinez that the relationship between implementation actions and anticipated greenhouse gas reductions should be more clearly presented. He encouraged staff to highlight measurable implementation priorities and demonstrate how municipal actions would contribute toward achieving the City's overall greenhouse gas reduction goals.

Commissioner Dickson requested additional information comparing Costa Mesa's greenhouse gas inventory and reduction assumptions with Orange County and neighboring jurisdictions to provide context regarding the City's methodology and reduction targets.

MOVED/SECOND: DICKSON/ANDRADE
MOTION: Receive and file.
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas
Nays: None
Absent: None
Recused: None
Motion carried: 7-0

ACTION: Planning Commission received and filed the item.

2. FAIRVIEW DEVELOPMENTAL CENTER SPECIFIC PLAN STUDY SESSION

Principal Planner Melinda Dacey introduced the study session item and presented the consultant team, including Planning Manager Anna McGill, Transportation Services Manager Paul Martin, representatives from PlaceWorks, Fehr & Peers, and environmental consultants. Staff explained that the purpose of the study session was to provide an overview of the Public Hearing Draft Fairview Developmental Center (FDC) Specific Plan, the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR), community outreach efforts, and the anticipated review process before formal public hearings.

Commission Discussion:

Commissioners asked questions regarding the proposed land use plan, housing density, financial feasibility, affordable housing requirements, transportation circulation, secondary roadway access, environmental analysis, infrastructure improvements, open space, historic preservation, public outreach, implementation procedures, and long-term maintenance responsibilities.

Commissioners also discussed traffic impacts, public safety, compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods, and opportunities to improve connectivity, recreation, and community amenities within the redevelopment area. Staff and the consultant team responded to the commissioners' questions and provided additional clarification regarding the proposed Specific Plan and Draft Environmental Impact Report.

Public comments:

Speaker one agreed with previous public comments and expressed concern that the proposed landscaped medians would provide limited recreational value because they are located between traffic lanes. The speaker encouraged dedicating more of the available land to usable green space that would better serve future residents and visitors.

Speaker two requested that the traffic analysis include impacts associated with the annual Orange County Fair, stating that the project's size and proximity to the fairgrounds create unique transportation conditions that should be evaluated, particularly for nearby Environmental Justice communities. The speaker also expressed concern that the proposed residential density would likely result in predominantly studio and one-bedroom units rather than family-oriented housing and urged the City to be transparent about the types of housing that are realistically expected to be developed.

Steve Smith shared concerns raised during the community town hall regarding the project's limited access and anticipated traffic impacts on Harbor Boulevard and surrounding neighborhoods. He also expressed concern that increased congestion could undermine the City's active transportation goals and urged the Commission to carefully reconsider and revise the proposal before moving forward.

Brian Emestin, a College Park Costa Mesa resident and youth sports coach, urged the Commission to limit development to 2,300 housing units to preserve open space and expand recreational facilities. He highlighted the City's shortage of athletic fields, the growing demand for youth sports, particularly girls' programs, and encouraged the creation of a community park with athletic fields and other recreational amenities to better serve current and future residents.

Speaker five expressed concerns regarding emergency access, police and fire services, and public safety, questioning whether existing emergency response resources could adequately serve the proposed development. The speaker suggested additional public safety facilities may be needed and also noted increasing traffic congestion and concerns regarding electric bicycle safety throughout the community.

John Troder, a longtime Costa Mesa resident, expressed concern that the proposed development would rely on only two access points despite its large size. He stated that the limited access would increase traffic congestion, greenhouse gas emissions, and public safety risks during emergencies, and urged the Commission to reconsider the project's access configuration.

Diane Russell thanked City staff for conducting the public Q&A held in July and expressed support for the proposed Specific Plan. She emphasized the ongoing need for affordable housing and urged the City to ensure affordable units are constructed concurrently with market-rate housing through provisions in the Development Agreement.

Gary Bennett, Costa Mesa resident, expressed concern about the impacts of reconstructing the Costa Mesa Country Club golf course, including potential revenue losses and the effect on local high school golf programs. He also suggested evaluating Merrimac Way as an alternative access road to improve circulation while minimizing impacts to the golf course and recreational open space.

Wendy Leece, a longtime Costa Mesa resident, expressed concern over the State's housing requirements and the project's significant and unavoidable environmental impacts identified in the Environmental Impact Report, including air quality, biological resources, and traffic. She supported reducing the project to approximately 2,300 units, increasing park space, and encouraged the Commission to consider a scaled-back alternative that would reduce impacts while still meeting State housing requirements.

Speaker ten, longtime west side Costa Mesa resident, expressed concern that adding 4,000 housing units would significantly worsen traffic congestion on Harbor Boulevard, Placentia Avenue, and Victoria Street, negatively affecting emergency response times. While supporting affordable housing, the speaker urged the Commission to reduce the project's scale, citing concerns that it would strain City resources and delay needed infrastructure improvements, including flood mitigation projects.

Speaker eleven (on Zoom), a Mesa Del Mar resident and lifelong Costa Mesa resident, advocated for a development that reflects existing Costa Mesa neighborhoods by incorporating a mix of single-family, affordable, and senior housing, along with connected walking and bicycle paths. She also expressed concerns about existing traffic congestion and urged the Commission to prioritize green space, sports fields, and recreational amenities while addressing residents' concerns about traffic and quality of life.

Kathy Esfahani (on Zoom), a lifelong Costa Mesa resident and representing the Costa Mesa Affordable Housing Coalition, expressed support for the proposed Specific Plan and the inclusion of up to 4,000 housing units to address the City's affordable housing shortage. She acknowledged concerns regarding traffic and recreation but encouraged the City to pursue creative transportation solutions, expand bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, establish joint-use agreements for athletic fields, and approve the proposed plan.

Forest Flarity (on Zoom), a Cornerstone Lane Costa Mesa resident, expressed concern that additional development would worsen traffic and further restrict access to his neighborhood. He questioned the shift from earlier concepts emphasizing parks and open space to a plan with substantially more housing and urged the Commission to preserve recreational amenities to protect residents' quality of life.

Cynthia McDonald, Costa Mesa resident, expressed concern that increasing the project from 2,300 to 4,000 units would primarily add market-rate housing while providing little additional affordable housing or open space. She questioned the City's ability to accommodate the increased demand for public services and infrastructure and urged the Commission to pursue a more balanced development that better reflects smart growth principles and protects the community's long-term quality of life.

Commissioner Comments:

Commissioner Martinez provided extensive comments and recommendations on the draft Specific Plan, focusing on increasing flexibility, improving clarity, and ensuring consistency throughout the document. He questioned the need for certain General Plan amendments, requested clarification regarding the Specific Plan's zoning framework, and asked how the Emergency Operations Center influenced the site layout. He suggested expanding flexibility for commercial development, simplifying land use categories, revising development standards, and encouraging additional homeownership opportunities. He also offered numerous recommendations regarding mobility, including reducing roadway widths, improving bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, enhancing transit connections, increasing park space, updating parking standards, and incorporating additional complete streets improvements. Throughout his comments, Commissioner Martinez requested several technical corrections and clarifications to the Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report.

Commissioner Andrade focused on the project's financial feasibility and full build-out (i.e. 4,000 units) of the Specific Plan (previously referred to as Land Use Concept 3). She asked questions regarding the financial assumptions supporting the preferred development concept and the likelihood that projected returns

would accurately reflect future market conditions. She expressed support for the opportunities the Specific Plan provides, including homeownership, affordable housing, senior housing, and permanent supportive housing. Commissioner Andrade also encouraged maximizing public open space where feasible, sought clarification regarding project access and circulation, and asked staff to continue exploring opportunities for additional bicycle and pedestrian connections to surrounding neighborhoods while acknowledging the constraints posed by the Emergency Operations Center. She also supported considering creative transportation solutions, including trolley service, to help reduce future traffic impacts.

Vice Chair Zich expressed significant concerns regarding the overall direction of the Specific Plan, stating that he believed the project no longer reflected the extensive public outreach conducted over several years. He questioned the increase from earlier planning concepts to a proposal containing up to 4,000 residential units and argued that the project would substantially worsen traffic, reduce park space, and negatively affect surrounding neighborhoods. He expressed concern regarding the proposed secondary access road, questioned the City's justification for its necessity, and encouraged continued evaluation of Merrimac Way as an alternative. Vice Chair Zich also questioned the City's approach to affordable housing, parkland requirements, environmental impacts, and financial feasibility, stating that he believed the proposal did not adequately respond to community input or prior City Council direction.

Commissioner Dickson acknowledged the difficult task assigned to staff but expressed concern that the proposed Specific Plan was not adequately planned for Costa Mesa's long-term transportation and infrastructure needs. He questioned assumptions regarding reduced parking requirements, future travel behavior, and the relationship between the Specific Plan and future Measure K rezoning efforts. Commissioner Dickson also questioned the assumptions used in the financial feasibility analysis, including the selected internal rate of return, and asked whether additional alternatives had been evaluated to better reflect previous City Council direction and community input. He emphasized the importance of balancing multimodal transportation with realistic vehicle demand and expressed concern that the proposed project placed too much emphasis on financial feasibility while giving insufficient consideration to public engagement and the City's historical planning objectives.

Chair Harlan acknowledged the community's concerns regarding whether a single primary ingress and egress point would adequately serve a project of this size. He agreed with Vice Chair Zich that the City should further explore Merrimac Way as a potential secondary access point and engage more directly with the State regarding that option. He stated that the City should not initially bear the burden of providing a secondary easement through the golf course. He suggested further

examining the State's land lease with the Harbor Village operator and noted that renegotiating the lease to allow secondary access could potentially increase the value of the property.

MOVED/SECOND: MARTINEZ/DICKSON
MOTION: Receive and file.
The motion carried by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Chair Harlan, Vice Chair Zich, Commissioner Andrade, Commissioner Dickson, Commissioner Klepack, Commissioner Martinez, Commissioner Rojas
Nays: None
Absent: None
Recused: None
Motion carried: 7-0

ACTION: Planning Commission received and filed the item.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

1. **PUBLIC WORKS REPORT -** None.

2. **DEVELOPMENT SERVICES REPORT -** Director Tai thanked members of the public for attending the recent Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan Town Hall. She reported that the Zoning Code Amendments considered by the Planning Commission would be presented to the City Council on August 4, 2026. She also advised that the Fairview Developmental Center Specific Plan and the Climate Action Plan would return to the Planning Commission on August 10, 2026, and reminded the Commission of the special meeting scheduled for August 17, 2026, regarding the Neighborhoods Where We All Belong initiative.

CITY ATTORNEY REPORT:

1. CITY ATTORNEY REPORT - None.

ADJOURNMENT AT 11:15 p.m.

Submitted by:

CARRIE TAI, SECRETARY
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION