

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
OF THE CITY OF LA MIRADA**

**JANUARY 20, 2022**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting of the Planning Commission was called to order by Chairman Michael Saenz at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers at City Hall, 13700 La Mirada Boulevard, La Mirada, California.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**ROLL CALL**

Present:

Chairman Michael Saenz  
Vice Chairman Richard Cline  
Commissioner Jack Miranda  
Commissioner Lee Olsen

Absent

Commissioner Philip Massey

Staff:

Gabriel Bautista, Community Development Director  
Eric Garcia, Senior Planner  
Arturo Cervantes, Associate Planner  
Alison Moore, Economic Development Manager  
Jorge Orozco, Senior Administrative Analyst  
D. Craig Fox, City Attorney

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**1. MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 18, 2021**

Commissioner Olsen moved, and Vice Chairman Cline seconded to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2021 Planning Commission meeting.

**MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**AYES:** Chairman Saenz, Vice Chairman Cline, Commissioner Miranda,  
Commissioner Olsen

**NOES:** None

**ABSENT:** Commissioner Massey

**ABSTAIN:** None

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**2. ZONING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT (ZOA) NO. 52: Planning Commission consideration of Resolution No. P-01-22 recommending to the City Council the**

**adoption of Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 52 amending the following sections of the Zoning Code, Title 21 of the La Mirada Municipal Code and the adoption of the associated Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program: Section 21.76.020 definitions of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to include and delete certain definitions; Subsection 21.76.050(6) of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to clarify the permitting of Electronic Billboards; Table 21.76.070, of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to allow Electronic Billboards within the Freeway Commercial (C-F) Zoning District; Section 21.76.130 of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to specifically address new Electronic Billboards and the conversion of Non-Electronic Billboards; Chapter 21.76, "Signs," by adding a new Section 21.76.140 establishing standards for the development of Electronic Billboards; and Section 21.114.020 of Chapter 21.114, "Site Plan Review," to include Electronic Billboards under the list of projects subject to the Site Plan Review process.**

Chairman Saenz introduced the item and requested staff's report.

Mr. Jorge Orozco stated that the City is requesting Planning Commission consideration of a resolution recommending to the City Council the adoption of an ordinance amending Chapter 21.76, "Signs" and Chapter 21.114, "Site Plan Review" of the Zoning Ordinance.

Mr. Orozco stated that the widening of the I-5 Freeway resulted in the removal of several existing billboards and that developers have inquired about the installation of new Electronic Billboards which are currently not permitted. He added that existing billboards within the City are considered legal non-conforming because they were installed prior to their prohibition under the current code and that the proposed ordinance would allow for Electronic Billboards to be built only within the Freeway Commercial (C-F) Zoning District and that their installation would be subject to a Development Agreement and Site Plan Review. He added that the Development Agreement would include compensation to be paid to the City for allowing the installation and operation of the Electronic Billboards.

Mr. Orozco stated that the development standards for the installation of Electronic billboards will include a maximum display area of 700 square feet; a maximum height of 50 feet; a minimum distance of 1,000 feet between billboards on the same side of the freeway; a minimum distance of 500 feet from any non-electronic billboard; a minimum setback of 25 feet from any property line and 25 feet from any building; and a minimum lot area of three acres for the installation of an Electronic Billboard. He added that the standards were developed by surveying surrounding cities' requirements and discussions with the City Council at the December 2021 study session.

Mr. Orozco stated that while there is currently one non-electronic billboard along the I-5 Freeway that is approximately 670 square feet in sign area and 70 feet tall, staff is proposing a lower maximum height of 50 feet and as previously noted a maximum sign face areas of 700 square feet.

Mr. Orozco introduced Mark Blodgett of Blodgett Baylosis Environmental Planning for review of the Mitigated Negative Declaration associated with the proposed ordinance.

Mr. Marc Blodgett indicated that a review of the environmental impacts that may result from ZOA No. 52 found that the proposed ordinance would not result in any significant adverse unmitigable environmental impacts and determined that a Mitigated Negative Declaration would be the appropriate environmental review document. He added that, while impacts were identified within certain environmental categories, the environmental analysis concluded that, with the adoption of mitigation measures and a corresponding Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, the impacts could be reduced to a less than significant level.

Mr. Orozco concluded his report by recommending that the Planning Commission conduct a public hearing, affirm the Mitigated Negative Declaration, and adopt Resolution No. P-01-22, recommending to the City Council the adoption of ZOA No. 52.

Chairman Saenz opened the public hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak in favor of the ordinance

No one spoke.

Chairman Saenz asked if anyone would like to speak in opposition

No one spoke.

There being no one wishing to speak on the matter, Chairman Saenz closed the public hearing and opened the item for discussion.

Commissioner Olsen asked for clarification on the conditions pertaining to the brightness of the signs and how it is controlled.

Mr. Blodgett responded and stated that not only was the brightness controlled and limited by regulation, but that the colors are also controlled in the ordinance and that the ordinance also controls the billboard display, and that the colors can be monitored and adjusted accordingly.

Vice Chairman Cline requested clarification on the purposes of Section 10, Number 9, Letters (C) and (D) of the attached ordinance.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that Section 10, Paragraph 9, Letter (C) will be changed so that the frequency of change does not occur within four (4) second intervals. He added that this will conform with letter (D) which already includes this language.

Commissioner Miranda asked about the number of billboards that would be installed.

Ms. Alison Moore responded and stated that the City doesn't really know how many billboards, developers are interested in installing, but that staff has been approached by two property owners: one on the northside of the freeway and one on the southside. She added that Caltrans's requirement, that Electronic Billboards be 1,000 feet apart will limit the number and that there are some existing static billboards that may also affect the number of new billboards because of the 500-foot distance from these types of billboards. She added that the number of Electronic Billboards will depend on the number of applicants.

Commissioner Miranda stated that there is construction of Electronic Billboards and conversion of the existing static billboards, he asked how many billboards the City has.

Ms. Moore responded and stated that she believed the north side of the freeway currently had three and that one of these is being proposed for conversion to an Electronic Billboard, and that changes to the other two have yet to be proposed. She added that the south side of the freeway currently has only one billboard left due to the removal of two others as part of the widening. She stated that the City currently has a proposal from a developer for the installation of two billboards on the south side of the freeway. If approved these billboards would be located at each end of the proposed development. She added that the ordinance would not allow any new static billboards.

There being no further discussion, Chairman Saenz requested a motion on the item.

**Vice Chairman Cline moved, and Commissioner Olsen seconded to approve Resolution No. P-01-22 recommending to the City Council the adoption of Zoning Ordinance Amendment No. 52, with the changes discussed, amending the following sections of the Zoning Code, Title 21 of the La Mirada Municipal Code and the adoption of the associated Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program: Section 21.76.020 definitions of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to include and delete certain definitions; Subsection 21.76.050(6) of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to clarify the permitting of Electronic Billboards; Table 21.76.070, of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to allow Electronic Billboards within the Freeway Commercial (C-F) Zoning District; Section 21.76.130 of Chapter 21.76, "Signs," to specifically address new Electronic Billboards and the conversion of Non-Electronic Billboards; Chapter 21.76, "Signs," by adding a new Section 21.76.140 establishing standards for the development of Electronic Billboards; and Section 21.114.020 of Chapter 21.114, "Site Plan Review," to include Electronic Billboards under the list of projects subject to the Site Plan Review process.**

**MOTION CARRIED BY THE FOLLOWING ROLL CALL VOTE:**

**AYES:** Chairman Saenz, Vice Chairman Cline, Commissioner Miranda,  
Commissioner Olsen  
**NOES:** None  
**ABSENT:** Commissioner Massey  
**ABSTAIN:** None

Mr. Bautista stated that item is approved and will be considered by the City Council at a future meeting.

### **INFORMATIONAL ITEM**

#### **3. Summary of 2021 Community Development Department Projects and Activities.**

Chairman Saenz introduced the item and requested staff's report.

Mr. Bautista stated that at the beginning of every year staff provides a year-end review of the previous year's activities and that this year's review would be presented by Senior Planner Eric Garcia.

Mr. Garcia proceeded to review the 2021 year-end summary via a PowerPoint presentation. He reviewed the various types of administrative items handled by staff on a day-to-day basis. He noted that the total number of Zoning Clearance/Site Plan Reviews was 677; that the total number Accessory Dwelling Unit reviewed was 41; and that that total number of Zoning Clearances for Business Licenses was 132. Mr. Garcia added that the number of Sign Design Reviews completed was 23; that Zoning Letters totaled 19; Home Occupation Permits 65; Temporary Use Permits 11; Film Permit four; Administrative Adjustments three; identified unpermitted structures 84; and Public Records Request totaled 22.

Commissioner Olsen inquired if all ADU applications had been approved.

Mr. Garcia responded and stated that they were all approved by the Planning Division.

Mr. Garcia then reviewed the Building & Safety Division totals for 2021 and compared them to the 2020 totals.

Mr. Garcia then reviewed the digital submittal process that was implemented because of the Covid-19 Pandemic. He stated that since City Hall was closed to the public for approximately three months, in April of 2020 a process was devised for the digital submittal of applications and plans. He added that the online submittal process continued through the end of June of 2021 for a total of 1,641 submittals during the online submittal period. Mr. Garcia also informed the commission that when City Hall was reopened to the public, a permit kiosk was installed in the lobby for anyone who did not have internet access at home. He added that the kiosk was set up for applicants to complete applications and print them directly to the Building Permit side of the counter thereby eliminating the exchange of paper for health and safety purposes.

Mr. Garcia then reviewed the emergency outdoor dining and commercial programs totals.

Vice Chairman Cline asked if these approvals required annual renewal.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that there was an indefinite period for the approvals under the two programs. He added that the programs were originally anticipated to run through the end of 2021, but given the ongoing pandemic, they were allowed to continue and that they were not expected to expire this fiscal or calendar year. He further added that the approvals would be allowed to continue as long as they adhered to the program requirements.

Mr. Garcia provided an update on projects reviewed by the Planning Commission including the two housing projects on Valley View Avenue; the 28-unit apartment complex on La Mirada Boulevard; the single-family home on Ocaso Avenue; the Church of the Nazarene project on Foster Road; the VCA project; and the Vons Chicken which he reported had recently changed to Legend Hot Chicken.

Mr. Garcia reviewed the Housing Element update stating that two community workshops had been conducted. He added that Mr. Marc Blodgett was working on final revisions before submittal to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD).

Mr. Bautista added that the draft of the Housing Element update was reviewed by staff and that comments were provided to the consultant, who is preparing the final draft of the documents and the associated environmental review. He added that upon completion the document will be forwarded to HCD for review but that they currently have a large backlog of documents. Mr. Bautista added that he did not think the document would be adopted by the deadline.

Commissioner Olsen said it seemed a little backwards that the state approves it before the City.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that if we didn't do it that way, there is the potential of the city approving it and HCD not approving thereby requiring the document to go back through the City approval process, which is why we are requesting preliminary approval from HCD. He added that HCD will more than likely have edits and required changes to the draft Housing Element.

Commissioner Olsen asked if the Housing Element goes back to the state for final approval after the City approves it.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that once it gets approved by the City, the final document with the resolution of approval from City Council is sent to HCD for certification. He added that this assumes the City Council is willing to accept all the changes that are made by HCD to get their approval.

Mr. Garcia updated the commissioners on administrative projects including the Starbucks on Beach Boulevard; the CVS that closed; and Gold's Gym.

Commissioner Olsen said that it appeared that there was already a Conditional Use Permit for the drive-through as it did not have to be renewed.

Commissioner Cline inquired about the new drive-through requirements being considered by the City Council and if this effected the Starbucks.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that the Starbucks in questions took over a Conditional Use Permit that was granted to a Jack in the Box with a drive-through, so they did not have to go back through the entitlement process.

Mr. Garcia continued his review of administrative projects including the Yoshiharu Ramen restaurant; Bubbakoo's Burritos; Taco Bell restaurants on Leffingwell Road and La Mirada Boulevard; Del Taco restaurant on Imperial Highway; and Pep Boys/Advance Auto Parts on Rosecrans Avenue.

Mr. Arturo Cervantes added that the Advance Auto Parts is a part of Pep Boys and that the two stores will be completely independent. He added that the Advanced Auto Parts will be doing all retail and that Pep Boys will be primarily servicing vehicles with very light retail sales.

Mr. Garcia stated that there are other projects in the works which may or may not move forward and briefly reviewed them, including a proposal for multiple buildings for fast food establishments, a fueling station, with a convenient store, a carwash tunnel, and a multi-story hotel.

Commissioner Miranda asked who the developer was.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that the developer is Shopoff but that the property owner is Peter Dunkel.

Commissioner Miranda asked how tall the hotel would be.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that he believed it will be five stories tall. Roughly 50' to 55' feet high.

Mr. Garcia concluded the presentation and asked if there were any questions.

Commissioner Miranda inquired about the number of property owners for the previously mentioned commercial center on Beach Boulevard.

Mr. Bautista responded and stated that there could very well be more than one owner and that it is not uncommon for commercial centers in the City to be under split ownership.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

No one spoke

**COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Commissioner Miranda appreciated both Mr. Olsen and Mr. Cline for being involved in the Housing Development workshop.

Commissioner Miranda asked the City Attorney if he would be required to recuse himself and leave the City Council Chamber if he, as a Planning Commissioner, were interested in owning a billboard and had an application before the commission.

City Attorney Craig Fox responded and stated he may not be able to own a billboard and be on the Planning Commission. He added that it could potentially be a government Code Section 1090 violation wherein his contract interest in his private capacity, could conflict with his official capacity as a commissioner.

Commissioner Miranda thanked him for his response.

Vice Chairman Cline stated that he would encourage everyone to attend the "State of the City Address" which is coming up next Thursday.

**STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT**

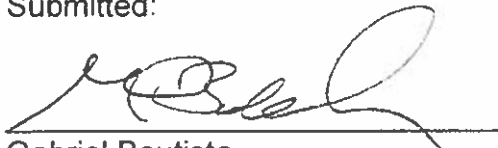
Mr. Bautista advised the commissioners of the provided invitation from the La Mirada Chamber of Commerce for the "State of the City Address" on January 27, 2022, at 11:30 a.m. at the Holiday Inn. He also advised the commissioners that they were invited to the Community Garden Ribbon Cutting at Frontier Park on January 27, 2022, at 4 p.m.

Mr. Bautista briefly updated the commission on the Housing Element, reminded them of the Form 700 filing deadline and requested shirt sizes from the commissioners for their new Planning Commission polos.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Planning Commission, Chairman Saenz adjourned the meeting at 7:44 p.m. to the next regular meeting to be held on Thursday, February 17, 2022.

Submitted:



Gabriel Bautista  
Community Development Director

Attest:



Michael Saenz, Chairman