

MINUTES
PLANNING COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING
December 15, 2020 – 6:00 P.M.

This meeting was conducted as a video conference meeting in a remote location. All votes during the meeting were conducted by roll call.

CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Highland was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Community Development Director Mainez through video conference.

Present:	Chair	Randall Hamerly
	Vice Chair	Chandra Thomas
	Commissioner	Edward Amaya
	Commissioner	Jarrold Miller
	Commissioner	Jessica Sutorus

Staff Present: Lawrence Mainez, Community Development Director
Kim Stater, Assistant Community Development Director
Salvador Quintanilla, Associate Planner
Carlos Zamano, City Engineer
Matt Bennett, Assistant Public Works Director
Camille Goritz, Administrative Assistant III

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chair Hamerly

COMMUNITY INPUT (ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA)

None

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. Minutes from the November 17, 2020 Regular Meeting.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Sutorus, to approve the minutes as amended. Motion carried on a roll call vote, 5-0.

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Accessory Sign Review Application (ASR 20-006) is a request to amend the 7-Eleven Sign Program to increase the height and the overall sign area of two future monument signs which identify the gas station and future tenants along Greenspot Road and Boulder Avenue. (Continued from the November 3, 2020, Planning Commission Meeting)

Chair Hamerly opened the public hearing.

Associate Planner Quintanilla presented the staff report.

Warner LeMenager, Applicant stated I think the height of the sign is adequate for capturing what we need.

Chair Hamerly asked what is the exact positioning of the proposed staff recommended location of that sign? Is it outside of the 25-foot line of sight triangle?

Associate Planner Quintanilla replied yes, it is the proposed location will be out of the line-of-sight location and it has been verified with the Engineering Department.

Chair Hamerly stated both the modified conditions three and four those two signs will essentially be identical; wouldn't that revert to the original definition of monument sign A that was in the previously approved sign program?

Associate Planner Quintanilla stated the previously approved sign program was 10 foot 6 with 96 square feet over the sign area. The modified sign is 11 foot with a sign area of 106 square foot. It is going 6 inches taller and 10 square feet larger in the sign area.

Chair Hamerly stated the previously approved sign program there was only one destination both the letter A's, two monument signs, and they were identical. If the new destination sign B would be redundant since both signs are now identical, again?

Associate Planner Quintanilla replied yes, we will modify and call them as A.

Chair Hamerly closed the public hearing.

A MOTION was made by Commissioner Sutorus, seconded by Vice Chair Thomas, to approve:

- 1) Adopt Resolution No. 2020-012, to approve Accessory Sign Application (ASR 20-006) to amend the previously approved 7-Eleven Sign Program to increase the height and sign area of two (2) monument signs, subject to the Conditions of Approval, and Findings of Fact; and
- 2) Direct Staff to file a Notice of Exemption with the County Clerk of the Board.

Motion carried on a roll call vote, 5-0.

RESOLUTION NO. 2020-012

A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF HIGHLAND, CALIFORNIA, APPROVING ACCESSORY SIGN REVIEW NO. 20-006, AN AMENDMENT TO THE 7-ELEVEN SIGN PROGRAM PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY THE HIGHLAND PLANNING COMMISSION ON AUGUST 21, 2018 BY RESOLUTION NO. 2018-012. TO INCREASE THE HEIGHT AND THE OVERALL SIGN AREA OF TWO MONUMENT SIGNS. THE SITE IS LOCATED AT 28359 GREENSPOT ROAD (APN: 1201-361-28, -29, & -30).

3. City of Highland Active Transportation Plan (ATP); a comprehensive plan for the network of trails, bike lanes, sidewalks, and other elements to support safe walking and bicycling in the City.

Chair Hamerly opened the public hearing.

Community Development Director Mainez presented the staff report.

Samuel Zneimer, Applicant presented the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) presentation.

Commissioner Miller stated when we look at the regional state and federal grants the criteria to acquire those grants are very specific. Did we look at the criteria and take it into account when developing the prioritization framework?

Samuel Zneimer stated we did not use what the state criteria was for some of the grants. We made sure that what we are proposing could be supported by a grant of some sort. One of the big grants you will see is the Active Transportation Plan (ATP).

Chair Hamerly asked what the monitoring process involved to gauge success in reducing trips per day? How do these goals reflect our inability to control some of the macro issues?

Samuel Zneimer replied that will always be an issue of how much you can affect for air quality and those goals can be modified. Unfortunately, some of these are at the state regional level and in that section, it is state metrics that are utilized on a consistent basis for measuring process for Active Transportation Air Quality. City of Highland cannot affect all of those, but they are usually within Active Transportation Plans. These plans are unique to a community, so we are removing those ones due to your specific issues with them is understandable.

Chair Hamerly stated the compromise on that might be is if we are identified as a community of need, because of poor air quality that might help us qualify for the grant. If the grant is not tied to a metric of monitoring where it shows we have reduced our bad air quality to a certain threshold, because of these programs. I do not think that would be achievable, so I would not include those in the goal statements for what we are trying to achieve.

Samuel Zneimer stated when implementing goal settings for each of these plans a lot of the times the goals that are set are the ways you will receive a grant. I have not seen a grant program where you not meeting that goal works against the future in terms of air quality especially at this regional level, however it will be essential how we will receive these grants. We like to do goal setting that is ambitious, that would help the City in the long run.

Commissioner Amaya stated I am glad that there is an emphasis on equity in the plan and using CalEnviroScreen. The 210 freeway intersects our city and especially on the western portion that is where there is a big need. Regarding safety on page 112, is that specifically make it safe towards walking and biking because there is a lot of traffic and cars speed. Did people give input that they did not feel safe walking, because there might be vagrancy theft or crime?

Samuel Zneimer replied it took into account though it was more focused on the actual collision history. We had community input about safety issues regarding code enforcement or not feeling safe which we factored in. In terms of the recommendation, I did factor in crime, loose dogs, and code enforcement in my idea of making it safe.

Commissioner Amaya asked is there any survey as far as getting these projects up and running, do we think there will be enough people wanting to bike or enough bike parking?

Samuel Zneimer replied I did not take account if there is going to be enough bike parking at one specific location if these projects are up and running. In general, I recommend placing them at locations and destinations of interest.

Commissioner Amaya stated regarding existing barriers and one of big main barriers on the western side some of the infrastructure needs to improve.

Samuel Zneimer stated it is a very common thing to see infrastructure improvements as a barrier and a lot of communities especially in the disadvantage section is probably the most sighted barrier that I have seen.

Community Development Director Mainez clarified the page numbers that were called out by Commissioner Amaya were referenced to the page numbers from the agenda packet and not from the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) packet. Please refer to the page numbering on the ATP packet.

Commissioner Sutorus stated that she has worked on an Active Transportation Plan in the past. What was helpful with writing the grants to be funded was a budget attached with estimates for prioritization. I did not see that on the plan, were you going to have an opportunity to come up with estimates or leave as is?

Samuel Zneimer stated for this practice we are going to base it as our prioritization scale, unfortunately for this grant opportunity there was not enough funds to go into detailed as cost estimations of each of these projects.

City Engineer Zamano stated doing cost estimates at this level is very difficult and expensive. Working on numerous amounts of grant applications for the city can be expensive, although I see in this report when I reviewed it Samuel included range for cost estimates. He gave it a rating of low, medium, and high, which there is some information, but this document is meant to serve as a planning guide to help the city identify what the needs are. In regard to the Capital Improvement Program you will be pleased to hear there is quite a few project already in the works that are going to help boost and complete the projects that are listed in the packet.

Chair Hamerly asked Community Development Director Mainez if this would be an element that would be added to the City's general plan document or is this a stand-alone document?

Community Development Director Mainez replied this is a stand-alone document. This document is consistent with the general plan.

Chair Hamerly stated I noticed the city had an interactive site plan. There is an application called Strava which is for running and cycling and the real power of these things is the interactivity. For example, if you are riding and see a pothole a lot of the time those applications will show an interactive feature to report an issue. If there was an interactive feature hosted by the City's Maintenance Department would not have to be on 24-hour call. They would have community input essentially virtually with unlimited watch from the community constantly on these improvements. The City would benefit putting together an app that people could load onto their phones and it will show the best route. It will map out the new path that has created. It would show how far it is going to be, how long it would take to arrive at the destination, and while in route the person could report a maintenance issue to the application.

Community Development Director Mainez recognized Associate Planner Quintanilla working with other team members to acquire a grant, which to tie into the Planning and Building and Safety permitting and entitlement software. If anyone that has an application in house could track it in real time. Also, the new software will allow the public to submit complaints related to Code Enforcement, Public Works, and Engineering Departments.

Chair Hamerly stated there are two different standards that I have come across for pedestrian activities. One is a quarter mile radius from every location is considered an easily walkable community and others will use a half mile standard to arrive to your destination. What was the figure that we were using to determine a reasonable walking distance when creating a connected series of paths within the City?

Samuel Zneimer stated we use our standard half mile for bicycle facilities and a quarter mile for pedestrian facilities in terms of rating of accessibility.

Chair Hamerly replied most of the corridors within Highland are the major east/west arterials. I am wondering how we met the goals of creating viable pedestrian opportunities if the distance to key destinations within the city is not within those convenient walking distances?

Samuel Zneimer stated that is the toughest elements of active transportation is that it is best utilized by something that is nearby. A lot of the time is distance, effort, and time as the three big reasons why they do not utilize active transportation for all their trips. Unfortunately, it does limit some accessibility. The best is to provide them with the best infrastructure and the opportunity to make those trips comfortable and safe as much as possible is the only way I have seen people overcome those barriers.

Chair Hamerly stated within the distance constraints that we have since we have a linear city that is very long east and west it seems making the trip as pleasant as possible is one of the most valuable tools we must encourage. More frequent rest stops, increasing the amount of shade and access to water might be high priority items to make those routes attractive. On the exhibits I noticed that the street names did not correspond with their proper location on the maps and the quality of the copy was poor. One of the issues with walking through the city is that certain areas of the ATP referenced not only pedestrian safe routes, but also universal designs and accessibility. In certain neighborhoods there are four-foot walkway standards, frequently there will either have a transformer or meter that reduces the sidewalk down that it is not an accessible clear path of travel. The different strategies to consider for creating safe pedestrian routes is to think seriously about increasing the right-of-way or the sidewalk width if we are going

to incorporating utilities and public infrastructure that is encroaching those walkways. It is preferred that the walkway is completely unobstructed, however that is not always achievable.

City Engineer Zamano stated we do that at the project level. The City identifies that the utility needs to be relocated we will reach out to the utility company to coordinate as part of the effort with the project.

Chair Hamerly stated I know the bike lane widths are usually calculated from face of curb which is not always safe. Sometimes those gutters are steep slopes and gutters to get greater water flow capacity and that does not lend itself to a safe cycling condition. My recommendation is the bike lane be measured on the pavement and not face of curb because it is not usable if you are including the gutters. Church Street has very high velocity traffic and a lot of storm drains.

City Engineer Zamano stated the way we approach things now is much better whenever we implement or move forward with a pavement rehabilitation project. A new practice is to look at the striping very closely and we make sure we give the maximum width to the bike lanes.

Chair Hamerly asked are there programs for educating the public to be aware that they are driving a route to school and need to slow down?

Samuel Zneimer stated that is a huge concern. On page 142 it has a picture of the slow down sign, and there are different public awareness campaigns to maximize peoples understanding of safety concerns of the user. It does not specially target motorist; the signage is supposed help.

Chair Hamerly stated the Shelton Trail between Bacon and Cloverhill the trail cuts off and you have to hike down around the canyon and back up the canyon to get back to Cloverhill. There is a trail that cuts across between those two streets and was wondering when that was going to reopen.

Community Development Director Mainez stated it is private property and the city does not have jurisdiction. The Trails Committee would be the one to review that issue.

Commissioner Miller stated on page 139 green infrastructure is mentioned and says the City of Highland will include green infrastructure when feasible. What is the city's vision for incorporating green infrastructure within these projects? Will green infrastructure be used as a tool and inquire additional funding and grants for these projects?

Community Development Director Mainez stated every project that is built in our city both private and public is required under state and federal law to implement green standards. We call it low impact development.

Commissioner Miller replied I am on board with that. I am very familiar with those requirements for LID. A lot of these different bike projects and smaller permit projects as it relates to transportation are exempt. Is it going to be only incorporated when its required or will there be additional consideration to include green infrastructure to maybe expand the funding options?

Community Development Mainez stated since we are an agency in California, we need to start thinking from that perspective. Even though we are exempt and not required, we need to explore how to make this green.

City Engineer Zamano stated the purpose of this is bringing our attention to the possibility of introducing this to more projects. It is giving us flexibility to optimize the projects and do it in a manner that is the best interest of the city.

Commissioner Miller stated I would love to see a little bit more aggressive language in there. We have these different requirements, but it sounds like you are willing to consider this maybe even when it is not required. There is a lot of grants out there available for green infrastructure.

Community Development Director Mainez replied we can add that language.

City Engineer Zamano stated as we construct some of these green belts, we do need to consider maintenance and it is one thing to build them, but who is going to maintain them. If we do not have a funding mechanism for that sometimes it makes it difficult to go and construct these types of beautiful improvements. We will consider that wherever it is possible and practicable.

Commissioner Sutorus stated working on a grant for ATP in the past they wanted that specific language. They would not consider us if we did not have attributes such as bioswales and permeable pavements in the grant document request. It sounds like it is a multi-million dollar project that is going to take several years and if you can receive grant funding to help support pieces of it along the way those environmental attributes will be important to be competitive.

Commissioner Miller stated maintenance costs would be one of the items to consider in any feasibility study.

Chair Hamerly replied one of the biggest elements of maintenance has to do with plant materials and ground cover materials that are selected. Choosing things that do not have natural spreading capabilities that can thrive into the climate in which they are planted makes it that we do not have significant supplemental irrigation. That goes along ways to make it an attractive natural environment.

Community Development Director Mainez stated I will work with City Engineer Zamano to come up with language that will appease both Planning Commissioners and balance the future cost.

Chair Hamerly stated traffic calming and a lot of the tier one projects are on the major east/west arterials and that is walking a tight rope because the more traffic calming you put on Base Line or Highland Avenue the more congestion you are going to have. I am a firm advocate of traffic calming which there might be certain corridors that might not be advisable because of the volume of traffic and we want to people to get from their house to the freeway as quickly as possible. The split between what we are developing for recreational use versus what we are viewing as alternative transportation and trying to reduce trips per day. I did not see any loops in the proposed system and loops are much less monotonous. Is there any consideration given to creating loops of varying distances that have mileage markers and directional signs similar to developed bike and trail markings?

Samuel Zneimer stated I did not focus on recreational loops. This one was a very much focused on shifting trips and while it did have share used trails as part of the recreational aspect of the plan overall. As far as wayfinding signage we did not put specific locations for those elements. We do make the recommendation to include an update wayfinding signage.

City Engineer Zamano stated one of the locations where you will find wayfinding signage is along Base Line. You will find the signage throughout the city already, and we are looking to add more wherever we can.

Chair Hamerly stated for the safe routes for school, I recommend somehow make a game out of it and make incentives for adopting the program.

Community Development Director Mainez stated prior to COVID-19, I used to meet with the principals from both Redlands and San Bernardino Unified School Districts. That was one of things that they talked about and promoted where they would incentivize kids walking safely to school and a couple schools would have pizza parties in honor of the students who met their goals.

Chair Hamerly stated making it fun is the best ways to facilitate adoption. In the future, the 210 freeway improvements are going to be completed. When they initially opened the freeway years ago, on a Saturday they shut down the whole strip from I think San Bernardino Ave and Rancho Cucamonga and it was bikes and pedestrians only. I would like to throw that idea out to promote safe cycling and active lifestyle that we entertain on a weekend before they open the 210 freeway.

City Engineer Zamano stated I attended that event. It was from San Bernardino and Rialto. I remember how neat it was and very well published. This is something we can follow up with Assistant Public Works Director Matt Bennett.

Chair Hamerly stated on page 151 regarding prioritization given the primary objectives of the entire plan is to serve under served communities where the needs are the greatest. Where can we do low scale cost and get it done quickly, whereas the whole purpose of the program is to try to connect different parts of the city specifically focusing on the most under served areas. Why wouldn't the tier one projects be including the areas of the greatest need even though that might be logistically difficult to achieve?

Samuel Zneimer stated we did consider it to be apart of it, that is why we used the CalEnviroScreen shown on page 150. It was not the only metric we used, but it was one of our main metrics. We can change some of the prioritization and if you want it to have more points, we will have the equity score to be higher.

Chair Hamerly stated it just seems like if we are trying to sell this as connecting disadvantage, communities that probably choose one of the main arterials being Base Line east of the 210 freeway already has bike lines and is a fairly wide street.

Commissioner Amaya stated shown on page 153 the tier one projects table 11, those corridors that majority are west of the 210 freeway, correct?

Samuel Zneimer replied yes. Majority of the projects are west of the 210 freeway.

Chair Hamerly closed the public hearing.

A MOTION was made by Chair Hamerly, seconded by Vice Chair Thomas, to incorporate the feedback from the Planning Commission and the Community and will continue the Planning Commission regular meeting scheduled January 19, 2021.

Motion carried on a roll call vote, 5-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Assistant Community Development Director Stater announced the Planning Commission regular meeting scheduled on January 5, 2021 will be canceled.

Community Development Director Mainez announced that he is working with the City Attorney to provide training workshops for the Planning Commissioners. Also, in the future provide the Commissioners an overview of the General Plan.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, Chair Hamerly declared the meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Camille Goritz, Administrative Assistant III
Community Development Department

Randall Hamerly, Chair
Planning Commission