

UNOFFICIAL UNTIL APPROVED

**MEETING MINUTES OF THE CITY OF  
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION**

**March 11, 2024**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Chair Ereth led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**ROLL CALL**

Present: Chair Adam Ereth, Vice Chair Russell Toler, Commissioner Angely Andrade, Commissioner Karen Klepack, Commissioner Jonny Rojas, Commissioner Vivar

Absent: Commissioner Jon Zich

Officials Present: Assistant Director of Development Services Scott Drapkin, Assistant City Attorney Tarquin Preziosi, Planning & Sustainable Development Manager Bill Rodrigues, Principal Planner Phayvanh Nanthavongdouangsy, Assistant Planner Gabriel Villalobos, Director of Public Works Raja Sethuraman, Transportation Services Manager Jennifer Rosales, Active Transportation Coordinator Brett Atencio Thomas, City Engineer Seung Yang, and Recording Secretary Anna Partida

**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PRESENTATIONS:**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – MATTERS NOT LISTED ON THE AGENDA:**

Ida Wolf, spoke against the proposed Jamboree Housing project proposed for the Senior Center parking lot.

**PLANNING COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:**

Commissioner Klepack informed the public of the deadline to apply to serve on a City Committee is March 18, 2024.

Commissioner Vivar thanked all present for attending the Planning Commission meeting, and also thanked Council Member Harper for his service on the City Council.

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**CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**No member of the public nor Commissioner requested to pull a Consent Calendar item.**

**MOVED/SECOND:** Vivar/Rojas

**MOTION:** Approve recommended action for Consent Calendar Item No. 1.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Ereth, Toler, Andrade, Rojas, Klepack, Vivar

Nays: None

Absent: Zich

Abstain: None

Motion carried: 6-0

**1. APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES: FEBUARY 12, 2024**

**ACTION:** Planning Commission approved the minutes of the regular meeting of February 12, 2024.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:****1. PLANNING APPLICATION 23-15 FOR A CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT TO RENOVATE AND EXPAND CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL LOCATED AT 760 VICTORIA STREET**

**Project Description:** Planning Application 23-15 is a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for the renovation and expansion of an existing school ("Christ Lutheran School"). The proposed school expansion includes adding a 3,078-square-foot second-floor mezzanine area to the existing recreational gym and adding 400 square feet of classroom area. To accommodate these changes, the slope for a portion of the existing gymnasium's roofline will be modified and several new clerestory windows added. The building height modifications are subject to the approval of a conditional use permit. In addition, 2,900 square feet of classroom area and a 711-square-foot church café & kitchen would be renovated. The previously approved student enrollment is not proposed to change.

**Environmental Determination:** The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class 1), Existing Facilities and Section 15305 (Class 5), Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations.

One ex-parte communication reported by Chair Ereth who spoke with David Handcock and noted that he attended the school from 1989-1990.

Gabriel Villalobos, Assistant Planner, presented the staff report.

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The Commission asked questions of staff including about current student enrollment, maximum student enrollment, traffic study, number of parking spaces, reason for previous appeal for the site, gated access, potential traffic impacts, and landscape enhancement.

**The Chair opened the Public Hearing.**

Pastor Drew Ross, applicant, stated he had read and agrees to the conditions of approval and provided the Planning Commission with some context for the project. Ronnie Boslow, principal, and James Cleveland, architect, also representing Christ Lutheran Church and School spoke in support of the project.

The Commission asked questions of the applicant team about driveway operations, pick-up operations, crosswalk visibility, applicants property ownership, benefits of white noise machine to reduce sound and green screen to limit visibility, and applicant's openness to adding landscaping to help alleviate noise concerns.

**The Chair opened public comments.**

Karen Johnson spoke in support of the item.

Cammie Mendez spoke in support of the item.

**The Chair closed public comments.****The Chair closed the Public Hearing.**

Vice Chair Toler made a motion to approve the application. Chair Ereth seconded the motion.

The Commission discussed the motion including the positive impacts on the community, community involvement, landscaping, and noise mitigation.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Toler/Ereth

**MOTION:** Approve staff's recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Ereth, Toler, Andrade, Rojas, Klepack, Vivar

Nays: None

Absent: Zich

Recused: None

Motion carried: 6-0

**ACTION:** The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

1. The project is categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) per CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 (Class

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- 1), Existing Facilities and Section 15305 (Class 5), Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations.
2. Approve Planning Application 23-15, based on findings of fact and subject to conditions of approval.

**RESOLUTION PC-2024-06 - A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA APPROVING PLANNING APPLICATION TO RENOVATE AND EXPAND CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH AND SCHOOL LOCATED AT 760 VICTORIA STREET**

The Chair explained the appeal process.

2. **GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PGPA-23-0001 TO AMEND THE 2015-2035 GENERAL PLAN CIRCULATION ELEMENT BY ADDING A REFERENCE TO THE COSTA MESA PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN AND REVISING POLICIES UNDER GOALS C-1 TO C-12; AND REVIEW OF THE DRAFT COSTA MESA PEDESTRIAN MASTER PLAN**

**General Plan Amendment (PGPA-23-0001)** is a proposed amendment to the **General Plan - Circulation Element** to incorporate revised policies and a reference to the Costa Mesa Pedestrian Master Plan. The Planning Commission will hold a public hearing regarding the proposed amendment to the Circulation Element and to review the draft Costa Mesa Pedestrian Master Plan on March 11, 2024. The Planning Commission will consider both items and make a recommendation to the City Council.

**Environmental Determination:** Exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies), 15276 (Transportation Improvement Programs), and 15061 (b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption)

Two ex-parte communications reported. First, Vice Chair Toler reported conversations with staff. And, second, Chair Erath reported conversations with staff as well as two members from the Active Transportation Committee, Ralph Taboada and Florence Martin.

Raja Sethuraman, Director of Public works, Jennifer Rosales, Transportation Services Manager and Brett Atencio Thomas, Active Transportation Coordinator, presented the staff report.

The Commission asked questions of staff about reasons behind the creation of the Pedestrian Master Plan (PMP), plans to implement the PMP, excess capacity of streets, if street furniture could be added as a buffer between pedestrians and traffic, pedestrian safety, limiting driveways at arterials, City applying for grants to help fund the implementation of the PMP, Safe Routes for School Action Plan, the

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relation between the PMP and the Environmental Sustainability Goals, frequency that City observes and adjusts of speed limits, what data does they city use to decide wither an intersection should have no right turn on red, collaboration with Orange County Transportation Authority, collaboration between the City's Planning Division and Public works Departments on review of development projects, roadway classifications, traffic collision data, staff providing annual reports for City Council, replacing trees for safety issues and policy for replacement, traffic signal locations with prohibited pedestrians crossings, difference between a recommendation and policy within the staff report, e-bike safety, traffic solutions for speeding and an annual collection of Citywide pedestrian and bicycle count data.

**The Chair opened the Public Hearing.****The Chair opened public comments.**

Florence Martin spoke on pedestrian safety and data she would like in the appendix.

Ralph Taboada, Chair for the Active Transportation Committee, provided a statement from the committee regarding the PMP.

Speaker three gave language suggestions. He spoke on slip lanes and downgrades of roads.

Michaela Teissere expressed her support for the item.

Cynthia McDonald stated she supports the concept of the item. However, she asked for a more complete document to be sent to the City Council.

**The Chair closed public comments.**

Commission asked more questions of staff to include about Safe Routes to School Action Plan, the difference between Recommendations and Policies in the Circulation Element, thoughts on providing a twelve-month implementation plan, adding a set of appendices to PMP, federal highways and controlled crossings, Local Road Safety Plan, grant funds received, redundancies in policies and recommendations, grant opportunities that could be used to help enforce safe driving, and traffic accident history and locations.

**The Chair closed the Public Hearing.**

The Commission deliberated and asked that the following suggestions be included in the staff report to be presented for consideration by the City Council:

- Recommendation 2.5 - that the metric not be tied to the number of pedestrian and traffic accidents. Instead, that it be based on the amount of

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people using the intersection to cross safely. Include the number of left turn yields

- Toolbox, Pedestrian Lighting – that pedestrian-scaled lighting of approximately 12 to 15 feet maximum be used
- Flashing Yellow Arrows – remove these and instead employ protected left turns
- Incorporate the use of raised cross walks / speed tables
- Discontinue use of speed feedback signs
- Remove the text in the bottom left on Page 82 as it is not needed
- The average cost column in the toolbox should be worded for the public
- Provide longer cross walk times for pedestrian walk signals
- Projects Prioritization Criteria - recast to be more favorable for the Safety Category
- Modify language in policies C-1.19 and C-3.8 by generalizing the language, and C-1.12 to “maximize the efficiency of”
- Policy C-8.4 – asked City to plant more trees than is currently required
- Recommended that C-8.7 language be more explicit
- Make Recommendation C-9.16 a policy
- Policy C-10.3 be changed to a Recommendation
- Strike “excess” from policy C-1.6
- Add language to Policy C-3.19 to “discourage speeding on all streets”
- Eliminate slip lanes in the city
- Change language to “enforce traffic violations for all transit modes”
- Add to Policy C-2.2 text reading “avoid driveways on arterial streets”
- Remove redundancies where they occur in the policies and recommendations
- Recommend changing the following from Recommendations into Policies: C-7.11; C-14; C-7.25; C-7.28; C-8.13; and C-8.21

Chair Ereth made a motion. Seconded by Commissioner Vivar.

The Commission discussed the motion and their anticipation for this to go to Council.

**MOVED/SECOND:** Ereth/Vivar

**MOTION:** Approve staff’s recommendation.

The motion carried by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Ereth, Toler, Andrade, Rojas, Klepack, Vivar

Nays: None

Absent: Zich

Recused: None

Motion carried: 6-0

**ACTION:** The Planning Commission adopted a resolution to:

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1. Find that the project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15262 (Feasibility and Planning Studies), 15276 (Transportation Improvement Programs), and 15061 (b)(3) (Common Sense Exemption).
2. Recommend to the City Council approval of the Draft Pedestrian Master Plan as recommended by the City's Active Transportation Committee (ATC); and
3. Recommend to the City Council to approve General Plan Amendment PGPA-23-0001 amending the Circulation Element to revise and include new policies outlined in the Pedestrian Master Plan.

**RESOLUTION PC-2024-07 - A RESOLUTION OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA, CALIFORNIA RECOMMENDING THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA ADOPT GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PGPA-23-0001 TO AMEND THE CIRCULATION ELEMENT OF THE CITY OF COSTA MESA GENERAL PLAN BY ADDING A REFERENCE TO THE COSTA MESA PEDESRIAN MASTER PLAN AND REVISING POLICIES ASSOCIATED WITH CIRCULATION ELEMENT GOALS C-1 THROUGH C-12**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

None.

**DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:**

1. Public Works Report – None.
2. Development Services Report – None.

**CITY ATTORNEY'S OFFICE REPORT:**

1. City Attorney – None.

**ADJOURNMENT AT 9:31 PM**

Submitted by:

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SCOTT DRAPKIN, SECRETARY  
COSTA MESA PLANNING COMMISSION