



## SPECIAL Meeting Minutes

For the WHIP Committee Meeting Held:  
Sunday, February 11, 2023, @ 1:00 pm  
Fire Station 84, Community Room

21050 Burbank Blvd near De Soto Ave., Woodland Hills, CA

### Committee Members:

Chairperson Heath Kline,  
August Steurer,  
Julie Waltrip, and Aaron Williams

• **Public Input on Agenda Items** – The public may address the Committee on any agenda item before the Committee acts on an item. The Committee will accept comments from the public on agenda items only when the Committee considers the individual item.

• **Public Input on Matters not appearing on the agenda** – During the General Public Comment period, the Committee listens to comments from the public on other matters not appearing on the agenda within the Committee's jurisdiction. \* Please note that the Brown Act prevents the Committee from acting on an issue you bring to its attention during the General Public Comment period; however, the issue raised by a public member may become the subject of a future Committee meeting.

• **Notice to Paid Representatives** - If you receive compensation to monitor, attend, or speak at this meeting, City law may require you to register as a lobbyist and report your activity. See Los Angeles Municipal Code §§ 48.01 et seq. More information is available at [ethics.lacity.org/lobbying](https://ethics.lacity.org/lobbying). For assistance, please get in touch with the Ethics Commission at (213) 978-1960 or [ethics.commission@lacity.org](mailto:ethics.commission@lacity.org)

• **Public Comments are limited to two (2) minutes per speaker** unless adjusted by the presiding member of the Committee. The presiding member may impose different time limits per agenda item as needed.

Contact Person: Heath Kline  
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[h.kline@whcouncil.org](mailto:h.kline@whcouncil.org)

### 1. Called to Order @ 1:00 pm

### 2. Establish Quorum:

Roll Call — Heath Kline (P), August Steurer (P), Julie Waltrip (P), Aaron Williams (P)

Guests: Stakeholder Dennis DiBiase, Board Member Steve Sommers observing

### 3. Comments from the Public regarding Issues NOT on the Agenda but within the Committee's purview for later action.

All public comments are limited to 2 minutes per speaker unless adjusted by the presiding member of the Committee.

### 4. Agenda Items for Discussion and Possible Action by the Committee:

#### A. Item No (A) - For Submission to Board on February 15, 2024

PRB Member August Steurer was recused as a Board Member of the PRB.

#### A Stakeholder request for CIS to SUPPORT an action of the Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan Review Board regarding a pending amendment affecting the Boards Structure:

Committee discussion and possible action to issue a Community Impact Statement regarding action proposed by City Planning Commission to City Council in CF 17-1071-S1 to amend the Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan.

*Dennis DiBiase explained the history of the PRB since he has been on the board for a while. He explained there needs to be a change in the way signage is processed. Last redistricting from 4 council areas along the boulevard to 2, and now to 6 appointees, one for each community, and NC appoints 1 per area, plus 1 per Mayor. The Planning Commission approved only seven members because city planning claimed they couldn't support more. One Member of the City Planning Commission disagreed and said more representation is key. The makeup of the PRB must be 2 members from each community. Each community's interests are different. PRB is advisory, and the city council makes final decisions on everything. Studio City homeowners and NC, Tarzana Homeowners and NC, WH Homeowners. Sherman Oaks and Encino? WH should voice and chime in on this.*

*The committee discussed the draft motion. DiBiase recommended a shorter version and left at 1:45 pm.*

Reference: <https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=17-1071-S1>

## **Roll Call Vote**

*Vote to approve amended version: Yes: Kline, Waltrip, Williams, No: none, Abstain: None, Recused: Steurer*

*Approved motion follows*

## **Summary for CIS Portal:**

The Board of the Woodland Hills -Warner Center Neighborhood Council (WHWCNC) supports a 13-member VCBCSP Review Board structure found in the Letter of Communication issued by the Plan Review Board (PRB) [see PRB Letter in supporting docs] of the Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan (VCBCSP). **The WHWCNC does not support the structure proposed by the City Planning Department and City Planning Commission**, which has only a 7-member PRB, without Neighborhood Council appointees, because it allows a possibility of one Council Member appointing 6 out of 7 Board Members. The alternative structure, now supported by the affected Neighborhood Councils, will ensure that even if the whole VCBCSP was in one Council District, a single Council Member could appoint only 6 out of 13 members. The PRB letter supports an alternative PRB membership structure compared to the one from City Planning. City Council President Paul Krekorian first proposed the 13-member VCBCSP Review Board consisting of one Board Member to be appointed by the Mayor, one Board Member to be appointed by the City Council Member(s) for each of the Specific Plan's defined six communities (Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, and Cahuenga) within their Council District, AND one Board Member to be appointed by each Neighborhood Council representing one of the Plan's six communities. Should more than one Council Member represent a community, the multiple Council Members shall jointly choose their joint appointee for that community regardless of where the Council District boundaries fall in the VCBCSP community.

## **WHWCNC CIS Submission:**

The City Council is reviewing proposed amendments to the Ventura-Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan (VCBCSP), found in Council File 17-1071-S1. Some of the changes negatively affect the structure of its Plan Review Board (PRB) for community representation by reducing the affected community's direct influence regarding the administration of the Specific Plan.

## **What does the PRB do?**

- The PRB oversees the city's spending of fees collected from properties and projects within the Specific Plan. Currently, most fees are devoted to safety and traffic improvements.
- The PRB advises City Planning on cases requiring discretionary actions for zone changes, variances, and exceptions.

- After Neighborhood Councils were created, the PRB delegated its project review responsibilities to the relevant affected Neighborhood Councils within the Plan.
- The PRB notifies the local City Council Members when it discovers amendments are needed to the Specific Plan. The PRB recognized the need to revise the Board Membership rules over 5 years ago. The City Council initiated the amendment process from City Planning based on recommendations made by the PRB.

### **Why does the PRB structure need to be revised?**

Before the City's 2022 redistricting of City Council Districts, the PRB had nine members, with some of the Specific Plan's communities having only one representative and some having two. Because the Specific Plan is now within just two Council Districts, the PRB, under the current rules, has been reduced to only five members, with two Specific Plan communities having no representation.

Against the recommendation of the PRB, the amendment submitted by the City Planning Department (and subsequently approved by the City Planning Commission) alters the structure of the PRB to have only seven members. The City Council Member(s) for the six communities defined in the amended plan (Woodland Hills, Tarzana, Encino, Sherman Oaks, Studio City, and Cahuenga) will appoint one member for each community, and the City Mayor will appoint one member.

The PRB and Neighborhood Councils in the Plan are concerned the proposed structure does not best serve the interests of their communities. Currently, there are only two council districts along the Boulevard. Council District 4 contains four communities along the eastern roughly 10.5 miles of the Plan, and Council District 3 has two communities along the western 6.5 miles. Under the proposed structure, one council district would control most of the Board. Notably, near the end of the 2022 redistricting process, a map was briefly considered with only one Council District encompassing the Specific Plan, giving just one Council Member supermajority control of the Board and a lack of diverse opinions.

As proposed by City Planning, the future Board Memberships should satisfy various demographic categories for "diversity." However, the changes lack any emphasis or requirement for selecting appointees familiar with the Specific Plan and/or knowing the community's experience and issues with the Specific Plan. There was some concern by the PRB that appointments could be made for political purposes, which does not serve the affected communities well.

When City Planning Department staff first provided the PRB with proposed changes, the PRB members recognized the potential issues arising from their proposed restructuring. They voiced those issues to the staff. Later, after a City Planning Commission approval of a 7-member PRB, the current PRB members unanimously passed a motion to send a Letter from the PRB (see attachment) to support their preferred 13-member structure for the PRB. Council President Paul Krekorian initially proposed it when he represented a portion of the Specific Plan. Community organizations and Neighborhood Councils along the Boulevard(s) currently support the PRB letter.

### **What is the WHWCNC & PRB members preferred PRB structure?**

The favored, alternative PRB structure expands upon the 7-member Board structure to have a 13-member Board. Under the expanded structure, the relevant Neighborhood Councils would each appoint a Board Member to improve their representation on the PRB. Because Neighborhood Councils perform case reviews of projects along the Specific Plan, they can best appoint members with appropriate experience related to the Boulevard(s). This alternative prevents any City Council Member from controlling a majority of the PRB whenever redistricting reduces the number of Council Members within the borders of the Plan to one or two.

Any limitations put on the terms of PRB members can be detrimental since the City's slow processes often take many years to accomplish projects. Some past PRB projects took over a decade for Members to champion successfully to completion.

A 7-member board offers less diversity of experience. A smaller board presents a larger burden on each PRB member to address and review the needs and issues within the Specific Plan. Also, when only one member represents a community, any absence of that member leaves the community without representation during PRB discussion.

We note from discussions with PRB members that the Planning Department provides minimal support for reviewing the plan, as exemplified by the fact that the annual report from staff, as required by the Plan, has not been presented to the PRB for many years.

The WHWCNC believes that a 13-member board would require minimal additional support in this digital era compared to supporting a 7-member board. The larger board could function better. A 13-member Board will give greater attention to the needs of the Specific Plan.

### **THEREFORE,**

The Woodland Hills Issues and Policies Committee recommends that the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council join in supporting the position of the Ventura/Cahuenga Boulevards Corridor Specific Plan PRB Members, other Neighborhood Councils in the Specific Plan, the Woodland Hills Homeowners Organization, to have a 13-member Plan Review Board whereby:

- The City Mayor appoints one member.
- One member is appointed for each of the six communities by the City Council Member for the Community.
- One member is appointed for each of the six communities by the relevant Neighborhood Council for the Community. Appointed members must qualify as stakeholders of the community.
- There are no limits to the number of 3-year, staggered Board Member terms.
- The Officers for PRB are to be the President, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

### **FURTHERMORE,**

The Board of the Woodland Hills – Warner Center Neighborhood Council is to file an impact statement to CF 17- 1071-S1 stating its support for a 13-member Plan Review Board and notify the Mayor, all

City Council Members, City Planning Director Vince Bertoni, plus Shana Bonstin, Director of Community Planning and other appropriate Planning and City Council staff.

*Williams left at 1:55 pm*

**Item No (B)**

**Committee initiation of a response per the request of the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment regarding its report as submitted to City Council in CF 23-1027.**

Initiation of committee work on a response regarding the Department of Neighborhood Empowerment's Report to the City Council about potential Charter Amendments to Article IX, which covers the Department and Neighborhood Councils.

Reference: [https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2023/23-1027\\_rpt\\_DONE\\_01-22-24.pdf](https://clkrep.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2023/23-1027_rpt_DONE_01-22-24.pdf)

*August Steurer returned @ 1:50 pm.*

*Brief committee introductory discussion regarding the action by the City Council studying possible amendments to the City Charter arising out of a need to amend how redistricting is handled after the US Census every 10 years. The Department of Neighborhood Empowerment was asked to report on changes to Article IX regarding Neighborhood Council System. Action **continued to future meeting** for the WHIP committee to investigate Article IX sections for amendment.*

**6. Adjournment of Meeting @ 2:00 pm**