CITY OF WEST COVINA

PLANNING COMMISSION

TUESDAY, JULY 22, 2025 - 7:00 PM
REGULAR MEETING

CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS
1444 W. GARVEY AVENUE SOUTH
WEST COVINA, CALIFORNIA 91790

Livier Becerra, Chair
Nickolas Lewis, Vice Chair
Dario Castellanos, Commissioner
Jose Reyes, Commissioner
Sheena Heng, Commissioner

Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices prior to entering the Council Chambers.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
The City complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If you need special assistance at Planning Commission meetings, please call (626) 939-8433 (voice) or (626) 960-4422 (TTY) from 8 to 5 Monday through Thursday. Please call at least one day prior to the meeting date to inform us of your particular needs and to determine if accommodation is possible. For sign language interpreter services at Planning Commission meetings, please request no less than four working days prior to the meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS/ADDRESSING THE COMMISSION
Any person wishing to address the Planning Commission on any matter listed on the agenda or on any other matter within their jurisdiction is asked to complete a speaker card that is provided on the speaker podium and submit the card to a Planning Division staff member.

Please identify on the speaker card whether you are speaking on an agenda item or non-agenda item.
Requests to speak on non-agenda items will be heard during "Oral Communications" before the Public Hearing section of the agenda. Generally, comments are limited to three minutes per speaker unless further time is granted by the Chairperson. ***The Chairperson may also, at his or her discretion, further limit the time of each speaker in order to accommodate a large number of speakers and/or to ensure that the business of the Planning Commission is effectively conducted.***

Any testimony or comments regarding a matter set for Public Hearing will be heard during the public hearing for that item.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER/MEDITATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Regular meeting, June 10, 2025 - PC Minutes 6/10/2025

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS

This is the time when any member of the public may speak to the Commission on any matter within the scope of duties assigned to the Commission relating to non-agendized or consent calendar items. Other matters included on this agenda may be addressed when that item is under consideration. For all oral communications, the chairperson may impose reasonable limitations on public comments to assure an orderly and timely meeting. The Ralph M. Brown Act limits the Planning Commission and staff's ability to respond to public comments at this meeting. Thus, your comments may be agendized for a future meeting or referred to staff. The Commission may ask questions for clarification, if desired, at this time.

By policy of the Commission, Oral Communications at this time on the agenda is limited to a total of 15 minutes.

CONSENT CALENDAR

All matters listed under CONSENT CALENDAR are considered to be routine and can be acted on by one roll call vote. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless members of the Planning Commission request specific items to be removed from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion or action.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

2. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 25-04**
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
APPLICANT: Deisi Serrano
LOCATION: 547 S. California Avenue
REQUEST: The applicant is requesting the approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow the operation of a Pilates studio, located in the “General Urban" (GU) Zone, in the Downtown Plan, within an existing 1,519 square foot tenant space. The project is considered to be categorically exempt, pursuant to Section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

3. **CODE AMENDMENT NO. 25-01**
GENERAL EXEMPTION
LOCATION: Citywide
REQUEST: The Project includes amendments to Chapter 26 (Development Code) of the City’s Municipal Code and the City’s Downtown Plan and Code to consider allowing modifications to existing drive-through food establishments with approval of a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed code amendment is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).

NON-HEARING ITEMS

4. **PLANNING COMMISSION STANDING MEETING RULES**

TEN-DAY APPEAL PERIOD: Actions taken by the Planning Commission that are not recommendations to the City Council will become final after ten (10) calendar days unless a written appeal with the appropriate

fee is lodged with the City Clerk's Office before close of business on the tenth day.

COMMISSION REPORTS/COMMENTS AND MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

This is the time when any member of the Commission may bring a matter to the attention of the full Commission that is within the scope of duties assigned to the Commission. Any item that was considered during the Agenda is not appropriate for discussion in this section of the agenda. NO COMMISSION DISCUSSION OR ACTION CAN BE CONSIDERED AT THIS TIME. If the Commission desires to discuss an issue raised by a speaker or take an action, the Commission may vote to agendize the matter for a future meeting.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CITY COUNCIL ACTION

This is an oral presentation of City Council matters and actions, which are in the Commission’s area of interest.

ADJOURNMENT

AGENDA
ITEM NO. 2
DATE: 07/22/2025

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. 25-04
CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION
APPLICANT: Deisi Serrano
LOCATION: 547 S. California Avenue
REQUEST: The applicant is requesting the approval of a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow the operation of a Pilates studio, located in the “General Urban" (GU) Zone, in the Downtown Plan, within an existing 1,519 square foot tenant space. The project is considered to be categorically exempt, pursuant to Section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

BACKGROUND
The applicant is requesting the approval of a CUP for the use of a Pilates studio at 547 S. California Avenue, to be known as "VIDA Lagree Fitness Studio." The subject property is located in the "General Urban" (GU) Zone in the Downtown Plan, along S. California Avenue.

ITEM	DESCRIPTION
Zoning and General Plan Designation	Zoning: General Urban (GU) General Plan: Commercial (C)
Surrounding Zoning and Land Uses	North: Urban Center (UC), West Covina Plaza Mall East: Residential Single-Family (R-1), Single-Family Residences South: Residential Single-Family (R-1), Single-Family Residences West: Residential Single-Family (R-1), Single-Family Residences
Current Development	Retail/Commercial Tenant Space within a Commercial Plaza
Legal Notice	Notices of the Public Hearing have been mailed to all owners of properties located within five hundred (500) feet of the subject site, at least ten (10) days prior to the Public Hearing.

DISCUSSION
The applicant is requesting the approval of a CUP to allow the operation of a Pilates studio. The subject site is located in a commercial plaza within the Downtown Plan and requires the approval of a CUP in order to operate.

Business Operation
The proposed business would be known as "VIDA Lagree Fitness Studio." The Pilates studio will have a capacity of thirteen (13) Megaformer machines. The business will be a membership-based fitness studio offering instructor-led group classes. As stated in the Business Operation Plan (Attachment No. 2), classes are expected to be 45 minutes long with 15 minutes in between sessions to allow for cleaning and reset. The business will operate from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., with the first class beginning at 5:15 a.m. The last class will be at 7:15 p.m., ending at 8:00 p.m. With this schedule, the business will be able to host 15 sessions a day.

To address any potential noise issues due to the proposed use, the following conditions of approval have been included in the draft resolution:

- Amplified sound shall not exceed levels that are plainly audible, or vibrations felt on the outside of the tenant space.

- Noise levels shall not exceed the ambient noise level by more than (5) five decibels as measured outside of the tenant space.

- Doors of the building shall be kept closed at all times during class instruction, except when doors are in use, in order to minimize noise impacts onto adjacent properties.

REQUIRED FINDINGS

Findings necessary for the approval of a Conditional Use Permit are as follows:

a. That the proposed use at the particular location is necessary or desirable to provide a service or facility which will contribute to the general well-being of the neighborhood or community.

The proposed use is consistent with the "General Urban" Zone in the Downtown Plan. The "General Urban" Zone is comprised primarily of community serving retail, office, entertainment, and hospitality uses. The proposed use is a Pilates fitness studio with a floor area of 1,519 square feet. The Pilates studio facility will provide recreational services for the community, as it is located near single-family residences, where it would be a convenience for the neighboring communities and families. The proposed Pilates studio facility use meets all the applicable requirements of the "General Urban" Zone.

b. That such use will not, under the circumstances of the particular case, be detrimental to the health, safety, peace or general welfare of persons residing or working in the vicinity or injurious to property or improvements in the vicinity.

The proposed Pilates studio will occupy an existing vacant retail space. The business hours are Monday through Sunday, from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. With the conditions of approval, the proposed Pilates studio will not be detrimental to the health, safety, peace or general welfare of surrounding residents or business owners.

c. That the site for the proposed use is adequate in size and is so shaped as to accommodate said use, as well as all yards, spaces, walls, fences, parking, loading, landscaping, and any other features necessary to adjust said use to the land and uses in the neighborhood and make it compatible there with.

The existing building and site are adequate in size and designed to accommodate the proposed Pilates studio. As conditioned, sufficient parking exists on the site to accommodate the Pilates studio.

d. That the site abuts streets and highways adequate in width and improvements to carry traffic generations typical of the proposed use and that street patterns of such a nature exist as to guarantee that such generations will not be channeled through residential areas on local residential streets.

The subject property abuts South California Avenue. The site can be accessed via South California Avenue and West Covina Parkway. The proposed Pilates studio will not generate a substantial amount of vehicular traffic nor alter present circulation patterns.

e. That the granting of such conditional use permit will not adversely affect the general plan of the city, or any other adopted plan of the city.

Granting the CUP for the proposed use of a Pilates studio would allow the opportunity for the surrounding community to have access to recreational activities. The proposed Pilates studio would not compromise the character of the surrounding neighborhood nor be detrimental to the surrounding land uses. Allowing the proposed use is consistent with the policies and actions of the General Plan.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY
The City's General Plan Land Use Element designates the subject property for commercial use. The project is consistent with the following General Plan policies:

Policy 2.1 Maintain and enhance the City's current tax base.
Policy 2.4 Build on and grow West Covina's regional appeal.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION
Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed project is considered to be categorically exempt, pursuant to Section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities), in that it consists of minor alterations of the existing structure in order to operate the requested use.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS
Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 25-6168 approving Conditional Use Permit No. 25-04.

LARGE ATTACHMENTS
Plans may be viewed at the West Covina City Hall Planning Division Counter at 1444 W. Garvey Avenue South, 2nd Floor - Room 208, West Covina, CA 91790.

Submitted by: Miriam Machado, Associate Planner

Attachments

Attachment No. 1 - Resolution of Approval
Attachment No. 2 - Business Operation Plan

AGENDA
ITEM NO. 3
DATE: 07/22/2025

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT
CODE AMENDMENT NO. 25-01
GENERAL EXEMPTION
LOCATION: Citywide
REQUEST: The Project includes amendments to Chapter 26 (Development Code) of the City's Municipal Code and the City's Downtown Plan and Code to consider allowing modifications to existing drive-through food establishments with approval of a Conditional Use Permit. The proposed code amendment is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3).

BACKGROUND
On February 20, 2024, the City Council approved Code Amendment No. 23-01, adopting Ordinance No. 2519, known as the "Development Code Update" which amended the City of West Covina Municipal Code including the consolidation of the Subdivision Code (Chapter 20) and the Zoning Code (Chapter 26) into one Development Code (Chapter 26). The Development Code Update included provisions prohibiting the construction and new uses of drive-through food establishments throughout the City to address over-concentration issues.

On June 17, 2025, the City Council voted by minute-motion to direct staff to explore amending the Development Code to allow for existing drive-throughs to be modified to correct traffic, queuing, vacancy, or other related issues. The former Carl's Jr./Spotless Burger restaurant was used as an example: the site's drive-through was approved through a conditional use permit (CUP) as a reverse drive-through, where the drive-through window is accessible through the passenger's side of the vehicle, due to this configuration the property owner has had problems attracting restaurant tenants, which have all expressed the desire to reconstruct a new building with a different drive-through configuration.

DISCUSSION
The proposed Ordinance is included as "Exhibit A" to Resolution No. 25-6169 (Attachment No. 1). The following is an outline of the proposed changes to the West Covina Development Code:

Downtown Plan & Code

- **Table 4.3.1 -** Revised to explicitly state that modifications to existing drive-throughs in the T5-Urban Center and T-4 General Urban zones would be permitted through a CUP.
- **Subsection E of Section 10.1 -** Provides findings for CUP approval that cross-references the required findings in Section 26-116(i) of the Development Code, and lists the existing applicable drive-through standards within the Development Code.

Development Code

- **Table 2-12 of Section 26-51 and Subsections (a) through (c) of Section 26-116 -** Revised to explicitly state that modifications to existing drive-throughs in the Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU), Regional Mixed Use (RMU) and Service Mixed Use (SMU) zones would be permitted through a CUP, and created a distinction between new and existing drive-throughs.
- **Subsections "c)" through "f)" of Section 26-127(b)(1)(xv) -** Corrected clerical error in numbering.

REQUIRED FINDINGS
Before a Code Amendment is adopted, the following findings are required to be met:

(a) ***The proposed amendment ensures and maintains internal consistency with the goals, policies, and strategies of all elements of the General Plan, and, in the case of a Zoning Code amendment, will not create any inconsistencies with this Chapter.***

The purpose of the code amendment is to allow for the modifications of existing permitted drive-through food establishments to correct issues related to traffic, queuing, vacancy, etc. Therefore, Code Amendment No. 25-01 maintains internal consistency with the goals, policies, and strategies of all elements in the General Plan and will not create any inconsistencies within Chapter 26.

(b) ***The proposed amendment would not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience or welfare of the City.***

The proposed amendment will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience or welfare of the City. Code Amendment No. 25-01 is designed to improve the welfare of the City by allowing the opportunity to modify existing permitted drive-throughs to correct issues that are negatively impacting the community.

(c) ***The proposed amendment is in compliance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).***

Code Amendment No. 25-01 is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, which provides that CEQA only applies to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The Code Amendment would not result in direct or indirect physical change in the environment and does not involve any construction or additions to any existing structures.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY
The proposed code amendment is consistent with the following General Plan Policies:

- Our Prosperous Community Policy 2.1: Maintain and enhance the City's current tax base
- Our Prosperous Community Policy 2.4: Build on and grow West Covina's regional appeal
- Our Prosperous Community Policy 2.9: Support local businesses

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION
Pursuant to the State California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the Planning Commission finds and determines that the ordinance is statutorily exempt from CEQA under Section 15061(b)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines, which provides that CEQA only applies to projects that have the potential for causing a significant effect on the environment. The ordinance would not result in physical change in the environment and does not involve any construction or additions to any existing structures.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS
Staff recommends that the Planning Commission adopt Resolution No. 25-6169, recommending that the City Council approve Code Amendment No. 25-01.

Submitted by: Jo-Anne Burns, Deputy Community Development Director

Attachments

Attachment No. 1 - Resolution No. 25-6169

AGENDA
ITEM NO. 4
DATE: 07/22/2025

PLANNING DEPARTMENT STAFF REPORT

SUBJECT
PLANNING COMMISSION STANDING MEETING RULES

BACKGROUND
It is vital to utilize established procedures and/or rules in conducting meetings in order to ensure that meetings are productive, allows anyone wishing to speak to be heard, and allows the decision-making body to render clear decisions without confusion.

The Planning Commission rules of order/operation were adopted to allow for procedural guidelines for decision-making, allow for orderly and meaningful discussion, and provide transparency to the public. The Rules were initially adopted by the Planning Commission in 1964 (by Resolution), re-written/revised in 1995 (by Resolution) and revised in 2003 (by minute action).

The Planning Commission utilizes Robert's Rules of Order as its basic framework. The decision on how closely to follow Robert's Rules of Order is up to the Planning Commission.

DISCUSSION
The purpose of this study session is to discuss the adopted rules with the revisions recommended by the City Attorney's office (Attachment No. 1). The Planning Commission discussed the recommended revisions during its May 28, 2024, June 24, 2024, and August 8, 2024 meetings. The Planning Commission clarified the order desired for conducting public hearings:

1. Staff presentation
    - Planning Commissioner questions for staff
2. Public hearing opened (Public comments received if subject is a non-hearing item and #3 is skipped)
    - Applicant presentation & Commissioner questions for applicant
    - Speakers in Favor
    - Speakers Against
    - Applicant's Rebuttal
3. Public hearing closed
4. Planning Commission discussion/deliberation among Commissioners
5. A motion for a vote
6. Planning Commission roll call vote

The Planning Commission also directed staff to include a handout with a reference summary of the Robert's Rules of Order with the agenda packet. The Planning Commission directed staff to add a reference to the Robert's Rules of Order "quick guides" on Paragraph 7 of the recommended Standing Meeting Rules with text instructing staff to provide all new commissioners with a copy of the "quick guide" and Standing Meeting Rules.

During the August 8, 2024, Planning Commission meeting this item was continued to allow the Planning Commissioners the opportunity to submit suggested revisions and discuss the suggested revisions with staff and the Deputy City Attorney. Staff did not receive any further suggested revisions from the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission discussion on this item was placed on hold because two out of the three Planning Commission positions became vacant shortly after the August 8th meeting, and all vacant positions were not filled until May 2025.

The Planning Commission will have the opportunity to have a meaningful discussion on the subject and vote to adopt the attached Resolution. It is strongly recommended that the Planning Commission adopt the revised Planning Commission Standing Meeting Rules during the July 22, 2025, meeting to ensure smooth transitions and continued operations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Planning Commission approve the Planning Commission Standing Meeting Rules by adopting Resolution No. 25-6170.

Submitted by: Jo-Anne Burns, Deputy Community Development Director

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Attachments

Attachment No. 1 - Resolution No. 25-6170 and Standing Meeting Rules

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