



CONVENE: Acting Chair Stehura convened the Regular Meeting of the Monrovia Planning Commission on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 7:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers, 415 South Ivy Avenue, Monrovia, California. In attendance were Community Development Director Sheri Bermejo, Planning Division Manager John Mayer, Associate Planner Vincent Gillespie, Assistant City Attorney Chelsea Straus, and Management Assistant April Kea.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Commissioner Janicek led the pledge of allegiance.

ROLL CALL: In attendance were Commissioners Lyle Janicek, Gary Schaeffler, Aaron Stehura, and Michael Vachani. Commissioner Scott Austin, Vice-Chair Cheryl Rose, and Chair Jhaila R. Brown were excused.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: None

PUBLIC INPUT: None

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

**PH-1 Variance Requests; VAR2025-0001 and VAR2025-0002,
Minor Exceptions; ME2025-0010, ME2025-0011, and ME2025-0018, and
Design Review; DR2025-0018
113 South Mountain Avenue, Khaty Damlakyan, Applicant**

Associate Planner Vincent Gillespie presented the staff report regarding two Variances, two Minor Exceptions, and a Neighborhood Compatibility Design Review. He provided the following answers to the Planning Commission's questions:

- The applicant agreed to record a covenant against the property prohibiting parking in the driveway, which would memorialize the restriction in perpetuity;
- The proposed driveway depth would be approximately 10 feet;
- Two written public comments were received prior to the meeting: one in support of the proposed project and one expressing concerns regarding potential encroachment onto a neighboring property; and
- Existing fencing conditions were discussed, including fencing replaced by the southerly neighbor due to storm-related damage, fencing owned by the northerly neighbor that encroaches onto the subject property, and no changes to fencing along the rear property line.

The following individuals submitted written public comment before the meeting:

1. Mike Gabelman, Monrovia resident, submitted a written comment in favor of the proposed project.
2. Martha Martinez, Monrovia resident, submitted a written comment with concerns of potential encroachment onto her property.

Acting Chair Stehura opened and closed the public hearing, as there was no one present who wished to speak on the item.

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Janicek, seconded by Commissioner Vachani, to approve VAR2025-0001, VAR2025-0002, ME2025-0010, ME2025-0011, ME2025-0018, and DR2025-0018 with conditions. The motion carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote.

Community Development Director Bermejo stated for the record that the actions of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council if filed in writing within ten days.

**PH-2 Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Certification / Resolution No. 2025-0004, General Plan Amendment GPA2025-0002 / Resolution No. 2025-0005, Specific Plan SP2025-0002 / Resolution No. 2025-0006, Zoning Amendment ZA2025-0001 / Resolution No. 2025-0007, Vesting Tentative Parcel Map TPM2025-0002, and Conditional Use Permit CUP2025-0010
701 South Myrtle Avenue, BGB Myrtle, LLC (Scott Griggs), Applicant**

Planning Division Manager John Mayer presented the staff report regarding a proposed Specific Plan and development project at 701 South Myrtle Avenue. He and Community Development Director Sheri Bermejo provided the following answers to the Planning Commission's questions:

- Oak trees are the only protected trees under the City's regulations, and the City does not have a standardized two-for-one tree replacement policy;
- The existing pine trees along Myrtle Avenue have root systems that would conflict with the proposed subterranean parking level and are considered parking lot trees planted for aesthetic purposes; their removal was determined not to result in a significant environmental impact;
- The applicant acknowledged concerns regarding tree removal and proposed replacement trees to provide shade and soften the appearance of the development;
- A final Landscape and Irrigation Plan is required and will be reviewed and approved by the Community Development Director to ensure appropriate tree selection, size, and long-term sustainability;
- Proposed 24-inch and 36-inch box trees are consistent with the 701 South Myrtle Specific Plan guidelines, and staff coordinates with the applicant and the Public Works Department to identify appropriate tree species within the public right-of-way;
- Landscape plans are reviewed during the Building Plan Check process prior to the issuance of building permits;
- The project is comparable in scale to the Avalon mixed-use development to the south but differs in its incorporation of underground parking, which allows for greater architectural articulation and active ground-floor commercial space;
- The City cannot require additional private or public parking beyond what is proposed, as the project's parking standards are governed by the California Density Bonus Law;
- Guest parking spaces are reserved exclusively for project guests and not for general public use;
- The City's General Plan calls for commercial space at prominent corners, which is reflected in the proposed design;
- The project's loading area will be accessed from the alley along the south side of the site;
- Building massing and articulation were discussed, including the stepped fourth-floor setback along Myrtle Avenue and the use of brick façade treatment along the east elevation to reduce perceived bulk;
- Future mixed-use development within the Old Town Extension District would be expected to respond to the design context established by this project;

- The project includes 17 low-income units and three moderate-income units, which will count toward the City's Sixth Cycle Housing Element goals; and
- The applicant is subject to park resources mitigation requirements, which may include dedication of parkland, payment of an in-lieu fee, or participation in a Community Facilities District to fund public open space.

The following individual submitted written public comment before the meeting:

1. Brian B. Flynn, of Lozeau Drury LLP, submitted a letter on behalf of the Supporters Alliance for Environmental Responsibility (SAFER) expressing opposition to the project and alleging inadequate analysis, disclosure, and mitigation of potential air quality and noise impacts in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Assistant City Attorney Chelsea Straus stated that the letter was received after the close of the public comment period for the Draft EIR and did not present new information requiring recirculation of the EIR. She further stated that the letter would be entered into the public record, provided to the City Council in advance of its public hearing, and reviewed as part of the City Council's consideration of the project.

Acting Chair Stehura opened the public hearing.

Public Input:

1. Scott Griggs, applicant, spoke in favor of the project, described the project vision and community outreach efforts, and introduced members of the project consultant team.
2. Tracy Zinn, environmental consultant with T&B Planning, responded to issues raised in the SAFER letter, stating that the EIR relied on accepted methodologies and modeling tools, including CalEEMod and South Coast Air Quality Management District guidance, and concluded that potential air quality and noise impacts would be less than significant with implementation of applicable mitigation measures.
3. Blaine Fetter, applicant representative, spoke in support of the project and provided background on the property ownership and existing site conditions.

Acting Chair Stehura closed the public hearing.

The Planning Commission discussed various aspects of the application, including:

1. Concerns regarding parking availability in the City and the limitations on the Commission's ability to require additional parking due to the California Density Bonus Law; and
2. The City's discretionary review authority as it relates to the preservation of existing street trees along Myrtle Avenue and the review of the project's final Landscape and Irrigation Plan.

The Planning Commission made the following changes to the conditions of approval:

Data Sheet 1 (CUP2025-0010 and TPM2025-0002):

- Condition #15a was amended to read: **"Landscaping shall consist of a combination of 24-inch and 36-inch box trees, shrubs, groundcover, and turf, except on rooftop decks where 15-gallon trees may be used. Tree species shall be drought-tolerant and selected for shade and visual quality in courtyards, plazas, and streetscapes, consistent with the 701 South Myrtle Specific Plan. Existing street trees along Myrtle Avenue shall be preserved where feasible, subject to review and approval by the City."**

- Condition #15e was added to read: **“Prior to issuance of building permits, the final Landscape and Irrigation Plan shall be reviewed by the Development Review Committee (DRC). The DRC review shall include coordination with the project arborist and relevant City departments to evaluate the health and feasibility of preserving existing Myrtle Avenue street trees, confirm species selection, and ensure consistency with the 701 South Myrtle Specific Plan and Old Town Extension landscape objectives.”**

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Schaeffler, seconded by Commissioner Janicek, to recommend that the City Council certify the Environmental Impact Report (State Clearinghouse No. 2023120051), approve General Plan Amendment GPA2025-0002, adopt the 701 South Myrtle Avenue Specific Plan (SP2025-0002), approve Zoning Amendment ZA2025-0001, approve Vesting Tentative Parcel Map No. 085041 (TPM2025-0002), and approve Conditional Use Permit CUP2025-0010, subject to the amended conditions of approval. The motion carried unanimously with a 4-0 vote.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS: None

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORT: Community Development Director Bermejo provided an update on the following:

- Development Updates
 - Greg Boyajian, Monrovia Building Official, has been updating the City’s Building Code to comply with updates to the 2025 California Building Standards Code, which will go into effect on January 1, 2026.

REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

- Acting Chair Stehura provided a reminder that the City’s Thankful & Grateful Holiday Gathering is scheduled for November 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. at Library Park.
- Commissioner Schaeffler commended the staff, project consultants, and project applicant for their hard work on the 701 South Myrtle Avenue project.

ADJOURNMENT: Acting Chair Stehura adjourned the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Jhaila R. Brown, Chair
Monrovia Planning Commission

Sheri Bermejo, Secretary
Monrovia Planning Commission