



City of Commerce

Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 2026 - 6:00 PM

**CONCURRENT JOINT MEETINGS OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF
COMMERCE, JOINT POWERS FINANCING AUTHORITY AND THE GOVERNING BODY
OF THE SUCCESSOR AGENCY TO THE COMMERCE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION**

6:00 P.M. - CITY COUNCIL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lainez called the regular City Council meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Mayor Lainez
Mayor Pro Tem Garcia
Councilmember Altamirano
Councilmember Argumedo
Councilmember Rebollo

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

City Manager Hernandez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

INVOCATION

Council Member Argumedo offered the invocation.

APPEARANCES AND PRESENTATIONS

1. Recognition and Tribute to the United States Armed Forces

The City Council honored the five branches of the United States Armed Forces, along with a memorial observance recognizing those who have been killed or are missing in action. Parks and Recreation Director Marquez introduced Sports Travel Coordinator Anthony Almeida, who presented a tribute recognizing the six branches of the United States Armed Forces and honoring military service members and veterans. He also announced upcoming Memorial Day weekend events at Rosewood Park featuring America's Freedom Tribute and the traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall scheduled for May 22 through May 26, 2026, including the Wall Caravan, opening ceremony, candlelight ceremony, and farewell ceremony. Mayor Lainez thanked staff for organizing the event and encouraged community participation in the Memorial Day activities. He further recognized veterans, active-duty service members, and military families, expressing appreciation for their sacrifices and service to the nation.

2. Public Works Week Proclamation

The City Council proclaimed the week of May 17 - May 23, 2026 as National Public Works Week in the City of Commerce. Mayor Lainez read the proclamation into the record, recognizing the essential role public works professionals serve in maintaining infrastructure, transportation systems, public facilities, water systems, parks, and public safety services throughout the community. Mayor Lainez thanked Director Abbas and Public Works staff for their dedication and acknowledged the department's direct impact on the quality of life for Commerce residents.

3. Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 (ESP2) Project Update

The City Council received and filed a presentation from Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) that provided an update on the Metro Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 (ESP2) Project. Public Works Director Abbas provided introductory remarks regarding the Metro Gold Line Extension Project. He summarized prior City concerns related to traffic impacts, truck circulation, lane reductions, alternate routes, impacts to local businesses, and construction impacts associated with the proposed alignment through Commerce. Director Abbas stated that City staff had previously requested Metro reassess truck traffic impacts, evaluate midday traffic conditions, review traffic modeling results, analyze impacts associated with reduced lanes on Washington Boulevard, and consider underground alternatives for portions of the project alignment.

Metro representatives including Jill Y. Liu, Lorena Sanchez, and Rene Coronel presented the Eastside Transit Corridor Phase 2 Project update. Metro staff outlined the proposed 9-mile rail extension from East Los Angeles to Whittier, including the Phase 2A segment extending from East Los Angeles to Montebello with an underground station located in the City of Commerce near the Citadel Outlets. Staff discussed project benefits including increased regional connectivity, traffic reduction, economic development opportunities, job creation, and expanded transit access. Metro staff further discussed funding status, noting approximately \$3 billion in Measure M and Measure R funding had been committed toward the project, while additional State and Federal funding remained necessary to complete construction. Staff reviewed the anticipated environmental review schedule, public outreach process, public hearing schedule, and future stakeholder engagement opportunities.

Council Member Argumedo expressed concerns regarding traffic impacts, lane reductions, truck circulation, and congestion associated with ongoing and future commercial developments along Washington Boulevard and surrounding corridors. Questions were raised regarding mitigation measures, construction coordination, traffic modeling, and long-term impacts on local traffic flow. Metro representatives responded that the agency continued to work collaboratively with City staff to update traffic simulations, refine project designs, and incorporate mitigation strategies into construction planning.

Director Abbas stated Metro had revised portions of its traffic analysis methodology and indicated City staff continued coordinating closely with Metro regarding construction traffic control plans, modeling, and stakeholder simulation outreach efforts.

Mayor Lainez expressed support for the project's economic development potential and regional connectivity benefits while reiterating concerns regarding lane reductions and traffic congestion impacts on major commercial corridors. He also inquired regarding project funding contingencies and construction timelines. Metro representatives stated Phase 2A groundbreaking was anticipated in 2029 with projected revenue service anticipated between 2035 and 2037, subject to funding availability. However, the Commerce/Citadel portion was their priority.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Veronica Chavez addressed the City Council regarding concerns related to the Modelo construction project adjacent to Vista del Rio residences. She stated that residents located approximately 27 feet from the project site were omitted as sensitive receptors from the Environmental Impact Report and alleged the omission constituted a material defect under the California Environmental Quality Act. Ms. Chavez asserted that the omission resulted in insufficient mitigation measures, inadequate vibration monitoring, and a lack of proper oversight related to demolition and compaction activities. She further criticized City oversight, requested the release of vibration monitoring data and calibration records, and requested additional mitigation and transparency measures.

Mark Chavez / Gabriela Ortega Chavez addressed the City Council regarding concerns associated with vibration impacts and alleged omissions affecting Vista del Rio residents located adjacent to the Modelo project site. He expressed frustration regarding ongoing shaking impacts, communication concerns, and oversight issues. Mr. Chavez then yielded a portion of his time to Gabriela Ortega Chavez, who described concerns related to noise, vibration, quality of life impacts, and weekend construction activities while attending graduate school and commuting long distances for work and education. She requested later Saturday construction start times and additional disclosure regarding mitigation and environmental compliance measures.

Susana Larios addressed the City Council regarding the Environmental Impact Report associated with the Modelo project and alleged insufficient mitigation analysis affecting Vista del Rio residents. She stated residents had reviewed the Environmental Impact Report and concluded their neighborhood was inadequately analyzed and omitted from meaningful mitigation discussions. Ms. Larios further expressed concerns regarding vibration impacts, potential structural damage, excavation activities, and retaining wall impacts associated with future project construction.

Leela Leon requested that item number seven relating to the budget be removed from the Consent Calendar for further discussion due to concerns regarding the City's budget deficit and future fiscal impacts. She additionally discussed the missing Vietnam memorial plaque previously displayed at Veterans Park and requested the City locate or reconstruct the memorial in recognition of local veterans and Purple Heart recipients. Ms. Leon also referenced concerns raised by

Vista del Rio residents regarding ongoing construction impacts associated with the Modelo project.

Leonard Mendoza addressed the City Council regarding concerns associated with the Modelo project and alleged City liability related to monitoring systems installed at the project site. He stated that during his tenure on the City Council, the project was conditioned upon ensuring nearby residents were satisfied before proceeding. He asserted that the City had assumed responsibility and potential liability by becoming involved with project monitoring activities and recommended the City meet with the developer, Adrian Comstock, to address and resolve all resident concerns and mitigation issues. Mr. Mendoza criticized the current City Council's handling of the matter and referenced accomplishments during his mayoral term, including maintaining a surplus balanced budget during the COVID-19 pandemic, avoiding layoffs and furloughs, expanding employee benefits, and planting approximately 12,000 trees throughout the City.

CONSENT CALENDAR

Mayor Pro Tem Garcia removed Item No. 7 from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion.

Council Member Altamirano moved, seconded by Council Member Rebollo to approve Item Nos. 4 through 6. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Lainez, Mayor Pro Tem Garcia, Councilmember Altamirano, Councilmember Argumedo, and Councilmember Rebollo

4. Approval of Warrant Register Nos. 17A, 17B, 17C, and 17A S/A

Action Taken: Approved the bills and claims set forth in Warrant Registers No. 17A dated May 12, 2026, 17B for the period of April 23, 2026 through April 27, 2026, and 17C for the period of April 29, 2026 through May 5, 2026 and 17A S/A dated May 12, 2026.

5. Approval of Minutes

Action Taken: Approved the minutes of the Regular City Council meeting of Tuesday, April 28, 2026, held at 5:00 p.m.

6. Approve Agreement with Metro on Acceptance of Proposition C Funds

Action Taken: adopted Resolution No. 26-25 approving the Fulfillment Agreement No. 920000000FUL16 between the City of Commerce and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) for the acceptance of \$36,783 in Proposition C Fulfillment Funds; and authorized the City Manager to execute the Agreement and any related documents on behalf of the City of Commerce.

7. FY 2025-26 3rd Quarter Budget Report

Mayor Pro Tem Garcia removed this item from the Consent Calendar for separate discussion.

Council Member Rebollo requested clarification regarding projected revenue reductions and how the City planned to address anticipated budget shortfalls. City Manager Hernandez explained that the City was experiencing lower than anticipated sales tax revenue trends consistent with statewide patterns affecting numerous California municipalities following post COVID revenue spikes. He also stated the City had implemented cost saving measures including maintaining vacancies, reducing expenditures, and scaling back certain programs. City Manager Hernandez further explained that quarterly financial reporting was implemented approximately one year earlier to improve transparency and allow the City Council to proactively address fiscal concerns. Staff indicated the upcoming budget process would include lower revenue projections and financial strategies intended to address anticipated shortfalls.

The item was received and filed without formal action.

SCHEDULED MATTERS

8. Presentation/Update from the Sheriff's Department of Public Safety in the City of Commerce

Sergeant Cortez presented public safety statistics for April 2026 and reported that overall crime trends had decreased compared to prior months. He provided a bilingual public safety informational card developed by Public Safety staff containing emergency and non-emergency contact information, reporting instructions, and investigative follow-up procedures for resident use.

Senior Management Analyst Natalie Hernandez provided additional information regarding the upcoming America's Freedom Tribute and Traveling Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall event scheduled for May 22, 2026 through May 26, 2026, at Rosewood Park. She explained the City underwent a competitive application process to host the event and described the planned caravan procession, opening ceremony, candlelight ceremony, and farewell ceremony honoring veterans and fallen service members. Analyst Hernandez shared a personal interaction with a local Vietnam veteran who expressed appreciation that the wall would be accessible locally because he was unable to travel to Washington, D.C. to view the memorial. She stated the event would provide veterans and their families an opportunity to honor and remember fallen comrades and relatives. Analyst Hernandez also announced that veterans' organizations, City staff, and volunteers would assist throughout the event and noted the memorial would remain open to the public 24 hours per day during the exhibition period. She additionally announced the Tip-a-Cop fundraising event benefiting the Special Olympics to be hosted at Ruby's Diner at the Citadel Outlets on May 13, 2026 from 4:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

9. Summer Kick-Off Event Augmentation: Pedal Palooza & All Abilities Color Fun Run

Parks and Recreation Director Marquez presented a request for appropriation of Project Management Funds to support the expansion of the Summer Kickoff Event, including Pedal Palooza and the All Abilities Color Fun Run scheduled for June 6, 2026. He explained the event would encourage outdoor recreation, community engagement, and inclusive programming opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities. Activities would include bike riding, scooters, roller skating, pickleball, DJ entertainment, vendor booths, and the annual Aquatics Booster Club vendor fundraiser.

Councilwoman Rebollo expressed strong support for the event and specifically commended Parks and Recreation staff for partnering with the Aquatics Booster Club, noting that proceeds generated by the booster organization directly support student athletes and scholarships for local youth. She further emphasized the importance of inclusivity and community engagement.

Mayor Lainez stated open streets style events represented a positive opportunity for the community and encouraged staff to widely advertise the event through all available communication channels.

Mayor Lainez moved, seconded by Council Member Rebollo to:

Adopt Resolution No. 26-26 appropriating \$12,100 from the Project Management Fund to support the Pedal Palooza & All Abilities Color Fun Run scheduled for Saturday, June 6, 2026.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Lainez, Mayor Pro Tem Garcia, Councilmember Altamirano, Councilmember Argumedo, and Councilmember Rebollo

PUBLIC HEARING

10. Public Hearing - Amendment to Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) Program - Reallocation of Funds to Rental Assistance for Veterans

Community Development Director Serrano introduced Adriana Robledo, representative of Avant-Garde, who presented a proposal to amend the City's Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) Program by reallocating previously approved housing rehabilitation funds toward a Veterans Rental Assistance Program. Staff explained that the program would provide temporary rental assistance to Commerce veterans experiencing or at risk of homelessness, with assistance available for up to six months and payments made directly to landlords.

Mayor Pro Tem Garcia inquired whether the proposed program could potentially interfere with veterans receiving existing federal or state housing benefits. Staff acknowledged the concern and stated program guidelines would be developed to ensure temporary assistance would not negatively affect other benefits and assistance.

Council Member Rebollo confirmed the program would be limited exclusively to veterans residing within the City of Commerce.

Mayor Lainez stated the item originated from discussions regarding ways to support vulnerable veterans facing increasing costs of living and housing instability. He explained that Director Serrano proposed reallocating PLHA funds to create a pilot rental assistance program for veterans and emphasized the importance of ensuring the temporary assistance program did not inadvertently create long-term harm for recipients.

Mayor Lainez opened the public hearing at 7:41 p.m. There being no public comments, he closed the public hearing at 7:41 p.m.

Mayor Lainez moved, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Garcia to:

1. Adopt Resolution No. 26-27 to:

a. Approve an amendment to the City's Permanent Local Housing Allocation (PLHA) Program from the Housing Rehabilitation Program to a Rental Assistance Program for Veterans;

b. Reallocate previously approved PLHA funds totaling \$59,326 from the Housing Rehabilitation Program to a Rental Assistance Program for

Veterans;

c. Authorize the City Manager or designee to develop and adopt policies and procedures for distributing funds for qualified expenses, eligibility criteria, allowed expenses, and application process, among others;

d. Authorize the City Manager, or designee, to execute all necessary documents to implement the amendment;

e. Authorize a one-time budget appropriation of \$11,800 from the City's Project Management Fund to support program implementation and administration of the amended PLHA Program;

f. Authorize the City Manager to make any necessary amendments to an existing on-call agreement with Avant Garde Inc. to increase the budget, scope and term for the implementation and administration of the amended PLHA Program; and

2. Take any additional related action as deemed necessary.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 5 - Mayor Lainez, Mayor Pro Tem Garcia, Councilmember Altamirano, Councilmember Argumedo, and Councilmember Rebollo

CITY COUNCIL/SUCCESSOR AGENCY REPORTS

Council Member Rebollo wished all mothers a belated Happy Mother's Day and congratulated local sports teams that recently competed in San Diego and Las Vegas. She additionally acknowledged the recent Unplugged Kids performances and expressed regret that she was unable to attend in person, although she watched videos of the performances and commended the participants and organizers. Council Member Rebollo further addressed comments made earlier in the meeting by a former elected official and defended the current City Council, Mayor, and City staff. She stated the current Council had worked collaboratively over the previous two years to move the City forward and transform City operations under the direction of the new City Manager. Council Member Rebollo further referenced prior controversies involving the former elected official and discussed her recent appointment as Treasurer for Contract Cities after previously serving on the organization's Executive Board.

Council Member Altamirano reported attending the recent preschool graduation event and commended Parks and Recreation staff for organizing a successful program for participating children and families. He stated the event reminded him of his own childhood graduation experience and praised staff for creating a memorable celebration for students. Council Member Altamirano additionally discussed concerns raised earlier in the meeting regarding residents living near the Modelo project site. He stated he understood resident concerns relating to dust, noise, and vibration impacts associated with demolition and construction activities and emphasized the importance of ensuring the City remained responsive to affected residents. Council Member Altamirano further commented on the participation of former elected officials during public comment and characterized their comments as attempts to capitalize on community frustration and controversy.

Council Member Argumedo thanked Council Member Rebollo for her earlier comments and similarly criticized remarks made by a former elected official during public comment, stating the individual had historically been divisive while serving in office. He discussed concerns regarding the Modelo project and stated that, during a previous City Council meeting, project representatives and residents appeared to be making progress toward resolving concerns collaboratively. Council Member Argumedo stated additional dialogue was needed and emphasized that developer Adrian Comstock should be held accountable for addressing resident complaints and implementing mitigation measures. He further

requested that City staff provide an update regarding resident concerns, project conditions, and possible temporary measures if necessary to address ongoing impacts. Council Member Argumedo apologized for missing the preschool graduation event and explained that his family had been in the process of adopting two labrador retrievers. He described his family's experience adopting the dogs and later returning them after discovering his son had allergies. Council Member Argumedo additionally reported attending a press conference regarding recently proposed regulations by California Attorney General Rob Bonta affecting card clubs and gaming operations. He stated the regulations could negatively impact the City of Commerce and surrounding cities financially, potentially reducing revenue by an estimated \$8 million to \$18 million annually. He further discussed the upcoming June 2 sales tax measure and stated he believed the measure was important to maintaining City programs and services for residents.

Mayor Pro Tem Garcia agreed with comments made by fellow Council Members regarding criticism directed toward the City Council and stated the Council continued working collaboratively to move the City forward. She reported that on May 7 she attended the 5th Annual Children's Benefit Dinner focused on mental health services and family support resources. She additionally discussed the upcoming Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall event scheduled in Commerce and encouraged residents to attend the memorial exhibition and related ceremonies occurring May 22, 2026 through May 26, 2026. Mayor Pro Tem Garcia also expressed pride regarding her efforts leading the initiative to designate Commerce as a Purple Heart City.

Mayor Lainez reported attending the Big Four Summit involving the cities of Commerce, Industry, Vernon, and Santa Fe Springs, where business leaders and City representatives discussed job creation opportunities and economic development strategies. He thanked City Manager Ernie Hernandez, Community Development Director Jessica Serrano, and Senior Management Analyst Gisselle Delgado for participating in the event. Mayor Lainez additionally discussed Student Leadership Day coordinated in partnership with the Montebello Unified School District and thanked City staff for mentoring students and introducing them to career opportunities within municipal government. He specifically acknowledged Montebello Unified School Board President Liliana Magaña for helping coordinate the annual event. Mayor Lainez further reported attending the preschool graduation event and commended Parks and Recreation staff, including Director Adolfo Marquez and Brenda Diaz, for organizing the graduation ceremony with the

Zootopia space. He additionally discussed attending the Commerce Public Library's Commerce Now book launch event on May 8, recognizing oral histories and stories from community members, former elected officials, commissioners, volunteers, and residents. Mayor Lainez encouraged residents to visit the library and read the publication. He also praised the recent Unplugged Juniors production of the Wizard of Oz and commended Performing Arts Specialist Sarah Fenton, Nyree Rodriguez, Abigail Rosas, and participating youth performers for organizing a successful theatrical production.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the City Council, Mayor Lainez adjourned the meeting at 8:01 p.m. in the memory of Jaime Garza, an active member of our senior community and Commerce softball team. He extended condolences to the Garza family on behalf of the City Council.