



**City of South Pasadena
Planning and Community
Development Department**

Memo

Date: August 11, 2020

To: Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

From: Joanna Hankamer, Planning and Community Development Director
Kanika Kith, Planning Manager

Prepared By: Malinda Lim, Associate Planner

Re: August 11, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Item No. 1 – Additional Public
Comments for Moffat Street Extension Received (Project No. 2191-HDP/TRP)

After posting of the staff report, public comments were received from seven people in opposition to the project. These comments are included as **Attachment 1**.

Attachments:

1. Public Comments Received After Posting of the Staff Report

ATTACHMENT 1
Public Comments Received After
Posting of the Staff Report

From: Caitlin Díaz [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 11:06 AM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Comment for South Pasadena Planning Commission Meeting on August 11 on Project # 2191-HDP/TRP

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear South Pasadena Planning Commission,

I am writing to urge you to **vote against** the development plans from Planet Home Living to build luxury homes in El Sereno (**Project # 2191-HDP/TRP**). This is a blatant case of gentrification as these homes will cost at least 1.5mil when the surrounding area is already priced at an average of 600K.

Not only will this development displace the most vulnerable residents in the area by increasing housing costs, but it will also destroy much of our California endangered wildlife such as coyotes, hawks, and other migratory birds who rely on the ecosystems North East LA provides. It would also contribute to the extinction of the California Black Walnut Tree, which was a gift to this land by the native Kizh/Tongva people.

We must do better in not only preserving our natural ecosystem but providing fair and affordable housing to the communities of NELA. Housing costs across the country have risen due to gentrification, corporate greed, and, quite frankly, white supremacy. You have a chance to take a stand against this issue and make South Pasadena proud in supporting its most vulnerable inhabitants as well as those who have called El Sereno home for many years.

Again, I urge you to **VOTE AGAINST** this proposal at your meeting on August 11th.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Curtis Barlage [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 2:03 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: project# 2191-HDP/TRP

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings,

I am sending this email to you in regards to project# 2191-HDP/TRP and the great concerns that myself and a lot of the community surrounding this area have. Many of us feel this development should cease and desist. The damage to the eco system in the area alone is of enough concern as well as the harm of gentrification and the displacement development projects like this cause. The community will not let up and let it be known that if this project moves ahead, we will do anything in our power to halt it. The information about this project is spreading rapidly in public and we hope you take our concerns seriously and to mind.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Curt Barlage

-----Original Message-----

From: Emmett Casey [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 11:14 AM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: 2191-hdp/trp

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

In regards to:
2191-hdp/trp

Please do not allow this development to go in.
The developers are asking you to bend the rules for them when they do not have the community's interests at heart. And is that not what a governing body is asked to do, watch out for the well being of those less powerful? Is that not why societies are formed? Is that not why committees are formed?

You have the power to simply say no, the law does not allow this and we will uphold that, so please do.

There is great public outcry from Pasadena and Los Angeles. Neighbors don't want it. Environmental groups don't want it. Social groups are in outrage over it. Political groups are upset. Even this committee expressed in multiple public settings a wish for it to go away. It can. Simply deny the permission.

You have the chance to do right by the people, instead of leaning towards a small group of rich investors. This is really a Frank Capra moment. You have a chance to prove the system works for the little folk, that all are equal.

Emett

From: G [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 2:51 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Project Number: 2191-HDP/TRP

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Project Number: 2191-HDP/TRP

To Whom It May Concern:

OC-based developer and gentrifier of Brown communities, Planet Home Living, is trying to build luxury homes (starting at \$1.5 million) on a steep hill in El Sereno where homes average at 600K. This project needs to be stopped NOW!

- 1.) THE PROJECT IS ILLEGAL AND INFRINGES ON THE RIGHTS OF RESIDENTS. GOVERNMENT IS NOT ACKNOWLEDGING OUR RIGHTS DUE TO FEAR OF BEING SUED BY THE DEVELOPER
- 2.) THE PROJECT IS UNSUSTAINABLE CONSIDERING THE ENERGY NEEDED TO PUMP WATER UP THIS STEEP HILL. HIGHLY UNSUSTAINABLE DURING A DROUGHT AND FOR LA'S ALREADY LIMITED RESOURCES. WE CANNOT BE WASTING OUR RESOURCES TO CATER TO LUXURY HOUSING
- 3.) THE PROJECT WOULD LEAD TO RISING HOUSING COSTS AND WOULD DISPLACE OUR MOST VULNERABLE RESIDENTS. MANY EL SERENO RESIDENTS ARE ALREADY IN CRITICAL SITUATIONS DUE TO THE PANDEMIC AND EXISTING SOCIAL INEQUITIES. STOP SELLING OUT OUR COMMUNITIES!
- 4.) THE PROJECT WOULD DISPLACE COYOTES, HAWKS, NESTING AND MIGRATING BIRDS, ETC. ALL NECESSARY FOR NELA'S BIODIVERSITY. IT WOULD ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EXTINCTION OF THE ENDANGERED CALIFORNIA BLACK WALNUT TREE, ONE OF THE GIFTS TO THIS LAND FROM ITS ORIGINAL INHABITANTS, THE KIZH/TONGVA.
- 5.) THIS PROJECT IS FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLES OF WHITE SUPREMACY. THE ORIGINAL PLANS CALLED FOR CONNECTING THESE HOMES USING A PRIVATE STREET THAT WOULD ALLOW THE OWNERS OF THE LUXURY HOMES TO AVOID LA AND DRIVE IN THROUGH SOUTH PASADENA. DESPITE THE HOMES BEING IN LA, THE DEVELOPERS HAVE REFERRED TO EL SERENO AS "UNDESIRABLE", "VERY SUBSTANDARD" AND SOUTH PASADENA AS "MUCH MORE ATTRACTIVE QUITE FRANKLY." THEY HARASSED AND THREATENED NEIGHBORS, EXCLUSIVELY POC.

Thank you for your time and understanding.

Cheers,

-Grace Franco

Malinda Lim

From: Micah Haserjian [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 5:42 PM
To: PlanningComments
Cc: Malinda Lim; Joanna Hankamer; Kanika Kith; Diana Mahmud; Michael Cacciotti; Marina Khubesrian; Shaylee Papadakis; Brenda ♥ Contreras
Subject: Public Comment - Opposition to Moffat Street Project No2191-HDP/TRP.

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear South Pasadena Planning Commission,

I am writing once again to urge you to deny the proposed project Moffat Street, Project No. 2191-HDP/TRP. Since notification of this item on the agenda was posted on the evening of August 6th, I have attempted to get in contact with the Planning Department on multiple occasions to answer important questions about this project to no avail. The lack of information available to the public about the new plans for connection with Lowell in the city of LA proves insufficient for this item to even be on the agenda, yet alone be approved. Additionally, in the last planning commission meeting, the commissioners stated that their terms for pushing this project forward would be that the developer would need to work out a solution with the owners of 4519 Lowell Ave (myself and Brenda). Since the meeting, we **have not been contacted** to discuss these updated plans by the developer Planet Home Living (PHL) or the South Pasadena Planning department. In reviewing the updated plans, they are still not sufficient to serve our rights and needs.

I would also like to remind you that the original plans in connection to the public portion of Moffatt St goes well above the rights that PHL have with their ingress/egress easement they possess for access **only** to and from Lowell or Richard Drive (as clearly stated in the easement document). In addition, any construction on this easement that involves subterranean utilities, storm drainage, and retaining walls would be a clear overburdening of the easement.. Since the proposed project includes this type of construction, it would be an illegal use of the ingress/egress rights the developers have.

That being said, if you still are going to consider this project some gaping holes must be addressed in the plans presented in the agenda packet. Here are just some of them as follows:

1. Grading shows no grade change in Lowell Ave up to the proposed private street. The previous street plans show the grade of the private street well below Lowell Ave. PHL must submit updated plans for the entire street showing grading from start to finish (where does the street start?)
2. There has been no determination of who the lead agency is for CEQA -- City of South Pasadena or City of Los Angeles?
3. Where would the stormwater / runoff be diverted - down Lowell Ave? Can DWP handle this?
4. A new traffic study must be conducted in the City of LA for this connection to Lowell
5. The tree removals are not necessary for only connecting through Lowell. They would not have to remove all of the trees listed, so each permit needs to be reassessed.
6. Where would the construction staging and haul routes take place within the city of LA?

Residents of LA and South Pasadena will continue to strongly oppose this project for all of the reasons stated in prior meetings and comments. PHL has no rights to be building this street as they have proposed. Instead of

working out the best solution that serves the community of Los Angeles, they have only focused their efforts on intimidation of residents and government entities while attempting to prove their false claims to construction rights. PHL's rhetoric used throughout these and other community meetings has proven time and time again that they have no real interest in improving the community of El Sereno. This should lead to an easy decision in denying this project once and for all.

Regards,

Micah Haserjian

--

Micah Haserjian


Malinda Lim

From: Malinda Lim
Sent: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 9:02 AM
To: 'Micah Haserjian'; Kanika Kith
Cc: Joanna Hankamer; Brenda ♥ Contreras; Shaylee Papadakis
Subject: RE: URGENT Re: Moffat Street Connection with Los Angeles: Questions/Concerns

Hi Micah,

Please see my responses to your questions in blue below.

Malinda Lim | Associate Planner

CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA | Planning & Building Dept.
1414 Mission Street | South Pasadena, CA 91030
mlim@southpasadenaca.gov | T: 626.403.7228

COVID-19 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

- For general Planning-related information and questions, please email AskPlanning@southpasadenaca.gov or call (626) 403-7220.
- For Planning project-related information or questions, please continue to contact the project planner directly via email.
- For Building-related information and questions, please email PermitTech@southpasadenaca.gov or call (626) 403-7224.
- For Code Enforcement filing, please complete the form on our website and email the completed form to CodeEnforcement@southpasadenaca.gov.
- We appreciate your business and your patience during this time.

From: Micah Haserjian [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 1:44 PM
To: Malinda Lim <mlim@southpasadenaca.gov>; Kanika Kith <kkith@southpasadenaca.gov>
Cc: Joanna Hankamer <jhankamer@southpasadenaca.gov>; Brenda ♥ Contreras [REDACTED]
Shaylee Papadakis <shaylee.Papadakis@lacity.org>
Subject: URGENT Re: Moffat Street Connection with Los Angeles: Questions/Concerns

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello all,

I am just following up on this since the meeting is tomorrow and it is necessary to have these items cleared up before the meeting or submitting a public comment to the Planning Commission. I have tried calling the planning department phone number and they mentioned that there is no way to contact you via phone. The only way would be to do a virtual appointment and there are no open slots until Wednesday.

Please let me know if you can respond to my inquiry today.

Thank you,
Micah

On Fri, Aug 7, 2020 at 12:52 PM Micah Haserjian [REDACTED] wrote:

Hello Malinda and Kanika,

I noticed that the Moffat St. extension has been put on the Planning Commission agenda meeting for Tuesday, August 11th with recommendation for approval connecting to Lowell Ave in the City of Los Angeles only.

I have reviewed the agenda packet and have some questions and concerns relating to the updated plans that I hope you can answer. Feel free to give me a call at 310-909-9162 if it is easier to discuss over the phone.

1. In the last planning commission meeting, the commissioners stated that their terms for pushing this project forward would be that the developer would need to work out a solution with the owners of 4519 Lowell Ave (myself and Brenda). Since the meeting, we have not been contacted to discuss these updated plans by the developer or your department. In reviewing the plans, they are still not sufficient to serve our rights and needs. [We've asked the Developer to reach out to you.](#)
2. Has Planet Home Living stated their intentions for proceeding with these plans or are they still stating they have no intention of connecting with Lowell Ave in Los Angeles? [In the past, the Developer has opposed the alternative alignment for the street. With the new staff recommendation, they have not stated whether or not they would like to proceed with the connection of Lowell Avenue to the private portion of Moffat Street.](#)
3. What further communication (if any) has SoPas had with the City of LA about this project? [Staff has reached out to Los Angeles Planning and Los Angeles Fire Department. We've provided them with the new exhibit which is in tomorrow's agenda packet. We have not heard a response from the City of Los Angeles staff.](#)
4. I am confused about the overall grading of this project, because the current plans show that the grade of the private Moffat st. would be about 5 feet below the terminus of Lowell Ave. How will the street connect with a 5 foot drop off without further grading of Lowell Ave? Or did the developer submit new street plans showing updated grading of Moffat (private)? [The grades are more compatible to a connection from Lowell than a connection to Moffat. As part of the new conditions of approval, if the PC approves and the Applicant proceeds with the project, the applicant would need to submit a revised street improvement plan to connect to Lowell. The design would need to follow the conceptual layout shown in the new exhibit or go back to PC for review.](#)
5. Has there been a new traffic study conducted in the City of LA for this connection? [No. The City of LA would be responsible for such a study.](#)
6. The tree removals are not necessary for only connecting through Lowell. They would not have to remove all of the trees listed, so each permit needs to be reassessed.

I appreciate your prompt response to this, as we were only given one business day that we can discuss this with you after the new plans have been made available.

Regards,
Micah

--
Micah Haserjian

From: Shauna McGarry [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 1:37 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>; shawn.kuk@lacity.org;
shaylee.papadakis@lacity.org
Subject: Project number 2191-hdp/trp

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi, my name is Shauna McGarry, and I am a long time resident of East LA. I'm also a community arts educator (at Echo Park Film Center) that has seen first hand the negative impacts of gentrification on communities and the young people who are trying to grow up there. It is for this reason, and others, I am writing to strongly encourage you to vote down Brown Communities, Planet Home Living's request to build luxury homes on the hill bordering El Sereno and South Pas (project number 2191-hdp/trp).

This project is illegal and infringes on the rights of El Sereno residents. El Sereno is one of the remaining communities in LA in which low to middle-income families can afford to live. The addition of these 1.5 million dollar track homes will significantly disrupt a community where the median home price is 600k! Rising house costs directly endanger our most vulnerable residents by making the home and rental prices too high to meet.

The build is unsustainable, requiring heavy-duty water pumps to send water up a very steep hill. It would displace wild animals and birds, and destroy the endangered black walnut trees that exist on the hill.

The build is not wanted by the community. I urge you to stand up to the deep pockets of developers and their litigation threats. If LA is to meet the current demands social justice requires, we need to STOP aiding and supporting money-grabbing, non-local real estate developers who only care about profit.

Thank you for your care in this matter,
Shauna

Shauna McGarry
[REDACTED]

Malinda Lim

From: Tom Williams [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, August 10, 2020 10:29 AM
To: PlanningComments
Cc: Malinda Lim; Janet Braun
Subject: Re: Moffat Planning commission Considerations - Request for Continuation and Revisions

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the City of South Pasadena. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

DATE: 081020

TO: City of South Pasadena Planning Commission
PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov

FROM: Dr. Tom Williams, Snr. Techn. Adviser, Citizens Coalition for A Safe Community
[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Agenda Item #1 Public Hearing
Planning Commission Meeting August 11, 2020 6:30pm
Moffat Street Project Lowell City of South Pasadena (SoPas)
Project No. 2191-HDP/TRP

RE: Public Comments #4

Thank You for the opportunity to review this project as it relates to the North boundary of the North District of LA-32 Neighborhood Council area within the City of Los Angeles (CLA), for which I am an elected Director to LA-32 NC. I oppose this project as currently defined even with alternative connection to Lowell Av. and will appeal and undertake further actions if approved as currently presented.

General Issues to Resolve:

CEQA determination (categorical exemption) by City of South Pasadena (CSP) without Lead Agency designation, although City of Los Angeles (CLA) is directly and operationally affected by the Project, and both cities must decide as to lead agency for CEQA;

Land uses, Ownerships, and Growth Inducement within CLA and CSP is inadequately defined and delineated and is both provided for or allowed for undeveloped and developed lots which are susceptible to further developments by Lot splits, Small Lot Subdivision, and Accessory Dwelling Units;

Proposed private street is being reviewed but not designated as a fire lane for both CLAFD and CSPFD without designation as to regulator and service provider;

No construction staging area is designated within Project, and haul routes have not been identified other than in CLA and not in CSP;

Project design and construction drawings for project are incomplete and inadequate, street length 500, 600, or 650ft;

Accessible and served parcels are not clearly identified and ownership is not specified, especially for easements;

No provisions for Operations, Maintenance, and Security Association for both CLA and CSP service areas;

Lowell Ave. changes of exclusions and clearances are within the CLA and not within authority of CSP.

Given these deficiencies and inadequacies, please continue your consideration of this inadequately and incompletely developed project. Require applicant to revise and resubmit an adequate and complete application. Detailed comments will be submitted regarding current documents inadequacies and incompleteness.

I am available for direct communications and developments for this important project through cooperation between CLA and CSP, as we demonstrated for 30+ years regarding the shared SR-710 North Extension project.

Dr. Tom Williams