



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

Memo

Date: July 21, 2020

To: Planning Commission
Joanna Hankamer, Director of Planning and Community Development

Via:

From: Margaret Lin, Manager of Long Range Planning and Economic Development
July 21, 2020 Planning Commission Meeting Item No. 1 Additional Document –

Re: 2021 Housing Element Update - Preliminary Sites Analysis

Attached is an additional document which provides additional public comments that were received during the public comment period.

Public Comments Received Regarding RHNA and Building Heights
(as of July 21, 2020 at 10:00AM)

1. Oliver Wang
2. Ron Rosen
3. Rachel Orfila
4. Andrew Nam
5. Steve Schneider
6. Nirav Desai
7. Dan Kanemoto
8. Lissa Grabow
9. Aileen Kelly
10. Elliott Caine
11. Jackie Diamond
12. Josh Albrektson
13. Michael Siegel
14. Mayumi Fukushima
15. Jan Marshall
16. Cathy Lee
17. Joanne Nuckols
18. William Kelly
19. Stephanie Kirchen
20. Tara Kawakami
21. Meghan Kiser
22. South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce

From: Oliver Wang [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 12:14 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Height limits

Oliver Wang
[REDACTED]

South Pasadena homeowner since 2010

I'm a sociology professor with some familiarity on urban planning issues, especially as it relates to housing problems in California. Personally, I am in favor of amending existing height limits on building in the city as one way to create greater housing density/capacity in the region. While I don't think high density housing is a panacea to the crisis of housing affordability, it's one tool that should be available to long-term city planning. What I would heavily emphasize though is that any kind of multi-unit projects *must prioritize mandatory affordable housing inclusions*. Elsewhere in the county, developers have often been able to skirt those requirements and South Pasadena should not allow for any new high-density housing projects to move forward if it can't also guarantee that there will be substantial affordable housing set asides included within them. If changing height limits simply results in condos for the wealthy, I don't see the net good accomplished by that.

From: Ron Rosen [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 12:05 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: July 21 Meeting : Housing Element: Height Limits

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Ron Rosen
[REDACTED]

Housing Element: Height Limits

I oppose removing building height limits. I think there are a lot of things that need to be done before we do that. For one thing, I think the state has miscalculated our numbers. We need to push back against the overdevelopment of our town just as we pushed back against the freeway for 70 years. It's not right for the state to mandate changing the character of our small town. There are other ways to meet the state's housing needs. Perhaps the state can develop new towns in unpopulated areas. Perhaps at some point we just have to say, there's no more room here. We have a small town with limited space, why should we allow anyone to destroy its character. Some say that high density near transit is the wave of the future. But is high density really a good thing? I believe that psychological studies show that high density causes stress, anxiety, anger and other associated effects. How will we deal with more traffic, which is already a problem, and the need for more schools? We need to think of other ways for California to deal with housing. Destroying the character of South Pasadena is not the answer.

Ron Rosen

From: Rachel Orfila [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 1:23 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Please put height limits on the ballot.

Dear City Council Members,

South Pasadena needs more affordable housing. According to your own statistics, more than 50% of units in South Pasadena are occupied by renters, and 43.8% of renters in South Pasadena are rent-burdened. This leads to instability in our community. I will offer a personal example: in the six years my family has lived in South Pasadena, three tenants in the unit next door have left because the rent was too high. All of them had children. When children cycle in and out of our schools, they not only lose friends but also fall behind academically. In our time here, my daughter has also lost beloved teachers who left because they could not afford housing anywhere near here.

Because land and construction costs are so high, in order to build enough affordable housing, we will need to rethink some of our zoning restrictions, including the height limit passed in 1983. Specifically, I don't think an apartment complex would be out of place on Fair Oaks. I love the Rialto and Fair Oaks Pharmacy, but Fair Oaks also has a lot of generic strip malls and fast food restaurants; I don't understand why an apartment building would be more unsightly than a McDonald's or Blaze Pizza. Please put the height limit issue on the ballot and let voters decide.

Finally, I don't understand why the city council is lobbying the state to reduce the affordable housing requirement. Given the statistics I cited above, we need at least that many units.

Thank you,
Rachel Orfila

From: Andrew Nam [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 2:34 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Put Height Limits on the November Ballot

Dear Planning Commission,

I urge you to put building height limits on the ballot. There is a clear shortage of affordable housing in South Pasadena.

The city will not be able to meet the state RHNA mandate of 2,062 new units without increasing the height limit. The city should use its resources to facilitate building more housing, instead of wasting them in litigation against the state.

No one is asking for “a bunch of high-rise development.” The city only has to modify the current height limit to allow for building of enough units to comply with the state mandate.

It’s time for the city leaders to stop clinging on to this notion of “small-town community” and do what’s right for everyone, not just the homeowners.

Thank you,
Andrew Nam

From: Steve Schneider [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 4:57 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Height Restrictions

Hello,

I am writing to voice my opposition to eliminating height restrictions for buildings in South Pasadena. We need the restrictions to remain in place to prevent overcrowding in our 2 square mile town. If high density housing is allowed to come in like it has in neighboring Pasadena, we will be facing myriad problems. The traffic through our town is already beyond maximum capacity all day long up and down Fair Oaks Ave. If height restrictions are removed and high rise condominiums and apartments are allowed to be built, we will be overwhelmed by the increase in population. Please allow the height restrictions to remain in place and do not change them. We want our town to remain livable for all.

Sincerely,

Carol and Steve Schneider

From: Nirav Desai [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 5:01 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Height Limits

Hi

I live at [REDACTED], South Pasadena, CA 91030, along with my family.

I believe the height restrictions should not be changed without serious deliberation.

While I personally oppose increasing the height limits, if you must increase it, please mandate the buildings follow an architecturally pleasing style, like Art Deco for example.

The last thing we need is large sterile boxes ruining the city.

Thanks
Nirav

From: Daniel Kanemoto [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 5:20 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Housing Element: Height Limits

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 Planning Commission:

My name is Dan Kanemoto. My family moved to South Pasadena in 2013, and we plan to spend the rest of our lives in this wonderful town.

It's recently come to our attention that the Planning Commission is considering raising the building height limits, which is something that I oppose.

While we understand the need to follow the State's housing mandate, it's our belief that the Planning Commission must explore alternative solutions without raising building height limits. My wife and I have both lived in cities with no height limits, and we treasure South Pasadena for its unique small town feel.

Please do not repeal the voter imposed 45 foot height limit in our community.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read and consider this letter.

Dan Kanemoto

From: Lisa Grabow [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 9:36 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Housing Element: Height Limits

My name is Lisa Grabow
address - [REDACTED]
South Pasadena, CA 91030

Dear Planning Commission -

Please vote against raising building height restrictions. Please vote against increased density in South Pasadena.

As a resident of this fine community since 2000, I have helped fight the 710, I've volunteered to get the community garden going, I've organized Read Across America at Arroyo Vista, I've volunteered in the classrooms and I've sat on the school site committee. I love this town and I beg you not to allow the height limit of buildings to exceed what exists currently.

I live in a single family home, but I am flanked by apartments. If you allow higher buildings, my property and so many others will be shadowed by unsightly walls. Go drive around Pasadena and Alhambra and see how these tall apartments or mixed use complexes have ruined the charm of neighborhoods. We moved here to live in "Mayberry", not Gotham!

The latest abomination is near Hill and Elizabeth Street - a school has been razed to make way for "International Student Housing". The charming bungalows nearby are shadowed; instead of looking across the street at a neighbor's bungalow, whoever is left will look across the street and see a stucco wall. The neighborhood will not sustain the increased traffic and population.

Alhambra's Plaza is hideous. We don't want to look like Orange County - keep the stucco urban boxes out of South Pasadena!

South Pasadena fought the State over the 710 and won. We can certainly fight the State over increased density - ESPECIALLY DURING A PANDEMIC. It is your unique opportunity to shut this silliness down. South Pasadena should argue that increased density is the worst possible plan for preventing the spread of infectious diseases. Look no further than lovely New York City - how can people avoid one another? Did you notice New York had the highest death rate due to increased density?

Higher buildings mean more cars on our streets, more people shoved onto the Gold Line (that is a sardine can during rush hour), more people crowding our parks that already have the playgrounds taped off, more kids in schools where there is no more room to build more classrooms, more kids playing Little League or AYSO where there isn't enough room on the fields to accommodate the teams we have. I know our police and fire personnel. With greater density, will our police and fire services be as effective? Unlikely.

Seriously - don't be tantalized by the sales tactics of the developers - there isn't any skin in the game for them - they can build ugly and walk away, leaving the residents to suffer. Remember the Decoma project - when they decided they wouldn't make enough money, they left... you see no one has the best interest of our community in mind. The State wants housing - there is vacant

land ALL OVER THIS STATE - they don't have to build it in South Pasadena. The State isn't going to bail our schools out when our school district has to factor (that's an expensive way to bring in cash by selling receivables) to pay teachers salaries at the beginning of the year because our student population increases. Our schools, our citizens will be responsible to fund this expansion.

South Pasadena is known for our schools, our homes, our charm and character - they are great because there is a community involved - SPEF, the PTA, South Pasadena Beautiful. Leave the city's density and height restrictions alone. It's an expensive gamble and I have yet to see a town like ours benefit from increased height or density.

Kindest regards,
Lisa Grabow

From: Aileen Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 17, 2020 8:40 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Housing Element: Height Limits

To Whom it May Concern,

I support increasing housing density, especially affordable housing. If we need to remove the height limits to do that, then I support removing height limits.

Please don't let developers come in and build tall buildings full of homes for wealthy people and leave out affordable units.

Thank you for your time,

Aileen Kelly

--

Aileen Kelly
Co-founder
Persistiny
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, July 19, 2020 12:44 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Housing Element: Height Limits

I oppose increasing the population density of South Pasadena. We can resist new California regulations and win. We have fought the freeway extension for many years, and it looks like our fight has succeeded. Traffic is getting to be a major problem in town, especially since the advent of the Gold Line. Having a new, large condominium complex near the Gold Line will not only be aggravating, but also dangerous. Other planned large condominium projects should also be opposed. Please oppose any efforts by developers to "over develop" and ruin South Pasadena.

Sincerely,

Elliott Caine

[REDACTED]
South Pasadena 91030

From: Jackie Diamond [REDACTED]
Subject: Housing Element: Height Limits - South Pasadena
Date: July 18, 2020 at 5:21:27 PM PDT
To: [REDACTED]

Dear Ms. Kith,

I hope you don't mind that I'm reaching out to you directly. I have been attempting to send my email to the planning commission for days now and it keeps bouncing back as undeliverable so a friend recommended I contact you directly in the hopes that you'll make sure it's seen by the right people.

Thank you,
Jackie Diamond

To whom it may concern:

As longtime residents of city of South Pasadena, my family and I object to the removal of building height limits. We worry about being overrun with developers coming in to ruin our small town and it's charming historic character. We chose to live here and raise our family here because of South Pasadena's small town feel, great schools and open spaces. We don't need it to become a bustling city center with tall buildings and developers changing the landscape of our charming little town.

I do not believe the city should go along with the State's housing mandate. We are a unique community and should resist having the state change the character of our town. I think that this would ruin the charm of our beautiful small town, which is the reason why so many of us made our homes here and love it so much. It seems to me that a majority of the City Council agrees that we should not knuckle under to the state. There are also indications that the majority of the voters oppose height limits, so here I am, making our views known - Please, for the sake of our beautiful town and the happiness of the residents who call South Pasadena home, no repeal of the 45' voter imposed height limit.

Kindest regards,
Jackie Diamond
[REDACTED]
South Pasadena, CA
91030
[REDACTED]

From: Josh Albrektson [REDACTED]
Subject: Public Comment for South Pasadena Planning commission RHNA
Date: On Jul 18, 2020, at 2:56 PM,

I would like to say, the job done by staff and planning commission has been great, but there is a major flaw that will lead to this housing element to be rejected by HCD and come March the entire process will start over. I strongly suggest everybody read the official guidelines from HCD regarding site selection specifically the section regarding ADUs on page 31:

https://www.hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/docs/Sites_inventory_memo_final06102020.pdf

South Pasadena has 2,061 Housing Units assigned to it for the 6th planning cycle. I believe the 1,000 ADU units applied is unrealistic and will be rejected by HCD.

In the plan, South Pasadena states that over 8 years, there will be 1,000 ADUs produced that will be used for housing and that 200 of these ADUs will be low income housing. On page 31 of the guide posted above it lists specific guidelines about how to calculate how many ADU's can be counted in the housing element and it appears that South Pasadena didn't follow the rules.

South Pasadena has 5,000 single family homes. The plan suggested that over 8 years South Pasadena expects 1 out of every 5 single family homes to add an ADU for housing (Not an office or personal use). That means every year, South Pasadena would add 125 ADUs, or 25 ADUs per 1,000 Single family homes per year.

Los Angeles, in it's best year, approved 4,000 ADU permits. Not all of these are for housing and some of these were for legalizing existing units, but lets say they are all for new housing. They have 654,000 single family homes. That means that Los Angeles is adding 6.1 ADUs per 1,000 SFH per year.

Pasadena has 30,600 SFH and produced 100 ADUs over an 18 month period. This means they are producing 2.15 ADUs per 1,000 SFH per year.

So this housing element assumes that South Pasadena will produce ADU's at a rate that is 4 times that of Los Angeles and 12 times that of Pasadena. It really doesn't matter what kind of ADU incentive ordinance that is passed, these are completely unrealistic numbers and will be rejected by HCD.

A more accurate number would be about 250 ADU units used for housing over the 8 years, which is what it would be if we produced ADU's at the same rate as Los Angeles (The majority of which are in the San Fernando Valley, 15 miles from us).

I think you as the planning commission should ask staff and Planworks if they ran this by HCD or if they can find a single place in San Diego which is 6 to 8 months ahead of us that actually used ADUs at this level to try and comply with the requirements. I fully expect that come

March, HCD will knock this number down to 200 and South Pasadena will have to find a place to zone for 800 more units.

Part 2 of letter

I would also like to draw attention to the No Net Loss rule and be sure the planning commission understands it and how it will affect South Pasadena in the future. Attached is the guidelines from HCD

<https://hcd.ca.gov/community-development/housing-element/housing-element-memos/docs/SB-166-final.pdf>

No net loss means that all time South Pasadena must have enough zoning and built housing to satisfy the income levels at each zoning level.

So South Pasadena has to have enough zoning that it would be expected that 377 Very Low Income units be built over 8 years. If we zone for just that amount, we will end up having major problems in the future.

Say Vons was zoned for 50 Low Income units. They propose a project that is 10 low income units and 70 moderate income units. South Pasadena is not allowed to reject the project legally.

So with the 10 Low income units at Vons, that means the remaining sites would be zoned for 327 units, leaving a gap of 40 low income units to get to the 367 units that must be zoned for Low Income units. South Pasadena would have to do an immediate rezone or there is significant penalties, including by right housing for multiple different types of projects and possible lawsuits.

I believe that South Pasadena should try to zone for 20% more than the minimum, as recommended in the HCD memorandum linked above, at this time rather than have to repeatedly update and upzone with each new project that comes in.

Additional thoughts.

I have repeatedly seen people state on the City Council and to a lesser extent the commission that the 1.3 million housing units assigned to SCAG was a result of the 3.5 million housing units that Governor Newsom mentioned while campaigning. This is completely inaccurate. It was calculated based on multiple laws passed in 2017 and 2018 that required it to be calculated based on vacancy levels, overcrowding, and multiple other factors.

SCAG is 20 million people. They were assigned 1.3 million units. California is 40 million people. So by ratio the RHNA would be assigning 2.6 million units to California based on SCAGs numbers.

Here is the post from Gavin Newsom talking about the 3.5 million units that he promised by 2025. It also has a lot of information about why South Pasadena should stop thinking that the state or legislators will actually do anything to make sure South Pasadena doesn't have to build the homes assigned to it.

<https://medium.com/@GavinNewsom/the-california-dream-starts-at-home-9dbb38c51cae>

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Josh Albrektson MD
Neuroradiologist by night
Crime fighter by day

From: Michael Siegel [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 10:38 AM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Planning Commission meeting July 21 comment

Michael Siegel, [REDACTED]
Re: Housing Element: Height Limits

Comment:

I am in favor of removing the Height Limits along our corridors near commercial and transit.

It is one small tool needed in the overall toolbelt that will help make our town safer, more livable and prepare it for the future.

The idea of a 20-minute neighborhood, where residents have easy and convenient access to all the services and places needed, without relying on a car, is ideal for our town - in fact, we are nearly there. We already have one huge factor in our favor that we must take advantage of, a metro stop connecting us to downtown and beyond.

This will allow us to build mixed use developments that allow us to access everything we need just outside our door and right near transit. All we need is other designs of livable streets like those proposed in our General Plan to round it out, and we will be on our way to a much happier vibrant town.

Additionally, as someone who often sees signs in our community's homes and businesses welcoming immigrants and people of color, and supporting essential workers like nurses and food retail workers - what better way to show your support than by making it easier for them to take advantage of all the wonderful benefits our city offers by allowing them the chance to afford to live here. With the lack of housing cited in the General Plan Housing Element, our community has become very restrictive to folks without a great means of money.

Thank you...

From: Mayumi Fukushima [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 1:06 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Housing Element: Building Height Limits

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.

To Whom it May Concern:

I'd like to support the removal of building height limits in commercial corridors. If we can find ways to increase density, it seems like a reasonable place to start.

thanks,
Mayumi Fukushima

[REDACTED]
S Pasadena, CA 91030

South Pasadena Planning Commission meeting, July 21, 2020
Public comment for Item 2 - Recorded comment submitted
Submitted by Jan Marshall, [REDACTED]

This public comment is endorsed by South Pasadenans for Responsible Intelligent Growth, or SPRIG 2.0. We are a grassroots, non-partisan coalition of individual residents and merchants dedicated to ensuring that broad-based representative decision making is used in determining the future of South Pasadena.

SPRIG began in 1989 to guide community development, downtown revitalization and cultural preservation. We have rebooted for a new era of growth to ensure that we retain our small-town appeal while welcoming new neighbors.

Changing the building height is premature and should not be placed on the November ballot because:

1. The City must continue challenging the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) methodology and the numbers assigned to the City. The RHNA numbers are unrealistic without tremendous investment by taxpayers in the modernization and expansion of our water supply and distribution system, our storm drain and sewer systems, as well as the ability of our streets, schools, and community/social services to accommodate such growth.
2. The Housing Element process is only now commencing, and should rely on public participation to ensure all options, including inclusionary housing, are considered and analyzed within the current building height limit.
3. The plan updates and form-based development code is still under review and won't be completed until late fall.
4. The Draft Program Environmental Impact Report must have a feasible alternative analyzed that includes accommodating housing within the current building height limit.

SPRIG supports a November ballot on the UUT, but not on changing the building height limits.

81 Signatures

Jan Marshall
Richard Marshall
Nichole Dunville
Travis Dunville
Chuck Cummings
Gary Seigel
Catherine Douvan
Sydney Levitt
Brenda Blatt
Stuart Blatt
Christine Lovret
Yijie Tu
Sunil Varma
Stella Tripodis

Gordon Suzuki
Teresa Totaro
Marah Olsen
Gada Hayat
Aida Noueihed
Georgia Tripodis
Aristotle Katopodis
Dorothy Anderson
Lisa Marie Anayla
Casey Costa
Nadia Puklavetz
Janet Beaulieu
Phyllis Meacham
Shirley Gazell
Richard LaBrie
Carol LaBrie
Mike McClenon
Barbara McClenon
Sara Rodman
Dario Alvarez
Anne Bagasao
Liz Calvert
Sherry Plotkin
Stephen Plotkin
Tom Nuckols
Joanne Nuckols
Ken Kistingner
Tina Kistingner
Dr. William Sherman
Teresa Sherman
Dr. Michael Girvigian
Ray Girvigian
Ron Rosen
Delaine Shane
Russ Shane
Alan Ehrlich
Stephanie Ehrlich
Justin Ehrlich
Jennifer Muninnopmas
Sheila Rossi
Stephen Rossi
Brian Bright
Lawrence Abelson
Brian Bright
John Larson
Diane Larson

Brandon Fox
Andrea Fox
Lynne Heffley
Felix Gutierrez
Maria Gutierrez
Carol Koch
Steve Koch
Frank Cardenas
Ed Franzen
Kimberly Hughes
Joan Riboli
Richard Elbaum
Harry Knapp
Clarice Knapp
Florence Nelson
Barbara Eisenstein
Chuck Jones
Jacqueline Fitch
Shelly Stephens
Betty Emirhanian
Mara Coyne

From: Cathy Lee [REDACTED]
Date: July 20, 2020 at 9:59:08 PM PDT
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: 7/21/2020 - Planning Commission - Comments on the Housing Element Update

Dear Commissioners and staff,

My name is Cathy Lee and I have been a resident of this beautiful city since 2018. There are many things I love about South Pasadena, which include but are not limited to, its small town charm, the great schools, and engaged and caring members of the community.

First off, I am fully aware that the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is a state mandate which requires every city to create the necessary housing to tackle the severe state-wide housing crisis. So I know the question here is not whether to build more, but HOW. And my understanding is that the City is proposing a height limit increase to allow denser development especially in downtown and transit-areas.

I think the height limit increase, if we require the buildings to adopt the unique character and features that make our city so special, could help our city meet the RHNA goals. But the city must first adopt inclusionary housing ordinance and Housing Element goals that require developers to provide at least a 10% lower income affordable housing (with covenants).

The demographics in our city are definitely more affluent than others but I think every city, including ours, has to do its part to provide affordable housing to not only comply with RHNA mandates but to also foster an inclusive and diverse (socioeconomic and ethnic/racial) population.

As for efforts to fulfill the 926 unit shortfall, I am vehemently against using any existing open spaces near or along the arroyo seco including the ballpark area. If this pandemic and the months-long quarantine has taught us anything, our city and its residents need all of the open spaces we can get as a way to get some time outside, away from the dense parts of the city. We need to increase more open spaces, not take them away.

Finally, I also believe encouraging multi-family developments closer to transit centers, like the metro station, would help reduce amount of traffic a new development away from transit would bring. Being able to walk to the train station or a major bus stop is a major determinant of whether the new developments will cause significant transportation impacts. I urge you to consider these factors in adopting the Housing Element Update.

Thank you very much for considering my comments.

Best regards,

Cathy Lee

From: Joanne Nuckols [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 8:28 AM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Proposed Twin Office Towers, 1983/Planning Commission 7/21/20

Please read aloud:

Planning Commissioners:

I am opposed to the 45' height limit being put on the ballot which could result in a possible repeal and urge you to make that recommendation to the city council.

All one has to do is look at the twin office towers (see attached picture) proposed and approved by the city council for the west side of Fair Oaks just south of the 110 freeway to understand why the citizens in 1983 were concerned, to put it mildly, and thought it necessary to put a 45' height limit initiative on the ballot. One towers is 10 stories at 129' and the other 12 stories at 216'.

I doubt, had the proposed towers been built, that the citizens of South Pasadena today would be pointing to those buildings and the accompanying monumental traffic jams as wonderful assets to the city and not wonder what the city council was thinking at the time to have approved buildings with such negative visual and environmental impacts.

I shudder to think how many other tall multi story buildings like these would have been built had the citizens initiative failed to impose that 45' height limit.

The height limit has served South Pasadena well and allowed us to retain our small town character, even on Fair Oaks. That height limit should be continued and written into our new General Plan which is a promise by the city to the people of how the city will develop into the future.

Joanne Nuckols
[REDACTED]
South Pasadena, CA 91030

[REDACTED]

From: William Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Comment on Item 1 for 7-21-20 Meeting

Greetings:

I urge you to recommend:

- 1) That the staff report on the housing element be amended to include the schedule laid out below in the e-mail from the city planning director regarding drafting and adopting the inclusionary ordinance to require inclusion of affordable housing units in new projects. The ordinance should be adopted as an urgency measure that is enforceable upon adoption rather than next year to prevent projects from slipping in between the election and end of the year with no affordable units.
- 2) That you recommend that any city council resolution to place a measure on the November ballot to lift height limits include a provision directing the staff to develop and present for adoption to the city council an inclusionary housing ordinance as outlined in the schedule below pledged by the city planning director, with the exception that the resolution should specify that the ordinance will be immediately enforceable upon adoption.

Without an inclusionary ordinance, there is no guarantee that lifting the height limit will result in affordable units, which is the ostensible rationale for a ballot measure.

Thanks,
Bill Kelly
[REDACTED]
South Pasadena, CA 91030
[REDACTED]

E-Mail with my questions to Planning Department:

William Kelly [REDACTED]

Mon, Jul 20, 4:12 PM (18 hours ago)

to Margaret, jhanmamer, Stephanie,

Greetings:

I am preparing comments for tomorrow's Planning Commission meeting and had a few questions concerning your agenda report for the 2021 housing element update.

1) First, there is mention of the need to have an inclusionary ordinance to require affordable housing to be included in new projects, but no timeline for developing and adopting and enforcing such an ordinance is mentioned in the report, at least that I can find. Can you please reply in an e-mail with the current schedule for developing and adopting the inclusionary ordinance?

2) In terms of numbers of units for the various parcels where you are recommending lifting the height limit there are various numbers given for the numbers of units that would be built. Which numbers should be used. The slides have several numbers for each project and in some cases--the Ostrich Farms vacant sites and the Ralphs site--it appears several development scenarios are given, each with several numbers for the potential number of units. Are the development projects at each site additive or are they various options only one of which would likely be built. Also, for instance in the slide below, there are three different numbers given for the total of units that would be built. Which one is the staff aiming for?

3) In the memo it says that between 399 and 542 units would be built if the height limit is lifted at all the recommended sites, but this is inconsistent when you add up the numbers on the slides. When I add what appear to be the highest assumptions listed in the slides, assuming only one project each would be built at the Ostrich Farms vacant site and at Ralphs I come up with 880 units on the high end. What is the basis of the contention that 399 to 542 units would be built? Which numbers were added up to get this range?j

4) Finally, how many affordable units is the city aiming to see at sites where the height limit would be lifted if approved by the voters? The document is silent on that, except for saying that the 58 units at the Tyco site would be affordable units for seniors only.

If you could let me know this afternoon, I'd appreciate it as comments are due by noon tomorrow.

Thanks,
Bill Kelly



Reply from Planning Director:

Joanna Hankamer

Jul 20, 2020, 8:47 PM (13 hours ago)

to Margaret, me

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to review the material so closely. Hopefully this will help!

- 1) Anticipated Inclusionary Housing Ordinance development timeline:
 - a. July 2020 Planning Commission feedback

- b. July/Aug 2020 development of the ordinance based on feedback from PC and public
 - c. Sept 2020 public outreach, Planning Commission recommendations
 - d. Sept/October 2020 presentation to City Council for consideration of adoption
 - e. Dec 2020 enforcement. Adoption takes 1st and 2nd reading, 30 days apart. Enforcement starts 15 days after adoption if no Appeal is filed
- 2) Here is a good legend to read the slides:
- a. the blue text is information only about the precedent project. The project has been selected because we are using as inspiration for our analysis
 - b. The table below the images of the precedent project are the numbers that apply to South Pasadena. We used information from the precedent and modified it based on the South Pasadena site size, expectations for setbacks and other design controls and unit sizes. The result is two columns
 - i. Column 1 (Baseline Assumptions) is the density, height and resulting unit count we think is appropriate under current or draft GP/DTSP standards
 - ii. Column 2 (Proposed Height and Density) is what we are proposing for the site IF we were to apply this particular precedent to South Pasadena
- 3) There is a range because we have offered more than one precedent project for consideration for most of the sites. The range of 399 to 542 units is based on: 399 from adding the lowest number from Column 2 of the precedent images per site ($19+100+141+43+96=399$), and 542 from adding the highest number from Column 2 of the precedent images per site ($19+100+219+59+145=542$).
- a) The slides do not show the calculation between the difference between the baseline and the increased density/height. Here are the differences:
 - i. Gold Line Storage: $109-90=19$
 - ii. Vons: $257-157=100$
 - iii. Ralphs: $234-15=219$, or $156-15=141$
 - iv. Ostrich Farm – Vacant: $68-25=43$, $84-25=59$
 - v. Ostrich Farm – Tyco: $196-100=96$
- 4) The short answer is ~456. See the note under page 7 of the staff report and my added highlight clarification below. ..~456 units are required to be identified in the 2021 Housing Element Sites Analysis [for these 5 sites] to meet the 926-unit shortfall assuming other Staff assumptions are acceptable regarding underutilized best candidate sites (~370 units) and rezoning non-residential sites (~100 units), and that rezoning open space and single-family neighborhoods are not to be included as options at this time...
- a. However, as long as a developer stays within the maximum envelope and development standards (including those standards set by future Inclusionary Housing Policy, GP and DTSP), the City cannot dictate how many affordable units a developer must provide per site. All we can do is set the zoning envelopes and standards for quality design, and appropriate transitions to surrounding context, and incentivize affordable housing production. At this time, based on an opportunity for ~740 units to be redeveloped in the Downtown and Neighborhood Centers areas, Staff and the consultants believe we can plan for and incentivize such that we can achieve ~370 affordable units on those sites. Some projects will have less than 50% affordable units, some projects will be 100% affordable.
 - b. Please also note that while the Tyco site could accommodate affordable senior housing, we aren't suggesting to limit that site to that exact prescription. The precedent has been provided to

show what could happen. Our next step, if heights are raised, is to design the policies that would most likely result in affordable units being built on that site, and to the City's design standards.

c. Staff and the Consultants are presenting 3 options to providing these ~456 units:

i. Increasing the height at the five specific sites throughout the City (Gold Line Storage, Vons, Ralphs, Ostrich Farm – Vacant, and Ostrich Farm – Tyco), which would result in approximately 399-542 additional units

ii. Alt #1 - Increasing the height at only the seven sites within the Ostrich Farm Neighborhood Center, would result in approximately 460 additional units

iii. Alt #2 - Increasing height and density on Fair Oaks in the Downtown PLUS some version of a) and b) options since the recommendation on Fair Oaks alone won't provide enough low income units.

From: Stephanie [redacted] stephorff@earthlink.net
Sent: Monday, July 20, 2020 11:16 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Meeting Comment

From:
Stephanie Kirchen
[redacted]
South Pasadena, Ca 91030

Topic:Housing Element:Height Limits

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my extreme concern with the possibility of the removal of Height Limits for any upcoming projects in the City of South Pasadena. Our town has a unique, small town feel and aesthetic which will be extremely compromised if such limits are lifted.

Thank You,

Stephanie Kirchen

From: Tara Kawakami [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Comments 7/21

Planning Commission meeting 7/21
Regarding proposal to place repeal of 45' height limit on ballot

Planning Commission,

My name is Tara Kawakami and I am a 22 yr resident of South Pasadena. I ask you to take many things into consideration before supporting placing the height repeal on the ballot. We should not be rushing to appease the state. We are a unique community which had stayed this way thanks to the work done by those that came before us. Many of us moved here specifically because it is a low density community which prides itself on that small town feel. Our community can not currently support the proposed higher density projects. Traffic and schools are two of the things that will be negatively impacted. Growth must happen strategically with attention paid to our current infrastructure first . More time needs to be taken to consider how this can be done. At this time a repeal of the height limit should not even be a consideration. Imagine instead that your citizens oppose repealing the height limit and plan accordingly. Push back on state guidelines that do not take into account the uniqueness of our small community.

Thank you

Dear Planning Commission,

I implore you to not hastily put the height limit on the ballot prior to addressing the ability of our infrastructure to absorb that many new additions. There are several issues that need to be addressed prior to building high density properties.

- 1) Water, Sewage and Electricity. Can our system handle the influx of more sewage, water and electricity needed to provide for the new properties? If we overload our system, how much money will it take to upgrade our infrastructure? I know we have had several electrical issues around the city lately, is our infrastructure for electricity sufficient to handle the influx?
- 2) Where will the children go? We are busting at the seams in our school district. We know we are a sought-out school district, how do we plan on accommodating the influx of students to our school system?
- 3) Traffic. We need to address the traffic concerns prior to adding more cars to our streets. As a sports parent and coach here in town, a car is needed to be able to coach. Our SPLL Softball competes in other towns and as a result, I simply cannot coach without a car. How will we address the influx of cars?

We need to address those issues to make sure our developments and additions to town are sustainable. Putting the height limit on the ballot prior would be irresponsible as it protects us from high density buildings prior to our infrastructure preparations.

Regards,
Meghan Kiser

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**THE SOUTH PASADENA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

July 20, 2020

Planning Commission
City of South Pasadena
1414 Mission Street
South Pasadena, CA 91030

Honorable Commissioners,

The South Pasadena City Council is considering whether or not to include a ballot measure on the November, 2020 ballot to increase the existing 45' height limit on buildings in South Pasadena. The current 45' height limit was approved by South Pasadena voters back in 1983. The Planning Commission will be considering this initiative and providing a recommendation to the City Council. The measure would allow building height limits to be increased in certain appropriate locations (likely near major transit and transportation areas), which is one way that the city could help increase the housing zoning to be in compliance with the new State mandated Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) housing numbers. Proposed new height limits and locations would be specified in the ballot language, making it clear that only those identified properties would be allowed to be developed with the increased height.

The South Pasadena Chamber of Commerce is in support of this measure being placed on the November, 2020 ballot so that all the registered voters in South Pasadena have an opportunity to make their voices heard on this matter and urge the City Council to place it on the ballot. It also allows time for more communication and outreach by the city and others to clarify and educate our residents and voters on the pros and cons of allowing this height limit to be altered from its current limit. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter.

Warm Regards,



Laurie Wheeler
President/CEO

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