



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

Memo

Date: February 24, 2021

To: Public Record File

From: Joanna Hankamer, Planning & Community Development Director

Re: Additional Document No. 4 – Late Public Comment on Item #2

One (1) public comment was received past the deadline to submit public comments but just prior to the Planning Commission Meeting. The public comment was received from:

- Darby Whipple

The comment was forwarded to the Planning Commission for their review and was referenced during the meeting.

Joanna Hankamer

From: Joanna Hankamer
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 6:26 PM
To: Planning Commission; Diana Mahmud
Cc: Kanika Kith (kkith@southpasadenaca.gov); Elizabeth Bar-El; Teresa Highsmith
Subject: FW: Planning Commission Comments for Special Meeting Feb 23, 2021

Hello Chair, Commissioners, and Mayor,

We received a late public comment for tonight's agenda item #2. Please see below.

Thank you,

Joanna Hankamer
Director of Planning & Community Development
City of South Pasadena

From: Darby Whipple <whipped@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2021 6:10 PM
To: PlanningComments <PlanningComments@southpasadenaca.gov>
Subject: Planning Commission Comments for Special Meeting Feb 23, 2021

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Commissioners,

I provide the below assessment of the proposed ADU Ordinance to support a request to delay recommending this Ordinance to the City Council for adoption. The Ordinance in its final form has not been publicly available for long enough to fully digest and understand the proposed changes.

Although staff has worked diligently to provide a complete and thorough Ordinance for your review, there remain specific shortcomings that would benefit from further input and iteration.

To begin, the question outlined in the post presentation survey (Feb 10th) asked if the respondents agreed with height restrictions of 16 to 22 feet. Unfortunately the form of the question did not allow disagreement, yet consideration for higher or lower standards.

As for the proposed Ordinance
36.350.200

Paragraph E.1.e Standards for ADUs in front of primary dwelling

- i) "The ADU shall comply with ...side setbacks of four feet" This language could be construed to mean "only" four feet or "at least" four feet, this should be clarified.
- ii) Although "front elevation" in the vernacular may be understood to mean a facade facing the front yard, it could also mean street facing in terms of a corner lot. This term should be defined and diagramed.
- iii) "No driveway or parking area shall be allowed in front of the ADU" This language does not account for an existing drive or a driveway that serves the primary dwelling and extends to the street beyond the front facade

of an ADU. Is the intent of the language to prevent driveway access to an ADU and subsequent front yard parking? This should be clarified and diagramed.

iv) "...visible from the street" is an ambiguous term that may or may not include windows screened from view. Additionally, is vinyl meant to be an inclusive term for all forms (Vinyl clad wood core, etc.)

v) "...pitched roof if adjacent properties..." this is an ambiguous term that may or may not include one immediately adjacent property, or all adjacent properties, would it include only single family dwellings, residential vs commercial, across the street or others within a block face, etc. Furthermore, this ignores the design of the primary dwelling and potentially conflicts with consistent design on the site.

Paragraph f. Placement on Historic properties

"...front facing plane is behind the existing structure" is an ambiguous term that may mean behind the front plane of the existing or behind the rear plane of the existing. Furthermore the term "Existing structure" does not specify the primary dwelling or another accessory structure.

Paragraph 2 Floor Area

a & b) In the survey results attached question #2 shows that input is split evenly if FAR and Floor Coverage should be capped at 800 square feet. No justification in the staff report allows for the determination of capping ADUs at 800 square feet. This should be discussed further.

c) "...conversion of an existing accessory structure may have a maximum of 1200 square feet or the size of the existing structure, whichever is greater." This language is imprecise since "the definition of conversion does not allow for "any expansion"; therefore when would it be necessary to have a max of 1200 square feet? Isn't "...size of the existing..." sufficient?

Paragraph 3 Height Limits

Unfortunately the term "Story" is not defined in the SPMC, and has multiple definitions under the building code. This term should be clarified, defined and listed.

d) "However, the maximum height for a conversion ADU shall be the height of the existing structure." This language is ambiguous since a conversion cannot expand a structure; therefore when would a conversion ADU not be the same height of the existing structure?

Paragraph G. Development Standards Applicable to all ADUs

1.a. WINDOWS ON 2nd FLOOR

The criteria outlined here are unclear if this means "non-opening" windows within the lower five feet. Additionally it appears to allude to stained glass being prohibited. The use of the term "...bottom of the window..." isn't specific enough to indicate if a fixed non-operational frosted window could be installed, or if the frame of the window is considered "bottom of the window" and therefore no part of a window may be below five feet from the floor. In no way does the staff report expound on or explain the justification for these requirements. This should be discussed further.

1.b. The term "facing interior" is ambiguous since an ADU behind the primary with view of the front yard/street could be considered interior or external. Or equally confusing for a double frontage lot or a parcel with multiple street facades. There are no criteria or diagrams to explain the intent of the language and should be discussed further.

1.c. Setbacks for 2nd floor ADUs creates a potential conflict with Conversion Units with an existing 2nd floor. Furthermore, there is provision for structures that cannot meet the requirements; either for existing legalization or future conversion.

1.d. The criteria for articulation and offset do not specify the length of offset that may be calculated, such as dormers. Furthermore, it potentially overlooks other street facing facades which would tend to have greater impacts on the character of the block face, rather than limited or non-existent view from neighboring properties. This should be discussed further.

5. The term "mini-split" is both overly specific and vague. There are multiple terms to describe the HVAC system, yet the item being limited is actually the "condenser" and therefore exist regardless of the type of

system it is attached to. HVAC systems are typically allowed in setbacks, with screening or separation. Is the intent to limit the size of a unit allowed within a setback? No discussion is provided in the staff report to describe the thought process or set parameters for the exception to setback.

Paragraph H Parking

1. The list of exemptions are dated and imply a condition of scarcity, when in reality only a small portion of the city is outside the 1/2 mile radius from transit. If information was provided to map the areas outside all of these parameters it may be apparent that the requirement of parking be removed entirely. The staff report does not address this in any discussion and should be shared in a graphic.

Paragraph I High Risk Fire Areas

1. The language "...a garage may be converted to an ADU if two parking spaces are provided elsewhere..." does not take into account partial conversions or single car garages. Is the intent to replace parking on a one for one basis? This is not discussed in the staff report and should be given more time for contemplation.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important topic.

Darby Whipple

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