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**Sent:** Tuesday, December 13, 2022 3:44 PM  
**To:** PlanningComments  
**Subject:** Public Comment: Item 3 - Density; Transitional Housing Stay; Transportation Accessibility

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There are three topics related to Agenda Item 3 that cause me concern. I'd like to discuss those topics with you and learn more about the considerations given to them, whether more can be brought under scrutiny that was not before seen as an option or matter of concern.

## **1. Population Density**

The state has mandated that we increase the number of dwelling units to 2,065 more. Although I've learned that number is to be reached over a six-year span of time, it is still a huge number of dwellings. At this time, it seems it will lead to overcrowding and change the atmosphere and quality of life in our city.

From my vantagepoint, South Pasadena does not have the resources available (nor in the projected six years) to support that great an increase in population. There are many factors that impact supporting that growth. Among them are sufficient number of seats in schools, and number of schools, to properly educate our new, maturing society.

Some examples of where development has succeeded were shown to me. The locations are much larger than the ones currently under the magnifying glass here in South Pasadena. Again, to use a location such as the Pavilions or the Oak Tree Inn lots is a matter of strangling the landscape. The lots are too small. One of the examples shown to me is in Sacramento. It is a wonderful development. It also appears to be the size of the Von's (with its ancillary businesses) lot. However, Von's is not being considered for development purposes.

It would be helpful to be able to see some type of rendering of the proposed development on the current 20 lots (especially the smaller ones) so there can be a better appreciation of the impact by all parties.

There's an assumption that parking availability will increase in proportion to the number of dwellings. If not, again the sting of becoming yet another Los Angeles County Koreatown conditions will result. Again, that is not a characteristic of the community-oriented South Pasadena. However, I am aware that this body is investigating the parking allotment question and I feel comfortable that adequate allowances will be achieved.

During a recent conversation, I was advised the question of challenging the dwelling unit increase has been visited and failed. There were a number of factors that vitiating against acceding to the reduced number of mandated dwellings. One factor (which I'll discuss below) had to do with South Pasadena is considered a transportation rich city, because it has the Gold Line running through it.

## **2. Transitional Housing and Allowable Residence Duration**

Matters relating to transitional housing, emergency shelters, and low barrier navigation centers are also among the matters that will go into finalizing the Housing Element. From my interpretation of the terms "transitional housing" and "low barrier navigation center", the two entities are basically the same except one is more focused

on housing and rehabilitating those who have been convicted of a crime and spent time being incarcerated. They are similar in some respects, different in significant other ways.

During the Commission and Council special joint meeting of November 8, there was mention of the amount of time allowed to reside in the transitional housing - a minimum of six months. Six months may be the legislative minimum but it is not realistic for actualizing a person's ability to successfully prepare and make a transition back into mainstream life.

There are issues with regard to several matters. Enduring long lines to have an appointment with what is known as a case manager (a social worker) that can last a full day, or even be extended to another day (or more) to complete the initial steps toward simply getting admitted and start receiving services. This is the point where the emergency shelter serves the purpose of buffering the client until they are able to be "placed" into housing.

There are regaining items that need attention. One of them is obtaining identity documents. Another is then using the identity documents in order to start the flow of funds for transportation allowances, food (EBT), and other necessities.

The clients may have been unemployed for an extended period of time. They will require coaching and assistance on not only preparing a resume but also how to conduct a job search, how to approach an employer or apply for work via an agency or an online submission site. The client will need coaching on proper performance during an interview, in addition to appropriate worksite decorum.

Case workers will have at least weekly meetings with their clients to monitor progress on things such as making deposits into savings accounts (or else hold them responsible for depositing funds into a transition reserve). Banks require identity documents in order to open accounts. Although with the documents in hand, this matter is not inordinate but getting to that point can take time.

The client also needs the support and coaching of proper financial and budgetary management. Proper spending practices need to be developed, in addition to knowing the importance of making timely payments, use of credit, ability to identify the "must haves", "needs", and "wants" on their priority lists.

Language and communication skills are also a high priority and do not happen overnight. Good skills (not necessarily award-winning or stellar) are developed over time, as well as social behavior modifications that match the proper standards of life - including adherence to common rules and laws.

Then there is the matter of not only saving enough funds for a first and last months' rent, but the funds that will help buoy the client through their renewed mainstream life.

All of these matters, as well as some not mentioned here, take time. Shelters such as Good Shepherd for Battered Women and Children (which offers a two-year residency), Catholic Charities, Ocean Park (in Santa Monica) and similar entities, allow a minimum of nine months' stay which can be extended when circumstances necessitate doing so.

Many of these types of shelters also accommodate clients who have various types of impairments, physical, non-visible, as well as cognitive and emotional.

The point is, focusing on insisting that a client leave transitional housing after residing there for a minimum of six months is not the most feasible bar. It takes much more time because of the social and economic demands that are impacting the clients. If we are striving to be humanitarian in our efforts, let us consider allowing a reasonable amount of time to make a successful transition back into mainstream life, not creating a precipice that plunges the client back into the abyss from which they've climbed.

### 3. Transportation Accessibility

The previous ad hoc committee that attempted to challenge the dwelling unit increase learned South Pasadena is considered a transit-rich city, whereas its neighbors Alhambra and San Marino are not because South Pasadena has the wonderful benefit of the Gold Line running through it.

The Gold Line runs through the center of the city. Its transits between downtown Los Angeles and Pasadena run at approximately 10-20 minute intervals.

While those intervals are attractive, the South Pasadena stop is on Mission Street which boasts a public transportation MTA Line 258 which runs in an east-west direction every 60 minutes. That line can take a person from MTA Line 260 on Fair Oaks Avenue (in South Pasadena) to as far west as Figueroa Street in Los Angeles.

The MTA Line 260, like the Gold Line, runs at approximately 20-minute, north-south intervals almost 24 hours a day.

It was argued that people in neighboring cities can use the Gold Line to reach employment opportunities, thereby making South Pasadena a lucrative transit location. That assumption not realistic. The connection points, let alone the routes of these transit options, do not go into any of the areas that have hilly terrain. People who have mobility challenges are limited to walking (if able), bicycling (if able), or using shared ride for the remainder of their commute (if it is affordable).

Again, I urge a challenge of the dwelling increase based on the argument that "transit-rich" South Pasadena is a figment of imagination in someone's mind and is definitely NOT a reality. South Pasadena is a transit-challenged city and needs additional resources that begin to address the multiple layers of social necessities that exist in all locations.

Time constraints prevent me from examining additional proposed documents for this evening's meeting. However, I hope these points have been illuminating and instructive in regard to what some residents are experiencing with regard to performance under the HCD.

Viva

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