

CORRESPONDENCE

Jomsky, Mark

From: Greg Gunther <ggunther@frogkick.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2013 11:31 AM
To: Bertoni, Vince; Reimers, Scott; Chima, Vicrim
Cc: Bogaard, Bill; Bryant, Joel; De La Cuba, Vannia; Madison, Steve; Masuda, Gene; McAustin, Margaret; Robinson, Jacque; Tornek, Terry; Beck, Michael; Jomsky, Mark
Subject: General Plan > Add'l Expertise Needed

Importance: High

Dear Vince, Scott and Vicrim –

Greg Gunther here, writing as a Pasadena resident about the current General Plan Update discussions.

I've been left with a nagging concern after the April 8 City Council Meeting and I'm hoping that your office can arrange to have the appropriate expertise available to help address this issue in a professional way.

Frankly, I was bit dismayed by the last Public Comment (from a Planning Commissioner no less) which made an unsupported assertion that Pasadena's outlying neighborhoods will not thrive unless growth in the Central District is suppressed. Regrettably, this comment also seemed to be endorsed by a member of the City Council.

I find this "Downtown Containment" claim to be counter-intuitive for it seems to ignore a fundamental market truth... As proud as we are of our city, Pasadena does NOT exist as a closed system that leaves investors to choose only between OUR Central District or OUR neighborhood nodes. Rather, downtown-focused projects that cannot find suitable opportunity in our Central District will simply seek out other nearby areas (such as Glendale or Burbank) that offer the attributes their business model requires. And the resulting decline of our Central District will also lead inevitably to a decline in Pasadena's overall civic and fiscal health.

While I worry that this erroneous "Containment" perspective might inadvertently put the economic vitality of Pasadena at great risk, I also recognize my amateur status here. Can you help both the Council and the general public get their arms around this by educating us with current thinking about this issue? Even if the answer we get doesn't support my preconceptions, I believe we should all be well-grounded here.

Towards this end, please invite one (or both) of the consultants that have helped us develop this Draft General Plan to the upcoming Council Meeting on April 22. I'm not sure which consulting resource is most appropriate to address this question (that is, Woodie Tescher's policy planning expertise or Stan Hoffman's urban economics expertise) – but I sincerely believe that they will be able to shed some light on this critical question.

Please help our Councilmembers make an informed and responsible decision about the future of Central District with a solid understanding about its implications for the future of ALL of Pasadena.

Thanks in advance for your consideration –
// Greg Gunther

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April 18, 2013

The Honorable Bill Bogaard, Mayor
Members of the City Council
City of Pasadena
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

Attn: Mark Jomsky, City Clerk

Subject: Proposed Draft General Plan Update and Draft EIR

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Council Members:

I am a resident of the Central District and serve on the Board of Directors of the Downtown Pasadena Neighborhood Association. I respectfully request that the following comments be considered for inclusion in the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Draft General Plan Update.

Alternatives for the Purposes of the EIR

According to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), the EIR must evaluate a "reasonable range" of Alternatives to the Project. These Alternatives must *offer substantial environmental advantages over the proposed Project* and may be *feasibly and successfully accomplished to meet the basic objectives of the Project considering the economic, environmental, social and technological factors involved*. [Citizens of Goleta Valley vs. Board of Supervisors]. Further, according to CEQA, such evaluation must provide information sufficient enough to permit a reasonable choice of Alternatives for decision-makers in terms of environmental impacts.

Recommended Alternative

One reasonable and feasible Alternative is one which preserves the current jobs/housing balance of 1.87 jobs per housing unit in Pasadena. Based upon an alternative that calls for 147,732 jobs citywide and 71,327 in the Central District, the number of housing units to be evaluated would be 17,888 additional housing units citywide and 8,092 additional housing units in the Central District.

Reasonably Expected Benefits of Recommended Alternative: The reasonably expected benefits of having a more stable balance of commercial and residential uses in the city,

particularly in the Central District, are that there will be: (a) more residents within the Primary Trade Area who can walk/bike to retail centers, groceries, and services; (b) improved opportunities to live within walking/biking distance of places of employment; (c) reduced personal transportation costs; (d) reduced housing costs achieved through denser, mixed-use living; (e) reduced personal travel time, vehicle miles traveled and air pollution, and (f) greater density which will shift more trips away from private vehicles to travel modes which emit fewer greenhouse gases. *(Please see Attachment No. 1 for further documentation.) In terms of traffic impacts, the environmental analysis must be based upon an urban traffic model, not a suburban one.*

Recommendation Related to the Implementation Section of the General Plan Update

Any additional development over the next 20 years should be subject to the implementation of a **Form-Based Code** *in order to build the city of choice, not default.* Therefore, it is recommended that the Implementation Section of the proposed General Plan Update include the preparation of “Form-Based Code” for the Specific Plan areas of the City, with the Central District Specific Plan as the first priority.

Summary Rationale

The approach outlined above will allow the City Council to make a more informed decision regarding the appropriate development level for the City. This approach also will allow the City Council to more carefully calibrate development levels based upon the environmental impacts of the proposed Project and reasonable Alternatives thereto.

Respectfully submitted,

Marsha V. Rood

Attachment No. 1: *Excerpt from Julie Campoli, Made for Walking - Density and Neighborhood Form; Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2012*

Attachment No. 1

Excerpt from Julie Campoli, *Made for Walking – Density and Neighborhood Form*; Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2012; Page 11

A more compact, transit-rich urban form will help reduce VMT by giving many more people alternative ways to move around. And when driving is necessary, we won't have to go quite as far on a daily basis. It will take many years to reach the point where we see the benefits of these changes, but within a generation we could cut our transportation-related emissions to levels that will align them with those of other developed nations.

URBAN FORM MATTERS

It may seem obvious to anyone shuttling from their child's soccer game to the hardware store to the supermarket that a low-density land use pattern demands more time behind the wheel. But, would we drive less if we lived in denser cities, and would an altered urban landscape help slow climate change?

Three recent empirical studies analyzed the relationship between land use patterns and driving habits by measuring the impacts of a more compact urban form on VMT. *Growing Cooler* (Ewing et al. 2008), *Moving Cooler* (Cambridge Systematics 2009), and *Driving and the Built Environment* (Transportation Research Board 2009) all concluded that developing at higher population densities and mixing land uses will reduce the number of miles Americans drive each year. Locating jobs and people in close proximity would shorten trips, and people would be more likely to walk or ride a bike. Greater density also would make public transit possible by shifting more trips away from private vehicles and toward modes that emit fewer greenhouse gases.

The studies diverged on the question of how much difference such a density change would make, but all three focused on a target date of 2050. *Growing Cooler* envisioned a scenario in which we could be driving 20 to 40 percent fewer miles and lowering our greenhouse gas emissions by 18 to 36 percent (Ewing et al. 2008). The authors of *Moving Cooler* (Cambridge Systematics 2009) outlined various levels of reductions based on how aggressively we change our land use practices, estimating that expanding current best practices could achieve a 20 percent reduction. A maximum effort, including comprehensive growth boundaries, minimum required densities, and jobs/housing

balance, as well as nonland use strategies could reduce emissions by 60 percent. In *Driving and the Built Environment* the Transportation Research Board (2009) estimated a more modest reduction in the range from 1 to 11 percent.

The divergent opinions resulted from different assumptions about how likely we are to change our land use policies and how quickly our growth rate might alter the built environment through redevelopment. Critics of *Driving and the Built Environment* said the report underestimated the market appeal of compact development, and that changing demographics and rising gas prices will increase the potential for a shift toward denser urban forms (Ewing, Nelson, and Bartholomew 2009). Indeed, recent trends covered in chapter 6 indicate they may be right.

These three studies are not the final word, as research on the topic continues to show. A 2011 land use-transportation modeling analysis of the Charlotte, North Carolina, area found that long-term reductions of CO₂ emissions are possible by shifting to a more compact development pattern. Comparing a high-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented model with a low-density, auto-dependent pattern, the study determined that climate-warming carbon dioxide, along with the pollutants carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, and hydrocarbons, would be 5.5 to 7.1 percent lower overall in the dense transit model (Rodriguez et al. 2011). Combined with better fuel efficiency and alternative energy use, this shift could make a significant difference by 2050. The authors stress, however, that the scenario they modeled will not be sufficient. Since they expect population growth and the associated increase in travel to double CO₂ emissions over the next 40 years, an even more aggressive reduction in urban footprints must be paired with breakthrough automotive technologies to slow the build-up of greenhouse gases.

The most dramatic reductions in VMT would come from combining land use changes with other strategies that create economic incentives for driving less. Pay-as-you-drive auto insurance, congestion pricing, higher parking fees, intercity tolls, and other pricing policies can induce people to combine trips or leave a car at home (U.S. DOT 2010). In the absence of a higher gas tax, these

John G. Grech
516 S. Oak Knoll Avenue, #9
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April 17, 2013

City Council
City of Pasadena
100 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

Re: General Plan Densities for "CD-38"

Dear Council Members:

I am writing in connection with the current City Staff recommendation as part of the General Plan update to reduce the allowable residential densities within the area designated as "CD-38". This is a two block wide area between S. Hudson Ave. and S. El Molino Ave. north of the properties fronting on California Blvd. and south of the Pasadena Unified School District's headquarters properties and McKinley School.

For over 50 years this area has been zoned for 48 or more units per acre. Last fall a Staff report to the General Plan Update Advisory Committee ("GPUAC") contained a recommendation to reduce the density in the above mentioned area to 32 units per acre (a full one third reduction). When I inquired about this, Staff stated that this was an oversight and it was never their intention to recommend reducing (down zone) the existing densities within this area.

Staff made a presentation to the GPUAC at their December 6, 2012 meeting at which time they stated that a mistake had been made and that Staff recommended that the existing zoning and residential densities remain unchanged. As part of this presentation, Staff provided the following rationale:

1. Many properties within this area are already developed at or near 48 units per acre (well above 32 units per acre in many cases).
2. The current zoning was designed and functions as a "step down" or "transitional zone" between the commercial zoning on South Lake Ave. and the easterly side of S. Hudson Ave. and the 32 unit per acre zoning which begins on the westerly side of S. El Molino Ave.
3. The same "step down" or "transitional zone" exists on the easterly side of S. Lake Ave. The entire 2 block area east of South Lake Ave. between S. Mentor all the way to the Cal Tech campus between California Blvd. and Del Mar Blvd. is zoned RM-48 with the one exception being the historic residential development at 1000 San Pasqual. So this "step down" zoning is consistent and appropriate for both sides of S. Lake Ave.

4. The existing RM-48 zoning in these 2 block areas on either side of S. Lake Ave. is an appropriate, medium density that is consistent with, albeit at the low end, of other densities adjacent to commercial and retail corridors and helps support the businesses located within those corridors.
5. People who live in this area are able to walk to the grocery stores (Pavillions, Trader Joe's, and Fresh & Easy), restaurants, retails stores, coffee houses and other retail establishments, and places of employment (offices) rather than using their cars.

After considering the above, the members of GPUAC present at the December 6 meeting voted unanimously to retain the existing RM-48 zoning in this area.

This matter was then considered by the Planning Commission at two of their meetings at which time several speakers expressed a desire to have the existing density reduced to 32 units per acre in order to help protect some existing structures within this area and thus help protect the character of the area. There was also some discussion about a desire to preserve whatever "affordable" housing, if any, that may presently exist.

According to a review by City Staff, there are only 3 structures within this area that are designated as historical structures. Two of these are Designated Landmarks and the other is listed on the National Register. Due to this and the other City regulations in place that protect historical structures, these and any similar properties within this area appear to already have reasonable protections in place. It is important to note that this 2 block area is in no way unique in this respect. There are many other areas within the City, including the Central District, that have a residential density of 48 units per acre or higher with a greater concentration of older, low density and possibly "historical" structures and no one I am aware of seems to be concerned about those areas. So I fail to see why this area is being singled out.

As far as affordable housing is concerned, I don't believe that this area contains much, if any, affordable housing. There may be a handful of older rental properties with rents that are below those of some of the newer developments, but these properties are increasingly being remodeled and significantly upgraded after which their rental rates are being increased to relatively high levels. This trend will undoubtedly continue. Furthermore, any redevelopment of any of these properties will result in either the inclusion of some affordable units or the payment of substantial Inclusionary Housing In-Lieu Fees which should more than offset the potential loss of any below market rate (but certainly not "affordable") units that may be lost.

The primary reason that I am very concerned about any changes to the existing zoning is due to the fact that my family owns a vacant 28,000+ sq. ft. parcel in the 500 block of South Oak Knoll Ave. that we hope to develop in the foreseeable future. Changing the density from 48 units per acre to 32 units per acre would constitute a full one-third loss of density which would result in a catastrophic economic loss to my family.

Our lot is vacant so there would be no demolition of any affordable housing nor the demolition of any historical structures. This lot backs up to a 30 unit apartment building developed at a density of 46 units per acre and is across the street from a 47 unit condominium project developed at 48 units per acre. In fact, the MAJORITY (7 of 13) of

the residential properties on this block of S. Oak Knoll Ave. ARE ALREADY DEVELOPED AT DENSITIES THAT EXCEED 32 UNITS PER ACRE.

Due to all of the above, it does not appear that there is adequate justification to down zone this area. As stated above, this block of S. Oak Knoll Ave. is already predominately developed at densities that exceed 32 units per acre. There are no historical structures or any affordable housing that are threatened. The 48 unit per acre density is a mirror image of the opposite side of S. Lake Ave. and is an appropriate transition density from the S. Lake Ave. commercial corridor.

Thank you for your consideration of the above. Please feel free to contact me in the event any of you would like to discuss this matter or walk the area with me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John G. Grech".

John G. Grech



April 18, 2013

Mayor Bill Bogaard and Pasadena City Council
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109
VIA E-MAIL

Re: Pasadena General Plan

Dear Mayor Bogaard and Council Members.

The Pasadena Chamber of Commerce appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed General Plan. While it has been a frustrating experience, we also appreciate the many opportunities we have been provided to participate and give input as the General Plan process evolved over the past few years.

Over the course of the General Plan conversations, the Pasadena Chamber noticed consistent concerns expressed by both businesses and the community related to our local Pasadena economy. Residents at the community meetings and business interests alike repeatedly asked that the General Plan support job development and job creation, as well as a strong and diverse local economy that can support the level of services and provide the environment we all appreciate in Pasadena. The General Plan that is being proposed, especially for downtown Pasadena, does just the opposite.

At the Pasadena Chamber, we appreciate the addition of housing units in the Central District. Additional residents in the Central District area will help support our businesses, decrease our dependence on automobiles and contribute to a vital and interesting downtown for residents, visitors and those who work in Pasadena.

We are very concerned with the recommendation to impose commercial development caps, especially if those caps are at the reduced numbers recommended in the land use tables and diagrams provided by staff. 2,500,000 square foot development caps are overly restrictive and will hamstring the ability of the city to grow as the economy rebounds and may serve to stall Pasadena's economic recovery.

To be competitive in the current and future environment, Pasadena's cost for retail, office, R&D and tech/flex space must be competitive with our neighboring cities or companies will do what we have seen in the past couple of years and move to cities that are less expensive and can offer similar amenities, if not of the same quantity or quality. By cutting the development levels to minimal numbers, and capping development at these lower levels, we will further increase the value of developable properties in Pasadena. Though this may seem like a desirable outcome, it is not when faced with competition from our neighboring cities where land, development, entitlement, tax and use and rent costs are lower.

Imposing restrictively low commercial development caps will further reinforce Pasadena's reputation as a city that is hostile to development and economic growth. Allowing for amendment to the General Plan is not a solution as amending the General Plan is time consuming, costly and extremely rare.

The Pasadena Chamber of Commerce would support a Central District development level of 5,000,000 square feet. We would prefer to not impose caps, at any level, but provide for a mechanism that allows for a straightforward and inexpensive process to increase the development level over the life of this proposed General Plan.

Your own Economic Development Strategic Plan Task Force identified a strong need for Pasadena to be open to development, encouraging of investment in our economy and willing to embrace economic growth. We urge the Pasadena City Council to support a vibrant local economy that can generate jobs for the community, amenities for our residents and funding to support city services and important public works projects.

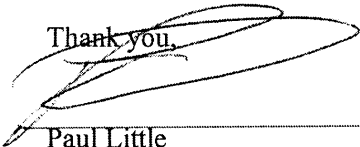
The Pasadena Chamber of Commerce appreciates the proposals for sustainable development and the creation of bicycle and walking oriented development nodes around major intersections and transit hubs. We would caution, however, that for those nodes to be truly sustainable, there may need to be a significant increase in residential density within a walking distance of each node. There simply aren't enough residents in those areas to make any business economically feasible unless it can attract a significant number of driving customers.

The Pasadena Chamber of Commerce also supports the efforts of the East Pasadena Business Association to amend the Transit Oriented Development parking restrictions around the Sierra Madre Villa Station.

The Pasadena Chamber is in accord with most of the changes suggested to the guiding principles. We appreciate the broadening of the education principle to take into consideration the broad array of educational opportunities in Pasadena. We remain very concerned about language that requires new development to be "in harmony with" the existing built environment. We all want an excellent built environment in Pasadena. Restricting the creativity of architects and builders by forcing conformity with existing buildings may result in the development of very uninteresting designs. Pasadena should try to attract the caliber of design and architecture that will make buildings constructed over the next 30 years as important a part of our built environment as those built more than 70 years ago.

We appreciate your time and deliberations on this matter and encourage you to consider Pasadena's economic future, and the quality of life that is dependent on a strong economy, as you make your decision on the General Plan.

Thank you,



Paul Little
President and Chief Executive Officer
Cc: M.Beck, M. Jomsky, V. Bertoni

Jomsky, Mark

Subject: FW: City Council Hearing - Zoning on Lake Avenue between Mountain and Washington

From: "steveyracer98@gmail.com" <steveyracer98@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, 18 Apr 2013 15:20:02 -0700

To: Margo Morales <mfuller@cityofpasadena.net>, Margaret McAustin <mmcaustin@cityofpasadena.net>

Subject: City Council Hearing - Zoning on Lake Avenue between Mountain and Washington

The Honorable Councilmember McAustin,

As you are likely already aware, the city council will be hearing matters regarding zoning restrictions along Lake Avenue on Monday April 22nd. Specifically the council will be considering relaxing zoning restrictions for the businesses along Lake Avenue to allow certain areas to become mixed use zones which would allow residential living above businesses along Lake Avenue.

This presents a very large concern for my neighbors and I and we would all respectfully request that you support our neighborhood in opposing these zoning changes, and maintain the area along Lake Avenue as commercial only. Further, we would also ask that the council reconsider the area along Lake Avenue between Claremont and Washington, and convert that area from mixed use to commercial only.

Over the last few years we have seen the negative effect of having residences above the businesses that are located there, especially the area adjacent to Lake on Washington. There has been drug activity, gang activity, noise and other disturbances, and a murder in the last two years alone. Expanding this area to include residences will surely only add to the problem.

We are at the leading edge of the Bungalow Heaven district, which is a historical and landmark neighborhood in Pasadena. It would be a terrible thing to introduce any zoning changes that would negatively affect such a wonderful neighborhood.

Please stand with us in opposing any expansion of the zoning for Lake Avenue between Mountain and Claremont, and to return the zoning area on Lake between Claremont and Washington to commercial only, before any further development ruins this great neighborhood.

Thank you very much.

Steven J. Sturm
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626.484.5821

Jomsky, Mark

Subject: Concerns about Potential Zoning Changes

From: Lily Martini <lilymartini@gmail.com>

Date: Thu, 18 Apr 2013 16:45:59 -0700

To: Margo Morales <mfuller@cityofpasadena.net>, Margaret McAustin <mmcaustin@cityofpasadena.net>

Subject: Concerns about Potential Zoning Changes

The Honorable Councilmember McAustin,

I, Lily Martini, a homeowner in the prestigious historical landmark district of Pasadena, CA, have been made aware of some potential critical changes to my neighborhood and its' integrity. The city council will be hearing matters regarding zoning restrictions along North Lake Avenue on Monday April 22nd. Specifically, the council will be considering relaxing zoning restrictions for the businesses along North Lake Avenue to allow certain areas to become mixed use zones, allowing residential living above businesses; granting varying height allowances above 30 feet.

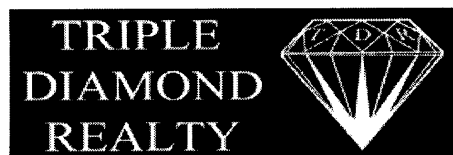
These matters pose a very large concern for my neighbors and I. I would like to respectfully request that you, as our districts' representative, support our historic neighborhood in opposing these zoning changes and maintaining the area along North Lake Avenue as Commercial only. More specifically, I would also ask that the council stand firm to support the area along North Lake Avenue, between Claremont Avenue and Washington Boulevard, and oppose the designation of mixed use; as only a Commercial zoning designation.

Over the last few years we have seen the negative effect of having residences above the businesses that are located here. Especially the area adjacent to Lake Ave. on Washington Blvd. There has been drug activity, gang activity, excessive noise, crowd control issues, and other disturbances; not to mention a couple of devastating murders in the last two years alone. Expanding this area to include more residences will guarantee additional problems. We are at the leading edge of the Bungalow Heaven district; a historic and landmark neighborhood. Which the American Planning Association (APA) previously acknowledged and designated our very own Bungalow Heaven, Pasadena, CA as one of ten great neighborhoods to live. This designation was based on our district exemplifying exceptional character and highlighting the role planners and planning play in creating communities of lasting value.

Together, the residents in this prestigious neighborhood and the Councilmember, need to uphold the praises received for this historic district's planner's and their planning. Please help us keep our historic district's exceptional character strong, uncompromised, and a great neighborhood to live in.

Yours sincerely,

--



Lily Martini, Realtor

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* Please *consider* the ENVIRONMENT B4 PRINTING this e-mail *
