

Petition against the new zoning amendments October 2020

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We strongly oppose the zoning code amendment to Single-Family Standards. In particular, we strongly oppose the proposed restriction to limit "new houses to less than 35 percent above the median floor area of houses within 500 feet". In short, the proposed limit is a "one-size-fits-all" approach that fails to account for the unique circumstances of many neighborhoods within Pasadena and will unfairly impose extreme and unreasonable burdens on many homeowners (in particular those that owns a large lot of land). We will outline my reasoning below:





The new proposed requirement fails to account for the land size of the property in question. As a result, a house that sits on a 15,000 square lot will be limited to the same buildable area as a house that sits on a 5,000 square lot. It will disproportionately and unfairly punish owners with larger than average land size within their neighborhood. In the two examples provided by the city Staff, in example 1, the regulation would impose a 1,650 s/f (on a 10,327 s/f lot) while in example 2, a maximum house sizes of 1,832 s/f would be imposed (on an 8,735 s/f lot). Although the lot in example 1 is 20% larger than example 2, the maximum house sizes would be 11% smaller.

Furthermore, this "one size fit all" approach fails to account for the unique circumstances of many different neighborhoods within Pasadena. For example, not only does the new requirement fail to take into account land size, but it also fails to provide sufficient weight to homes located within larger size lots in the same 500 feet radius. By definition, within the same 500 feet radius, more homes located in smaller lots will be included in the calculation than homes in larger lots. This is against the underlying objective of preserving the neighborhood.

The proposed discretionary review process is not an adequate solution, since it would impose an additional and unnecessary burden on homeowners seeking to exercise their existing rights under the current zoning code. Effectively making renovation and new build prohibitively expensive and time-consuming.

In an era of affordable housing crises, the proposed regulation would further limit housing affordability, by discouraging and in some cases, prohibiting current homeowners from being able to expand their current homes to accommodate multiple generations.

We hereby urge the City of Pasadena to remove/prevent such unfair and unreasonable regulation from damaging the currently functioning building code.

Name	Address	Date	Signature
James Chan	621 Castano Ave Pasadena	10/12/20	
Joe Chan	399 Hamilton Ave	10/15/20	
Joe Chan	2305 E Del Mar Blvd	10/15/20	
Joe Chan	1780 Keystone St	10/15/20	

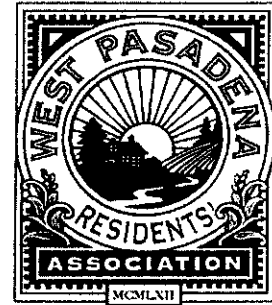
10/19/2020

Item 21

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2020 OCT 19 AM 9:36

WEST PASADENA
CITY OFFICE



October 17, 2020

Honorable Mayor Terry Tornek
Members of the City Council
City of Pasadena
175 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

RE: Mansionization Phase 2: Zoning Code Amendment: Single Family Residential Development Standards (RS-1, RS-2, RS-4, RS-6)

Dear Mayor Tornek and Council Members:

The West Pasadena Residents' Association (WPRA) appreciates the opportunity to again comment on Phase 2 of the "mansionization" Zoning Code Amendment referenced above, given the significant adverse impacts of this practice in our residential neighborhoods.

Although we generally concur with several of the proposed amendments outlined in the staff report: architectural compatibility for materials and finishes, height limitations, fenestration limitations, some oversight for accessory structures, setbacks, and expanded notification measures, we would like to make the following observations and recommendations to further reinforce the ordinance:

- ♦ Neighborhood consistency regulations and guidelines should be clear and explicit. Often vague and indeterminate guidelines leave a great deal to interpretation that can result in misinterpretation at best, or in willful disregard—with uncertain and or lamentable consequences. It would be far more effective to broaden the suggested 500-foot compatibility radius to minimum 800 feet.
- ♦ The Planning Commission, at its September 9 meeting asked to "*Adopt neighborhood compatibility requirements and calculations, similar to those found in Section 17.29 (Hillside Overlay Districts), but administered through a ministerial plan check process.*" (p. 4 of staff report). In addition to story poles, it would be desirable to require digital modeling. Often it is difficult to visualize the spatial relationships from two-dimensional drawings and schematics, and story poles alone only show bulk. The use of story poles and digital modeling *combined* may clarify intent and provide effective visual and spatial references.

WEST PASADENA RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
POST OFFICE BOX 50252 ▪ PASADENA, CA 91115

10/19/2020
Item 21

- ♦ It is important that accessory structures and accessory dwelling units comply in style and scale with the principal structure. It is not sufficient that the accessory structure is not visible from the public right-of-way; an incompatible structure is often visible from neighboring yards and homes. An incompatible and/or oversized accessory structure impacts views, privacy, sunlight, vegetation, aesthetics, and value of adjacent properties and encroaches on the rights of the adjoining neighbors. To this end, we are concerned that the staff recommends not returning to the Planning Commission at a later date to discuss design guidelines to address architectural compatibility. We understand staff's concern with attempting to establish architectural design compatibility where it does not currently exist, but it would seem that continuing to explore design guidelines through the Planning Commission would be a worthwhile effort.

- ♦ We would recommend strict time limits to complete remodels and new construction. Living adjacent to or in the proximity of endless construction erodes the quality of life and comfort of neighbors, and inhibits the use of their own property. Further, simultaneous construction activity (for example, next door and across the street, or behind) creates cumulative (sometimes insupportable) disruption and causes constant problems for the affected neighbor. Noise, parking intrusion, dust, construction traffic, trash, and safety breaches are continuous and unsupervised. We ask that the ordinance strictly regulate such activity and explicitly outline protections of neighbors who are being subjected to months (sometimes years!) of such insult.

- ♦ At times, the allowable ratio of the house square footage to the lot square footage (FAR)—because of variable lot sizes—does not ensure consistency in massing and scale. New construction or remodels that overwhelm and dwarf surrounding homes, *even when they are compliant under current standards*, need be rethought and revised. The norm should be established by the median square footage of the existing neighborhood homes—as suggested by staff—and not the size of the lot. However, 35% overage, as recommended in the staff report, is much too generous and will not sufficiently curb mansionization. The overage should be limited to a maximum of 25%.

- ♦ To our disappointment, to date ministerial plan check process has recurrently been ineffective and casual. Stringent and consistent review and confirmation of plans need to be in place prior to beginning construction. Once construction begins, systematic and knowledgeable oversight and inspections need to be conducted. There have been too many instances where deviations have been allowed or overlooked, and in some instances, remodels have turned into demolitions. Even designated or eligible historic homes have not been spared when oversight has been uninformed, casual, or neglected. Discretionary review has the potential to enhance this process and provide opportunity for public awareness and comment.

- ♦ Appropriate and meaningful penalties—both financial and operational—need to be in place to discourage the current trend of flaunting regulations to achieve owner, developer,

and/or speculator objectives. The existing negligible sanctions have not succeeded in serving as effective deterrents. Pasadena's historic and neighborhood fabric is continuing to erode, without any adverse consequences for the perpetrators.

- "Draft Design Review Guidelines for Single Family Residences," prepared in 2018 by John Kaliski Architects make a number of good recommendations and provide descriptive illustrations that could provide helpful references. The Planning Commission has recommended that these may be used to inform and educate applicants and serve as guidelines for their projects. We highly support this recommendation.

Specially in the last decade, we have seen an increase in oversized, architecturally strident and incompatible houses and remodels introduced into coherent, established, even historic neighborhoods that are the hallmark of Pasadena. These intrusions are degrading the character and design unity of our treasured neighborhoods, as well as eroding their privacy, visual integrity, and utility. Granted, multiple mandates from Sacramento overriding local planning decisions have made regulating such adventurism more difficult; but we are confident that as a leader in civic planning, Pasadena can marshal the will and tools to successfully stem this detrimental trend.

We appreciate the time and effort that has gone into this lengthy process, and submit the above recommendations and concerns for consideration and action.

Respectfully,



Dan Beal
President
For the Board of Directors



Mic Hansen
Chair, Planning

cc: David Reyes, Director of Planning and Community Development
Martin Potter, Planner
Takako Suzuki, Field Deputy, District 6
Sue Mossman and Andrew Salimian, Pasadena Heritage
Nina Chomsky, LVAA
Erika Foy, MHNA



M A D I S O N H E I G H T S

686 South Arroyo Parkway Suite 199 Pasadena, CA 91105 www.mhnapasadena.org

October 17, 2020

Honorable Mayor Terry Tornek
Members of the City Council
City of Pasadena
175 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91109

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Re: Mansionization Phase 2: Zoning Code Amendment: Single Family Residential Development Standards (RS-1, RS-2, RS-4, RS-6)

The Madison Heights Neighborhood Association(MHNA) supports Pasadena's efforts to limit "Mansionization" in our neighborhood and city. This sentiment was reinforced by our recent neighborhood survey in which "Mansionization" was the top concern among the replies we received. In general, remodels, ADU additions and all new construction should conform to existing neighborhood standards and not create homes that don't fit existing standards, design, style and architecture. Our concerns include inappropriate sizing, scale, setbacks, massing, on-site location, design and style.

We recognize that creating enforceable standards is challenging but we have a wide consensus that this is an important issue that the city must address. We also appreciate the opportunity to comment on the zoning code amendment given we have some significant homes in our neighborhood which have sparked the need for these changes. While we agree with many of the proposals, we would like the amendment to address the following;

- 1) Neighborhood consistency regulations need to be direct and crystal clear so there is no room for interpretation.
- 2) The use of story-poles and digital modeling is encouraged.
- 3) ADU's must comply in style and scale. This is especially important in MHNA where neighbors can view into each other's yards.
- 4) Shade and shadow studies need to be required where new two story buildings are added and may affect adjacent yards.
- 5) We encourage the city to apply necessary and impactful penalties when the zoning code has been significantly surpassed for the owners or developers benefit.
- 6) Median square footage of the neighboring homes should determine the allowable ratio of the new construction and not the lot size.

Thanks for all your hard work and effort to keep Pasadena a great place to live and work;

John Latta
President MHNA

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LINDS VISTA-ANNANDALE ASSOCIATION
POST OFFICE BOX 94364
PASADENA, CA 91109

2020 OCT 19 PM 1:26

October 19, 2020

Re: City Council Meeting 10/19/2020; Agenda Item 21; **ZONING CODE AMENDMENT: SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS**

Mayor Tornek and Councilmembers:

The Linda Vista-Annandale Association (LVAA) generally supports efforts at controlling Mansionization, including the Staff Report. However, we have several concerns with this limited approach to the ongoing problems of out-of-scale and out-of-character development in most of Pasadena's single-family neighborhoods.

Although the LVAA area is perceived as a Hillside area, in fact, a significant percentage of our neighborhood is considered "flat" (about 15-20 percent) and is being altered in accordance with underlying Zoning in a manner that is out-of-scale and out-of-character. The result is unacceptable impacts on adjacent neighbors and potential historic resources and streets. The time to do something about all this is NOW – we have several streets at a tipping point where character, scale, and valuable architecture and design are about to be lost forever.

As to the proposals before you, there is still too much emphasis on ministerial review and on a "numbers game", i.e. stressing size alone as a solution to character and scale as opposed to the realization that the issue is how the size, or the "clay" molded on the lot. Our position is that any proposed remodel, addition, or new construction, other than the most minimal effort, should receive public discretionary review so that neighbors can comment on the proposed project, i.e. where does the "size" go and how? The best example of the need for discretionary review is the Privacy issue where the only standard in non-discretionary situations as proposed by staff is how windows are aligned. What about looming, large additions that overwhelm adjacent neighbors? "Scale and character" does not mean a cookie cutter repeat of existing architecture – it means that new construction respects the existing form and rhythm of the surroundings so that intrusions that upset the balance of the area in terms of visual and physical impacts, such as large, looming additions, particularly on adjacent neighbors, are avoided. Better notice, renderings, story poles and such are all helpful, but then what happens, particularly if there is no public discretionary review? How do neighbors comment or raise questions? To whom do they express their opinions? What about an appeal and what is the appeal process? The current staff recommendations appear not to address these concerns.

In both a discretionary process and a ministerial review process, the prior very complete and helpful Design Guidelines that were previously considered by the Planning Commission would be quite helpful. We are disappointed that consideration of these Guidelines is being put off. We urge consideration and adoption of the Design Guidelines to inform all forms of review to be adopted as soon as possible, with consideration of also using these Guidelines in connection with Hillside Development Permit review where we have similar problems with scale and character.

In connection with proposed discretionary review, we agree with the comments of WPRA that the norm should be established by the median square footage of the existing neighborhood homes—as suggested by staff—and not the size of the lot, and, that the 35% overage, as recommended in the staff report, is much too large and will not sufficiently curb Mansionization. The overage should be limited to a maximum of 25%.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Sincerely

/s/ Nina Chomsky

Nina Chomsky,
LVAA President

cc: LVAA Board of Directors



October 19, 2020

Pasadena City Council
City of Pasadena
100 North Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, California 91101

RE: Zoning Code Amendment: Single Family Residential Development Standards

Dear Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

Pasadena Heritage applauds the City Council for taking up this matter and staff for working hard and listening carefully to the community to address concerns. **We urge the council to approve the recommended ordinance provisions which will provide stronger regulation of new homes in existing neighborhoods, help prevent egregious and out-of-scale remodels and new builds, and provide more public process for proposals that exceed the new regulations.** These reforms have gone through multiple iterations and have been revised significantly to protect our vibrant and livable neighborhoods, while balancing the rights of homeowners. We appreciate that many of our recommendations have been incorporated into the ordinance before you.

The Planning Staff has put together very forward thinking regulations. We note that Staff has not included all of the Planning Commission's recommendations, and we urge the City Council to send a clear signal on two outstanding issues: Neighborhood Compatibility and Design Guidelines, which we believe are essential to a most effective Mansionization ordinance. If neighborhood compatibility is to be applied in single family zones citywide, then **applying these standards in Historic Districts is commonsense**, and will not add another level of discretionary review *unless* the project is to exceed the 35% median size. Historic Districts should have the same base zoning as other single family districts with additional protections. **We also ask for further study of Design Guidelines.** Staff presented reasonable guidelines early in the process, and the Planning Commission balked at the time. As the ordinance was crafted further, the Commission asked repeatedly for Design Guidelines to be layered back in. We believe that these guidelines do not need to be burdensome or onerous, and ask at least that they return to the Planning Commission for consideration.

We thank the City Council, Planning Staff, and the Planning Commission for their commitment to our historic and residential neighborhoods. We believe this ordinance will address urgent and repeated community concerns.

Susan N. Mossman
Executive Director

Andrew Salimian
Preservation Director

cc: David Reyes, Director of Planning

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