

18 OCT 15 11:23AM

CITY CLERK

October 15, 2018

Dear Mayor Tornek and City Councilmembers Masuda, Hampton, McAustin, Kennedy, Gordo, Madison, and Wilson,

I am a resident of East Pasadena and am writing about very serious concerns regarding the Planning Commission's proposal to convert motels/hotels in my area into homeless housing. Overall, I understand that many of these properties are underperforming and problematic due to vagrants, homeless addicts, and crime. However, I cannot see how adding more homeless individuals to this area, which Pasadena has been unable to clean up and make safe in well over 25 years, could possibly result in anything but further significant deterioration.

Since recently finding out about the Planning Commission's proposal, I have tried to educate myself on what is going on. To that end, I called the Planning Department many times, finding that the staff listed as contacts on the City website no longer work there and the phone numbers are wrong. I left phone messages with Andre Sahakian, purportedly the planner involved, and received no response. I read as much information (sparse) as I could find and have spoken with representatives from: 1) the Temple City Sheriffs, specifically Sheriff April Nelson, who handles the East Pasadena area generally; 2) the Pasadena Police, specifically David James, who runs the crime stats for Pasadena; and 3) Kathryn Barger's [Board of Supervisors] office, specifically Dana Vanderford, who handles homeless initiatives. I was surprised to find that neither the sheriff nor police officer were aware of the Commission's proposal *at all* — which leads me both to believe that there is insufficient publicity and community awareness surrounding the proposal and to question the thoroughness of thought and consideration in creating this plan. In addition, your Staff Report/Planner's Fact Sheet *only* focuses on *speed* in ramrodding this through ("one of the fastest ways") and *money* (various impact fees and occupancy taxes). There is nothing under "Groups Affected." My neighbors and I, the whole of East Pasadena, will be hugely impacted and harmed. Why are we, the community, not of concern?

I'd like to summarize some of what I learned from speaking with the above-mentioned representatives. First, all are aware of and acknowledge the crime, homelessness, drug, and vagrancy problems in East Pasadena. Sheriff Nelson stated, however, that many of the individuals that appear to be homeless are in fact *not* — many have homes, and some reside in hotels. She talks with these people constantly, and they tell her that this area is a "goldmine" because residents give generously to panhandlers. It is so lucrative that the panhandlers have gotten into fights over turf and times in which to panhandle. She asked that the word be spread to not give money to panhandlers but to give to organizations helping the homeless instead.

In addition, Sheriff Nelson stated that a number of the actual homeless in our area have *already* been offered and taken to homeless housing -- only to then leave these facilities the next day or so. Because they are addicted to drugs/alcohol, they are unwilling or unable to adhere to the clean rules of that housing, choosing instead to return to our

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"goldmine" streets. According to Officer James, East Pasadena has a lot of folks who don't *want* to live in a home. So there is little reason to believe that the proposed homeless housing will do a thing to alleviate the current homeless/crime problem in the area. And even worse, the proposed homeless housing will serve to draw homeless individuals *from other areas* to this already-troubled area, where they too can choose to just walk out and add to the population already present. Officer James noted that individuals must abide by the rules of homeless housing or be kicked out. The truth is that beating an addiction is hard. When things get tough, they can freely leave; no one can be kept in homeless housing against their will. When they choose to leave, they may go where they please and simply stay in the area. If Pasadena cannot handle the homeless, vagrants, and crime in East Pasadena as-is, how can it possibly clean it up when deliberately adding to the troubled population?

Another significant issue that both Sheriff Nelson and Officer James discussed is the proliferation of crime due to Propositions 47, 57, and 64, which reduce the penalties for many crimes, including violent crime. Many of these offenses are now misdemeanors rather than felonies. According to Sheriff Nelson, all she and her colleagues can do is issue a misdemeanor ticket, which criminals ignore; they "rarely" respond or show up in court. She said that theft/burglary in East Pasadena is rife because, as long as the value of goods stolen in one incident is below \$950, there is no felony; it is merely a tick-etable (ignored) offense. She stated that the opportunistic addicts are well aware of this and take advantage. The LA Times has reported that Prop 47 allows "repeat offenders. . . to continue breaking the law with little consequence." East Pasadena has serious problems that law enforcement cannot sufficiently address. Residents, their homes, and property are already targets. It makes no sense to bring in more homeless addicts who can fail out of housing and increase crime where our sheriffs/officers are already handicapped by the Propositions and have their hands full.

Ms. Vanderford, with Kathryn Barger's office, mentioned various efforts and pilot/new programs to provide assistance to the homeless. Of course, these efforts and programs are commendable, but she admitted that all of these presently lack data on effectiveness. She mentioned Marv's Place, a beautiful, new \$12.2M facility constructed in a nice residential neighborhood in Pasadena. This differs in many ways from what is proposed with the East Pasadena motels. Unlike Marv's neighborhood, the motels area is already problematic, with crime, addicts, and homeless. These motels will not get the vast money and gorgeous rebuild like Marv's. As I understand it, one of the appeals of the motels is that they are considered almost ready-to-use buildings. Also, Marv's is for families. According to Bill Huang, the City of Pasadena Housing Department Director, "we don't have any homeless families living on the street" anymore. While that's great, that means the motels will house individuals — presumably lots of them. Marv's houses 20 families, which is 40 adults maximum or, likely, less. While it is unclear which and how many motels might be converted into homeless housing, this could, in the aggregate, involve multiple hundreds of homeless people. Even filling *one* motel would bring a significant number of individuals to an area that is already troubled and simply cannot afford it.

Homeless individuals are inherently more precarious than homeless families. Unlike homeless parents with minor children living as a family unit (in Marv's), homeless individuals are less incentivized to break from addiction and get help for mental illness. These individuals lack family support and are way more prone to engage in criminal activity. Individuals are far more likely to fail in homeless housing than parents, who want homes and stability for their kids. As mentioned, East Pasadena already has individuals on the street that have failed in homeless housing. So if motels are converted and more homeless individuals (potentially hundreds) are moved in, again, what happens to those who inevitably fail out of homeless housing? No one can prevent them from staying in East Pasadena. Crime, vagrancy, and homeless will skyrocket, while the quality of living for area residents will further plummet.

Unfortunately, East Pasadena has received short shrift from Pasadena in the past, perhaps because some portions of the area are technically the unincorporated area of Los Angeles County and therefore of low or no priority to Pasadena. I understand that some years ago there had been a much-needed plan to invest money to revitalize and improve East Pasadena along Colorado Blvd., the same area as the motels. None of that came to fruition. In addition, Pasadena recently settled a class action lawsuit for systematically and significantly overcharging for water supplied to East Pasadena residents in the unincorporated area. It really is time that East Pasadena be provided with the same resources, care, and consideration as the rest of the city.

I recognize that homelessness is a major problem sweeping the nation and certainly Pasadena. I personally feel compassion for these individuals and, of course, would like homelessness to end. We all know there are no easy solutions, but we need to be very careful and deliberate in ensuring that existing communities are not harmed in a hasty quest for "solutions." There needs to be more public notice and information about the motel conversion proposal and more input from the communities, particularly those that would be most impacted by the proposal. That even our law enforcement, the sheriffs and police who handle the area at issue, did not know about the proposal is both telling of the the lack of publicity of the proposal and lack of inquiry by the Commission and planners. I truly appreciate all the work that the City Council and Planning Commission do to try to improve Pasadena for its residents and future. However, I respectfully submit that it makes no sense to intentionally add a homeless population to an area that already has serious homeless, vagrancy, addict, and crime problems. The area's problems need to be *fixed, not compounded*. The East Pasadena area is just the wrong place to add homeless housing.

Respectfully,
Salina Chinn

CC:
Kathryn Barger, 5th District Supervisor
Pasadena Planning Commission Members:
Michael Williamson, Chair

Felicia Williams
Michael Coppess
David Coher
Patricia Keane
Steven Olivas
Donald C. Nanney
Tim Wendler
Ali Barar

Sussy Nemer, Field Deputy, San Gabriel Valley, 5th District
Dana Vanderford, Homeless Service Deputy, 5th District
Terry Clougherty, Chapman Woods President

Jomsky, Mark

From: McAustin, Margaret
Sent: Monday, October 15, 2018 11:51 AM
To: janinpasadena@gmail.com
Cc: Morales, Margo; Jomsky, Mark
Subject: Re: Contact Request from Website

Thanks Jan

Sent from my iPhone

> On Oct 15, 2018, at 10:46 AM, City Web <cityweb@cityofpasadena.net> wrote:

>

> Name : Jan sanders

> Phone: 626-676-5575

> Email: janinpasadena@gmail.com

> Message:

> Hi Margaret. Wanted to voice support for the motel conversion ordinance. I understand it's on today's agenda. Please continue your support

>

>

> Submitted from: 23.114.244.164

>

>

> User Information

> IP Address: 23.114.244.164

> User-Agent (Browser/OS): Apple Safari 605.1 / OS X

> Referrer: <https://ww5.cityofpasadena.net/district2/contact/>

>

Jomsky, Mark

From: Taline Levonian <taline.levon@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, October 15, 2018 4:42 PM
To: Taline Levonian
Subject: Conversion of Ramada Inn - please vote against it!

CAUTION: This email was delivered from the Internet. Do not click links or open attachments unless you know the content is safe.

Dear City of Pasadena City Council representative,

I'm a Pasadena resident and a parent of 2 young children that attend St Gregory Armenian School at 2215 E Colorado Blvd. I urge to vote against the consideration of converting the Ramada Inn on Colorado Blvd to a housing product for transitional, homeless, etc. While this may be a good solution for the homelessness problem, it is not a safe idea to place such a project in such close proximity to a Preschool to 8th grade school.

Please vote against this. Thank you for your consideration!

Taline Levonian
818-203-0339