

# Agenda Report

June 14, 2021

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Planning & Community Development Department

**SUBJECT: ZONING CODE AMENDMENT TO PARKING REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDITIONS TO SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENCES**

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the City Council:

1. **Find** that the Zoning Code Amendments are exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") pursuant to Section 15305 (Class 5 – Minor Alterations to Land Use Limitations) and that there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class, there are no unusual circumstances, and none of the exceptions to the exemptions apply;
2. **Adopt** the Findings of Consistency with the General Plan (Attachment A); and
3. **Approve** the amendment and direct the City Attorney to prepare an ordinance amending Section 17.46.020 of Title 17 (Zoning Code) of the Pasadena Municipal Code to exempt additions of any size to existing single-family residences from the two-car covered parking requirement, except for residences located within an HD Overlay Zone (Attachment B).

## **PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:**

After a public hearing held on May 12, 2021, the Planning Commission recommended that the City Council approve staff's recommendation and find that the Zoning Code Text Amendment is exempt from CEQA and approve an amendment that would eliminate the requirement to provide two covered parking spaces when constructing an addition of any size to an existing single-family residence that has nonconforming parking, while continuing to apply the 150 square foot threshold to residences located within an HD Overlay Zone.

## **BACKGROUND:**

New construction of a single-family dwelling requires two covered parking spaces with either a carport or enclosed garage. Smaller additions of up to 150 square feet to single-family dwellings are exempt from this requirement. The City Manager has initiated a Zoning Code Amendment to eliminate the requirement for providing two covered parking spaces when constructing any addition, regardless of size, to an existing single-family dwelling.

### **Existing Regulations**

#### **Parking for Single Family Residential Dwellings**

Existing Zoning Code regulations require that parking for residential uses in residential zoning districts must be located on the same site as the use served, but may not be located within a required front or corner side setback. Newly constructed single-family homes require two covered parking spaces within a garage or carport, with minimum parking space, garage door, and driveway width dimensions.

Notwithstanding these requirements, the Zoning Code allows smaller additions of up to 150 square feet to existing structures without providing additional covered parking. As a result, any addition to an existing residence, including construction of an accessory structure such as a pool house or workshop, of over 150 square feet, triggers a requirement to provide two covered spaces within a garage or carport. There is also an existing exception for designated historic resources, wherein a homeowner may request a waiver of the covered parking requirement when constructing an addition if an existing, one-car garage contributes to the significance of the property and/or district and is in good condition or will be returned to good condition as part of the work to add floor area to the dwelling.

#### **State Law for ADU's**

Beginning in 2017 and continuing each year thereafter, the State legislature has passed several bills requiring local jurisdictions to allow ADU's and limiting the types of regulations that can be enforced on them, with the goal of removing cost and space limitations for homeowners looking to build ADU's on their property. Current State law stipulates that local agencies may not require more than one off-street parking space for an ADU, and in certain cases, no off-street parking may be required at all. For example, no on-site parking may be required for an ADU when the property is located within one-half mile of a public transit stop; if the property is designated historic or in a historic district; or when the unit is a Junior ADU. Additionally, State law allows ADU parking to be located in any configuration on the same lot as the ADU, including covered spaces, uncovered spaces, tandem spaces, and uncovered parking spaces may be located within setback areas on an existing driveway.

## **DISCUSSION:**

### **Parking versus Living Space**

In a 2018 survey, the National Association of Homebuilders found that for all new homes in the United States, the average size of a master bedroom is 312 square feet and the average size of a master bathroom is 164 square feet<sup>1</sup>. Based on these averages, a typical bedroom and bathroom addition to an existing single-family home would consist of approximately 476 square feet, far exceeding the 150 square foot allotment provided in the existing Zoning Code. By comparison, a typical two-car garage would need to be approximately 400 square feet in order to meet minimum dimensions for parking two cars. This means that in order to build an average sized bedroom/bathroom addition in Pasadena, a homeowner would need to find twice as much space on their property and incur nearly double the construction cost to comply with the parking requirement. In cases where there is an existing one-car garage, the added costs of demolition or retrofitting to expand the structure could result in the new garage costing more than the addition itself, thereby making the enlargement and improvement of the residence cost prohibitive.

The increased cost and site constraints associated with building new covered parking for two vehicles is a significant barrier for many homeowners looking to renovate and improve their homes to meet modern needs. In turn, this also prevents the City's overall housing stock from being renewed and improved.

### **Need for Covered Parking**

While the intent for requiring covered parking for larger additions is to bring nonconforming structures into compliance with current parking standards, several factors distinguish existing single-family dwellings from new construction. First, the aggregate size of an addition does not necessarily relate directly to the parking demand generated by the addition. Additions could be used for a variety of purposes, including office space, larger kitchens, living rooms, dining rooms, or storage. Additionally, even if an addition creates new bedrooms, these do not necessarily indicate the need for additional parking either, as bedrooms could be occupied by household residents that do not drive. On the other hand, new construction of a single-family dwelling would still require two covered parking spaces, ensuring that when new units are created, adequate parking is also provided to accommodate the new demand. Another factor to consider is that there is currently no requirement that residents of a single-family dwelling use a garage or carport for parking vehicles. Many residents use garages for additional storage space, workshops, etc. and choose instead to park vehicles in the driveway, which is allowed by the Zoning Code. Allowing residents that build additions to their homes to use their driveways for parking would not be a significant difference from what is currently allowed.

An important exception to these factors is parking availability in the hillside areas of the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nahbclassic.org/generic.aspx?sectionID=734&genericContentID=266850>

City. Neighborhoods in the Hillside Development (HD) Overlay Zone contain lots with constrained proportions and slopes, often limiting off-street parking space. Further, the width and topography of hillside streets makes street parking difficult, and as a result, many areas prohibit street parking altogether. To address this issue, the Zoning Code requires a minimum of four guest parking spaces on any site fronting a street where parking is prohibited on both sides of that street, and a minimum of two guest parking spaces where on-street parking is allowed. These factors make it difficult to justify waiving parking standards for additions in the hillsides, given the limited availability of both on-street and off-street parking. Allowing greater flexibility to build larger additions would also be in conflict with the overall desire to maintain appropriate scale, massing, and access to residential structures located in hillside areas, a key policy identified in the General Plan. For these reasons, Staff recommends continuing to impose the 150 square foot addition threshold on properties in the HD Overlay Zones, and require two-covered parking spaces for additions that exceed that threshold.

### **Consistency with ADU Regulations**

An additional factor when considering this proposed Zoning Code Amendment is the discrepancy created by State law, which exempts ADU's from the requirement to build covered parking altogether, and allows the use of driveways to satisfy off-street parking requirements. With these regulations in place, a homeowner would be able to build an ADU of up to 1,200 square feet without any enclosed parking, but if they instead chose to build a 200 square foot addition for a home office, they would need to provide two-covered parking spaces at significant additional cost. While State law was established with the goal of incentivizing the construction of new housing units, it also creates an inequity for homeowners seeking to build additions that often do not generate any additional parking demand.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS:**

The Zoning Code Amendment has been assessed in accordance with the criteria contained in the CEQA Guidelines, and qualifies for Categorical Exemption pursuant to Section 15305 (Class 5 – Minor Alterations in Land Use Limitations), and there are no features that distinguish this project from others in the exempt class; therefore there are no unusual circumstances. Section 15305 exempts projects that consist of minor alterations in land use limitations in areas with an average slope of less than 20 percent, which do not result in any changes in land use or density. The Zoning Code Amendment would result in changes to parking requirements for additions to existing single-family residential structures, and would not result in any changes to regulation of land uses or density standards in the Zoning Code.

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:**

At a public hearing on May 12, 2021, the Planning Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the City Council find the proposed Zoning Code Amendment exempt

from CEQA pursuant to Section 15305. Staff recommends amending the Zoning Code to allow additions to single-family dwellings exceeding 150 square feet without the need to provide two-covered parking spaces, with the exception of any properties located in the HD Overlay Zones. This amendment would remove significant cost barriers for homeowners looking to modernize and improve their properties and make parking regulations consistent with those mandated by State law for ADU's.

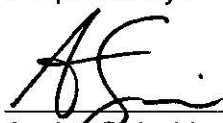
**FISCAL IMPACT:**

This action will not have a direct fiscal impact. However, indirect fiscal impacts may occur resulting from increased permit applications for additions to residences that could otherwise not be feasible without this zoning code amendment. Longer-term indirect fiscal impacts could also include increased property tax revenue resulting from increased property values due to more residential additions being constructed. The anticipated impact to other operational programs or capital projects as a result of this action will be none.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Attachments: (2)

Attachment A – Findings of General Plan Consistency for Zoning Code Amendments  
Attachment B – Draft Zoning Code Amendment Language