



**City of South Pasadena  
Planning and Community  
Development Department**

# Memo

**Date:** February 23, 2021

**To:** Chair and Members of the Planning Commission

**From:** Joanna Hankamer, Planning & Community Development Director

**Re:** Additional Document No. 1: Public Comments on Item #2

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Three (3) written public comments have been received on Item #2 from the following:

- Josh Albrektson
- Steve Dahl
- Michael Fazioli

The written comments received are attached to this document.

An audio comment was also received from Josh Albrektson on this item and could be heard by clicking [here](#). This verbal message will be played at the hearing.

## Elizabeth Bar-EI

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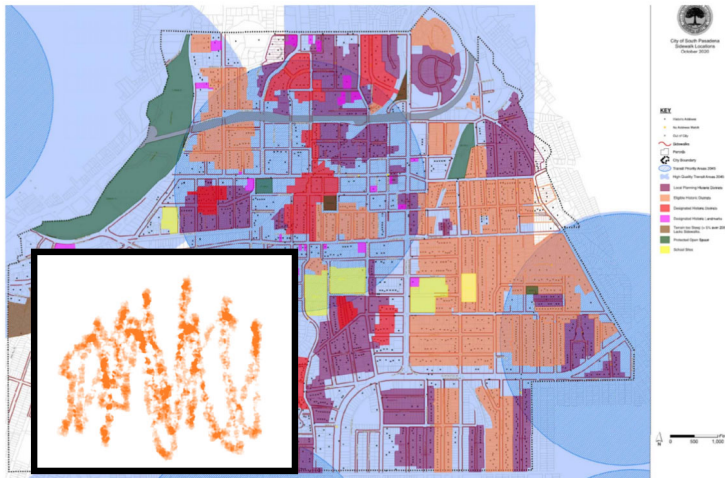
**From:** Josh Albrektson <joshraymd@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 22, 2021 5:08 AM  
**To:** PlanningComments  
**Subject:** Item 2, Planning commission meeting Feb 23rd

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This is a map taken from South Pasadenas RHNA appeal.

The bottom left is the high risk fire zone. I drew a fire on it for labelling. There are special rules for this area including sprinklers, which have to be within 150 feet of the front property line, and replacement parking.

Exhibit B: South Pasadena HOTA, Topographic, and Historic Overlay



The colored areas represent historic districts where there are more restrictions and design standards/guidelines. Most of the places that are not colored are the multi family homes in South Pasadena. So this ordinance will apply to almost no single family homes in South Pasadena while making it harder to build ADUs in all of South Pasadena. I believe you should look more closely and see what parts of South Pasadena are truly historic and should have the stricter design standards applied.

If you want to try and claim you should be allowed more ADUs than the 20 per year permitted, this is not the way to do it.

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Josh Albrektson MD  
Neuroradiologist by night  
Crime fighter by day

## Elizabeth Bar-EI

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**From:** Steve Dahl <steve@dahlarchitects.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 23, 2021 10:37 AM  
**To:** PlanningComments  
**Cc:** Steven P. Dahl; Kanika Kith; Joanna Hankamer  
**Subject:** South Pasadena Planning Commission hearing- 2/23/21- ADU's

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

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I am concerned about the proposed revised ADU ordinance, that unintentionally will both reduce upcoming ADU's and cause homeowners to rush to maximize their property's FAR (floor area ratio)/ lot coverage instead. As a local architect working with many of our City's homeowners, as well as other surrounding San Gabriel Valley communities, on their homes and ADU's, the State of California's ADU laws offers both a carrot and a stick for increased affordable housing. The required RHNA numbers are the stick for cities, without which some of them would continue to try and block or severely limit any increased housing (San Marino for example). While the carrot is the bonus offered homeowners of an additional 800 square feet now possible on their property.

Unfortunately in today's marketplace of supply and demand for rare homes available in South Pasadena, most of our new clients have been working with realtors for years, trying to buy their first home in South Pasadena, and it's for our terrific and free schools (they do it all for their children). Last week I toured a 1500 square foot home for sale for \$1.59 million, and a couple of years ago had a client buy a 900 square foot home for sale for over \$1 million- so homes are going for over \$1,000 per square foot. So, by removing the 800 square foot bonus offered by the State for an ADU (proposed in South Pasadena's revised ordinance to now count the 800 square feet of the ADU as part of the maximum allowed FAR/ lot coverage), then we are taking away \$800,000 of potential property value.

Even wealthy families struggle at these costs. So, when they finally are successful buying in South Pasadena, they are both thrilled and overwhelmed. It is their family's biggest investment ever and they have just over-spent and it does not pencil-out, unless they are able to, over time, increase the value of their property, mainly by adding on square feet. Their ADU needs are maybe for their elderly parents, or their grown-up children.

For many years, we have been designing homes, or remodels, with two master bedrooms, for two family units to share a more expensive home. Now, ADU's can allow more middle income families to be able to afford South Pasadena, by either renting out an ADU, or going-in to share a home, with one family in the main home, the other in the ADU. Their ADU needs are truly increased affordable housing.

Both the wealthy families and the middle income ones would be very unhappy if they knew and understood that we are now proposing to take away the State's ADU bonus square footage. Any/ all of our clients will rush to maximize their homes, before they would be able to add an ADU. They can not afford to lose \$800,000 value in this crazy real estate market and of their family's important investment. This will postpone then- for years adding an ADU, if ever, after they maximize first.

Adding on to your home in South Pasadena is a very lengthy (one year to a public hearing, after full and complete submittal) and very expensive with full and detailed architectural drawings (3-D renderings really needed too) so can be too much for a middle income family. While an ADU approval process can be mainly staff level and within 60 days. The choice seems clear. But, if you have a 2,000 square foot home, with a 2,800 square foot FAR, you can add the 800

square foot ADU first, but then the home would be considered max'ed-out, and then you can't add the 800 square feet to your home later. So, one has to max out their home first, before they add their ADU- discriminatory to middle income families, so then- not adding affordable housing- that was supposed to be the whole point by the State and South Pasadena!?! Please don't take away the ADU square feet, that will instead force homeowners to max out their properties instead, and lose affordable ADU housing, thanks, Steve.

**Steven P. Dahl, AIA**

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**[steve@dahlarchitects.com](mailto:steve@dahlarchitects.com)**

## Elizabeth Bar-EI

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**From:** Michael Fazioli <fazioli@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 23, 2021 11:34 AM  
**To:** PlanningComments  
**Cc:** Jose Villegas  
**Subject:** Planning Commission Meeting February 23 2021

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Mike Fazioli commenting/inquiring on Agenda Item #2 SPMC regarding ADU:

Unable to attend live or via phone, I ask for some clarification on the following points. Thank you to all for your really great work and insight behind the study and proposal. Really well done.

In Comparing SoPas draft ADU to State ADU Code 65855.2

When a conversion requires a rebuild for structural purposes:

page 2-15 of the staff report requires setbacks for an ADU 'conversion' if that structure is first demolished and then replaced. However State Code 65855.2 (a) (D) vii: specifically restricts setback standards when there is a new **"structure constructed in the same location and to the same dimensions as an existing structure that is converted to an ADU"**

Floor Area Computations:

page 2-17 2.c is not entirely clear on Floor Area exemptions. For a newly developed ADU, it is clear that a 800 s.f unit is exempt but it is not clear if this also means that the first 800 s.f. of a 1200 s.f. unit is exempt, or is it the entire 800 s.f. exemption lost if the ADU is over 800? A similar question relates to converted space, where all of the original space is exempt, but not clear if the existing square footage portion remains exempt if the conversion includes expansion beyond the +150, or is all of the existing space exemption lost?

Floor area standards raise another issue with an apparent inequity or perhaps conflict of handling ADU conversions vs newly developed. SPMC defines maximum floor area at 35% plus up to 500 s.f. for a garage. Should this not be updated to read 'plus up to 500 s.f. for either a garage or garage space that is converted to an ADU'. For example, a primary home at 30% of parcel with a 400 s.f. garage that is 7% of the parcel — owner has the right to increase the home to 35%. If the 400 s.f. garage (allowable floor area) is subsequently converted to living space, might the parcel then lose the right to that 400 s.f and therefore lose the right to increase the home to 35%. If SPMC 36.220.040 is modified read " plus up to 500 s.f. for either a garage or garage space that was/is converted to an ADU, our housing standards become neutral and not punitive with a homeowner choosing between maintaining or converting a garage. In fact, the prospect of forfeiting up to 500 s.f. of allowable space might prompt an owner to just build a entirely new and exempt 800 s.f. ADU, and further increase density by two accessory structures, each with its own code defined separate square footage exemptions.

page 2-17 d limits a JADU to 500 square feet. Will the space of a shared bathroom and hall access be included in the 500 s.f. computation?

Other Comments:

page 2-19 Section G states that the standards apply to all ADU, however many of these standards are actually NOT applicable to conversions of existing space. This could be an unintentional internal conflict in our ordinance.

page 2-19 Section G.3 references 'cooking facilities'. The code defines "Efficiency Kitchen", but not 'cooking Facility', leading to concern that staff may be subjective/discretionary in defining what is required for an ADU — and not all ADU are the same, eg a garage conversion may warrant an Efficiency Kitchen, whereas a two bedroom 1200 s.f. ADU a more robust kitchen. Perhaps set the standard that Efficiency Kitchen as defined is for JADU and conversion up to 800 s.f. etc.

page 2-20 1.b. is a perplexing statement. what does it mean?

page 2-21 K.4 regarding school impact fees is very unclear — what state law is being referenced, is it the ADU law using 750 s.f. as the threshold for applicable fees, or is it referencing some other state law with different standards?