



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
Planning Commission  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, August 23, 2023, 6:30 PM  
Amedee O. "Dick" Richards Jr. Council Chambers  
1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, CA 91030**

**CALL TO ORDER:**

A Special Meeting of the South Pasadena Planning Commission was called to order by Chair Dahl on Wednesday, August 23, 2023 at 6:32 p.m. The meeting was held at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena and via Zoom teleconference.

**ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Chair: Laura Dahl  
Vice-Chair: Lisa Padilla  
Commissioners: Arnold Swanborn and John Lesak

**Absent:** Commissioner: Amitabh Barthakur

**City Staff**

**Present:** David Snow, Assistant City Attorney  
Angelica Frausto-Lupo, Community Development Director  
Alison Becker, Community Development Deputy Director  
Matt Chang, Planning Manager  
Ben Jarvis, Interim Senior Planner  
Dean Flores, Senior Planner

**Council**

**Present:** Council Liaison: Jon Primuth, Mayor

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Approved, 4-0.

**DISCLOSURE OF SITE VISITS AND EX-PARTE CONTACTS:**

None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

**1. Public Comment.**

None.

**DISCUSSION:**

**2. Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP) Ad Hoc Committee Update.**

**Recommendation:**

Recommend that the Planning Commission review the DTSP Ad Hoc Committee report and incorporate suggested changes into the final documents and report to the City Council.

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Lesak and Commissioner Swanborn thanked Deputy Director Alison Becker for her summary of the last Special Meeting. Her comments were combined with the Ad Hoc Committee's notes and observations to produce the *South Pasadena Downtown Specific Plan Ad Hoc Committee Initial Observations and Recommendations* Memorandum.

The Commissioners and Staff considered possible achievable items outlined in the Memorandum and how they could be integrated given current schedule limitations. These included making specific Code revisions; all of the budgetary requests; and addressing some of the recommendations related to the final document, including navigation and readability. It was suggested that the Ad Hoc Committee continue to work with Staff over the next month, into early implementation to make sure all of the issues are addressed.

The Commissioners agreed that all of the ideas outlined in the Memorandum need to be incorporated into the documents.

The Commissioners had a robust, in-depth discussion of each item.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Decision:**

Commissioner Lesak moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Padilla, that a draft of the *South Pasadena Downtown Specific Plan Ad Hoc Committee Initial Observations and Recommendations* Memorandum be forwarded to the City Council with the Commission's full approval. In addition, that Staff and Consultants will continue to work with the Ad Hoc Committee should there be issues in getting these recommendations to the Council in a timely fashion.

Chair Dahl asked Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Swanborn	Aye
Commissioner Lesak	Aye
Vice-Chair Padilla	Aye
Chair Dahl	Aye

**Motion carried, 4-0.**

**PUBLIC HEARING – CONTINUED ITEM:**

**3. Zoning Text and Map Amendments.**

Proposed Zoning Text Amendments to the South Pasadena Municipal Code (SPMC) Chapter 36 (Zoning) and Zoning Map Amendments related to increased density by rezoning the existing Focused Area Overlay zone to Mixed-Use Overlay zone and increase density in the certain residential zoning districts in compliance with the updated General Plan and the 2021-2029 (6<sup>th</sup> Cycle) Housing Element.

A Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) has been prepared for this project to analyze any potential effect on the environment pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). A Notice of Availability was released on July 24, 2023.

**Recommendation:**

Review the Staff Presentation prepared for the project and then adopt a Resolution recommending that the City Council:

1. Amend certain South Pasadena Municipal Code (SPMC) Sections pertaining to rezoning of properties consistent with the General Plan Update and the 2021-2029 (6<sup>th</sup> Cycle) Housing Element which will do the following:
  - a. Add Section 36.230.050 (Mixed-Use Overlay Development Standards) for the newly established Mixed-Use Overlay District; and
  - b. Amend Section 36.250.340 (Focus Area Overlay District), to eliminate the Focus Overlay District and replace it with the newly established Mixed-Use Overlay; and
  - c. Increase density in the RM, RH and Mixed-Use Overlay Districts in compliance with the Housing Element Programs; and

- d. Amend other Code Sections relating to ancillary changes to the SMPC regarding reference to the new Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP) and minor changes to the Residential and Commercial zoning district standards in relation to the rezoning.
2. Amend the Zoning Map to eliminate the Focus Area Overlay zone and the Mission Street Specific Plan boundary, and replace them with the Mixed-Use Overlay zone and the Downtown Specific Plan boundary, respectively.

**Staff Presentation:**

Deputy Director Becker offered a refresher presentation; however, no additional material had been added to the original presentation from the last meeting. The Commissioners declined.

**Questions for Staff:**

Commissioner Lesak and Deputy Director Becker discussed the inclusion of a transit map depicting the ½ mile radius from the transit station.

Chair Dahl asked Staff to explain how the mixed-use development standards are slightly different from commercial standards. Deputy Director Becker explained the process used, which was coordinated with the City's consulting firm experienced in these matters.

**Public Comment:**

None.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

The Commissioners reviewed *Table 2-6. Mixed Use Overlay District Development Standards* in considerable detail. In particular, setbacks, stepbacks for residential, surface parking, the ground floor height limit, blank wall definition, combined open space and minimum balcony requirements were discussed at length.

The Commissioners discussed limiting access for driveways to a minimum 24 feet to get cars in and out and a maximum percentage of a site and recommended matching the language in the DTSP.

The Commissioners and Staff discussed the Maximum Floor Area by Story and *wedding cake* standard, and agreed that the specifications would reflect first story 100%, second story 100%, third story 90%, and fourth story 80%.

The Commissioners suggested having a list of things to review in a year, including reviewing the percentages versus the setbacks, below grade, reducing parking frontages, defining a blank wall and the Total Combined Usable Open Space number, which included a clarification about a balcony as it relates to the Private

Open Space Requirements in order to be counted toward the open space requirement.

Deputy Director Becker summarized that in regard to parking frontages and lot coverages, the Commission wanted to prioritize access from the alley or side street before the front yard. If it must be taken from the front yard, the driveway width is limited to 24 feet.

In addition, the Commission made adjustments to the following Development Features in *Table 2-6: Maximum Floor Area by Story; Maximum Elevation Above and Below Street and Sidewalk Level; Parking and Driveways Combined; and the Private Open Space Requirements.*

**Decision:**

Chair Lesak moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Padilla, to adopt a Resolution recommending the Ordinance changes in addition to the changes noted by Deputy Director Becker.

Chair Dahl directed Staff to call the Roll:

Commissioner Swanborn	Aye
Commissioner Lesak	Aye
Vice-Chair Padilla	Aye
Chair Dahl	Aye

**Motion carried, 4-0.**

Commissioner Lesak remarked on comments received via email challenging some of the math in the tables and asked Staff to verify the numbers being provided are correct.

Deputy Director Becker confirmed receipt of the email, and responded that Staff's goal is to provide accurate tables. They will be able to report back shortly on the outcome of that reconciliation.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

**4. Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled on September 12, 2023 at 6:30 pm:**

There being no further matters, Chair Dahl adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.



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Laura Dahl, Chair