



**CITY OF SOUTH PASADENA  
Planning Commission  
Special Meeting Minutes  
Monday, June 24, 2025, at 6:30 PM**

**Amedee O. "Dick" Richard, 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 Padilla on Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at 6:31 p.m. The meeting was held at 1424 Mission Street, South Pasadena, California.

**ROLL CALL**

**Present:** Chair: Lisa Padilla  
Vice-Chair Amitabh Barthakur  
Commissioners: Jason Claypool, Mark Gallatin, Arnold Swanborn,  
James Martin

**City Staff**

**Present:** Roxanne Diaz, Esq., City Attorney  
David Snow, Esq., Assistant City Attorney  
Robert (Dean) Flores, Acting Planning Manager  
Lillian Estrada, Administrative Secretary

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Approved, 6-0.**

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

Commissioner Gallatin reported conversations with two residents about Agenda Item 2 and Chair Padilla also reported conversations with a couple of residents regarding Agenda Item 2.

Chair Padilla welcomed new Commissioner James Martin and acknowledged his previous role serving as a Commissioner on the Design Review Board.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

### **1. Public Comment – General (Non-Agenda Items)**

None.

## **CONTINUED PUBLIC HEARING ITEM**

### **2. Consideration of Resolutions recommending to the City Council the adoption of proposed amendments to the General Plan Land Use and Housing Elements, the Downtown Specific Plan, South Pasadena Municipal Code (SPMC) Chapter 36 (Zoning) and Zoning Map to adjust height, density, development standards and housing overlay boundaries and adopt an addendum to a previously certified Program EIR pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act**

#### **Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Planning Commission conduct a continued Public Hearing and:

1. Resume discussion regarding the draft recommended adjustments to densities, heights, and other related standards, making any other recommended changes,
2. Receive an overview of the comments from the Community Meeting held on June 16, 2025 for discussion and direction, if any, regarding adjustments to densities, heights, and other related standards,
3. Adopt a Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an ordinance amending the General Plan Housing Element,
4. Adopt a Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an ordinance amending the Downtown Specific Plan, and
5. Adopt a Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an ordinance to amend SPMC Chapter 36 (Zoning) and the Zoning Map.

#### **Staff Presentation:**

Acting Planning Manager Dean Flores provided a brief presentation, highlighting the background on the progress of this item including: multiple public meetings to introduce the item and receive public feedback between January and March, 2025; a Joint City Council/Planning Commission (PC) Study Session on March 26, 2025; PC Special Meetings on April 29, 2025 and June 10, 2025; and a PC Special Meeting/Community Meeting on June 16, 2025.

Acting Planning Manager Flores introduced Consultant Phil Burns of The Arroyo Group who explained the Updated PC Proposal Scenario and community feedback in detail regarding height and density. He also remarked on outstanding issues for

discussion, including height averaging standards, landscaping standards for the Mixed Use/Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone and RM parcels fronting on La Senda Place and Olive Avenue and Pine Street.

**Questions for Staff:**

The Commissioners inquired about the economic analysis, assumptions regarding base density and height limits, concessions requested under density bonus scenarios, implications of height limits in terms of feet vs stories, and the feasibility of height averaging.

Staff, Assistant City Attorney David Snow and Consultant Burns addressed the Commissioners' questions.

**Public Comment:**

Dwight Bond, resident and architect, expressed appreciation to the Staff and the Commission for their hard work. He spoke about density and the height limit and asked for clarification on how building heights are measured.

Bianca Richards, resident, was very impressed with the Consultants and the accessibility of the information. She supported the process and encouraged the Commission to consider Mr. Bond's prior public comments.

Carol LaBrie, resident, spoke on behalf of Neighbors on Brent about concerns about the recommended 60-foot height designation for Brent Avenue.

Ed Elsner (via Zoom), spoke about a written comment he submitted two years ago regarding the Program Environmental Impact Report for the General Plan update and Housing Element Implementation Program.

Chair Padilla acknowledged receipt of written comments via email from resident Joanne Nuchols.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

Chair Padilla began the discussion with a review of the comments and input received from the Community Meeting. There were many positive comments, for which the Commission was very appreciative. A key question was about the maximum height.

Commissioner Claypool provided background regarding height – feet vs stories and height averaging - and reviewed a drawing which provided a visual representation (included in the Agenda packet).

The Commissioners engaged in a robust, detailed discussion regarding height, height limit and height averaging, and site landscaping - including consideration of

amendments to the General Plan, Zoning Map adjustments and housing overlay zones. They examined several scenarios.

The Commissioners discussed public feedback from the June 10, 2025 Community Meeting including, but not limited to, height limit, height averaging standards, landscaping standards for the Mixed Use and Housing Opportunity Overlay Zones and the specific places on the map of concern – RM parcels on La Senda Place and Olive Street.

Commissioner Gallatin offered several proofreading corrections to the four Resolutions which were noted.

City Attorney Diaz reviewed each Resolution proposed to be presented to City Council.

Chair Padilla closed the Public Hearing.

**Commissioner Discussion:**

The Commissioners discussed the Resolutions in detail and noted the changes and corrections from their April 29, 2025 meeting.

Chair Padilla directed the Planning Commission to consider adopting the Resolution recommending that the City Council adopt an Ordinance amending the General Plan Housing Element.

**Decision:**

Vice-Chair Barthakur moved, seconded by Commissioner Martin, to adopt the Resolution of the Planning Commission recommending the City Council adopt a General Plan Amendment to implement the Housing Element, as shown in Exhibit A and Exhibit B, and accepted the additional suggestions to the motion from the City Attorney, namely that Staff is authorized to make any other revisions to the General Plan Amendment and General Plan Land Use Map to ensure internal consistency, including consistency with the Planning Commission direction given to Staff during its meeting on June 24, 2025, and including any minor cleanup of the Amendment, if needed, including any revisions to figures, tables and maps, to fix grammar and typographical errors, and make the revisions to the CEQA section of the Resolution as stated by Assistant City Attorney Snow, direct Staff to undertake any fine-tuning of the CEQA Addendum, and to revise the map that would remove certain parcels from the Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone along Huntington Drive on Olive Avenue, La Senda Place and Oak Street, and adding certain properties zoned RM back into the Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone on Marmion Way and Arroyo Verde all per the map shown to the Planning Commission during the meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: Martin, Claypool, Gallatin, Swanborn, Barthakur, Padilla  
Noes: None  
Abstentions: None

**Motion carried, 6-0.**

**Commissioner Discussion – Housing Element Amendment:**

Chair Padilla directed the Commission to consider a recommendation to adopt the Resolution of the Planning Commission recommending that the City Council adopt a Housing Element Amendment to the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element, as shown in Exhibit A and Exhibit B.

**Decision:**

Commissioner Swanborn moved, seconded by Commissioner Martin, to adopt the Resolution of the Planning Commission recommending the City Council adopt an Amendment to the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element as shown in Exhibit A and Exhibit B and accepted the additional suggestions to the motion from the City Attorney that Staff is authorized to make any other revisions to the Housing Element Amendment to ensure internal consistency, including consistency with the Planning Commission's actions and their direction given to Staff during its meeting on June 24, 2025, and any actions taken by Resolution, and including any minor cleanup of the Amendment, if needed, including, revisions to the site inventory, figures, tables and maps, to fix grammar and typographical errors, and make the revisions to the CEQA section of the Resolution as stated by Assistant City Attorney Snow and direct Staff to undertake any fine-tuning of the CEQA Addendum.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: Martin, Claypool, Gallatin, Swanborn, Barthakur, Padilla  
Noes: None  
Abstentions: None

**Motion carried, 6-0.**

**Commissioner Discussion – Specific Plan Amendment:**

Chair Padilla directed the Commission to consider adopting the Resolution of the Planning Commission recommending that the City Council adopt a Specific Plan Amendment to amend the Downtown Specific Plan (DTSP), to implement the Housing Element, as shown in Exhibit A.

**Decision:**

Commissioner Gallatin moved, seconded by Vice-Chair Barthakur, to adopt the Resolution of the Planning Commission recommending the City Council adopt a Specific Plan Amendment to amend the Downtown Specific Plan to implement the Housing Element as shown in Exhibit A and accept the additional suggestions to the motion from the City Attorney that the Resolution will include Attachment 1, which is the approved Development Standards Table as amended by the Planning Commission, and make the revisions to the CEQA section of the Resolution as stated by Assistant City Attorney Snow and direct Staff to undertake any fine-tuning of the CEQA Addendum, revise Section 15 of the Resolution with respect to housing on religious congregation or private school sites to make it consistent with the figure in Section 5, which changes that property to Mixed-Use Core.

**Roll Call Vote**

Ayes: Martin, Claypool, Gallatin, Swanborn, Barthakur, Padilla  
Noes: None  
Abstentions: None

**Motion carried, 6-0.**

**Commissioner Discussion – Zoning Text and Zoning Map Amendments:**

Chair Padilla directed the Commission to consider adopting the Resolution of the Planning Commission recommending that the City Council adopt a Zoning Text Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment to amend the South Pasadena Municipal Code, Chapter 36, which is Zoning and the City Zoning Map to implement the Housing Element, as shown in Exhibit A and Exhibit B.

**Decision:**

Commissioner Claypool moved, seconded by Commissioner Swanborn, to adopt the Resolution of the Planning Commission recommending the City Council adopt a Zoning Text Amendment and Zoning Map Amendment to amend the South Pasadena Municipal Code, Chapter 36 and Zoning Map to implement the Housing Element as shown in Exhibit A and Exhibit B and accept the additional suggestions to the motion from the City Attorney that the Resolution will include Attachment 1, which is the approved Development Standards Table as amended by the Planning Commission, and make the revisions to the CEQA section of the Resolution as stated by Assistant City Attorney Snow and direct Staff to undertake any fine-tuning of the CEQA Addendum, to include the appropriate and updated Zoning Map and update the language of Section 8 of Exhibit A with respect to height averaging and to make amendments to the map that would remove certain parcels from the Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone along Huntington Drive and Olive Avenue, La Senda Place and Oak Street and adding certain properties zoned RM

back into the Housing Opportunity Overlay Zone on Marmion Way and Arroyo Verde, all per the map shown to the Planning Commission during the meeting.

Roll Call Vote

Ayes: Martin, Claypool, Gallatin, Swanborn, Barthakur, Padilla

Noes: None

Abstentions: None

**Motion carried, 6-0.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

- 3. Adjournment to the Regular Planning Commission meeting scheduled for July 8, 2025, at 6:30 p.m.**

There being no further matters, Chair Padilla adjourned the meeting at 10:41 p.m.

  
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Lisa Padilla, Chair