Frequently Asked Questions: Saturday, May 30, 2020 Housing Element Workshop

Question	Answer
Can commercial sites be rezoned for housing?	Depending on the sites analysis and the remaining number of units that will need to be accounted for, we may consider rezoning specific areas.
Can our city have some sort of citizen oversight committee (maybe involving current commissioners from different commissions) to make sure developers aren't destroying what we love about our city?	There are three commissions dedicated to doing exactly that, made up of citizens with oversight responsibility: the Planning Commission, the Design Review Board, and the Cultural Heritage Commission. These commissioners volunteer their time to act as stewards of the City's built environment by reviewing projects for approval, approval with conditions, or denial. Depending on the type of project, large and small projects are presented to one or more of these 3 commissions during the review process. Each commission meets regularly once a month to review project applications.
Can you address how lifting the 45 foot height limit in certain parts of the city like Fair Oaks and Huntington near the outskirts of town	There is a current height of 45' limit in the city by which all new development must abide. The only way to pierce the 45' height limit is through use of the State's Density Bonus Law, which allows a project with affordable housing to build higher than 45' if the height is required to make the project economically feasible. The recently approved senior housing project at 625 Fair Oaks, proposed to be 60' tall, utilized the Density Bonus in order to provide 13 of the 86 units as low-income units. The 45' limit was set by South Pasadena voters in 1983. Any change to the height limit, even in limited areas of the city like Fair Oaks or Huntington near the outskirts of town, would require a new ballot measure and a majority of South Pasadena voters. If the community prioritizes limited height increases, the extent and location of that height limit increase would be included in a ballot measure that would go before the voters in November 2020. City Staff has not yet determined whether a height limit change would be needed or not. That analysis will be completed and presented to the community for consideration over the next couple of months (June-July).
Can you also explain how all lots must be expected to be developed in 8 years? How you can just zone a 10 story building over a church.	The Housing Element does not require that housing be built within 8 years; but the state requires that the Housing Element plan for (allow for) for 2,062 units of housing at various levels of affordability. The City is not pursuing zoning changes that would allow a 10-story building. If a site that is not currently zoned for housing were to be considered for housing, a zone change would be required.
Can you discuss vacant lots? Will a tax be imposed to	The City is not considering a vacant property tax at this time. In order to establish such a tax, a ballot measure would need to be developed, put before the voters, and pass with 2/3 approval. In a City like

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encourage housing development? What about taxing vacant lots? Is that being considered?	Oakland, where there are numerous vacant lots, the vacant property tax is generating revenue to support homeless and affordable housing related programs. By comparison, South Pasadena has very few vacant lots.
Can you please explain some of the penalties for the city if South Pasadena doesn't comply with the RHNA rules? Some people think there is no punishment.	A non-compliant city would be required to update its Housing Element every 4 rather than 8 years, at the City's expense; The RHNA numbers would be added to the next housing element cycle, over-burdening future policy. The Housing Element must be certified for adequate General Plan and is enforced by the State Department of Housing and Community Development. Non-compliant cities would also be ineligible for State funding, and face potential legal challenges. The State could take legal action against non-compliant jurisdictions, and has recently done so against a few jurisdictions in Southern California.
Considering that San Marino is just as far from transit as many parts of South Pasadena, won't we have the ability for SCAG to redistribute based on actual viewing rather than a guess? How do our goals compare to La Cañada or San Marino? Are all communities being required to include large numbers of low income housing, including those cities that currently have no multifamily at all? Why are South Pasadena's numbers disproportionately higher than Pasadena and San Marino? Why and what are their numbers?	The City acknowledges the formula SCAG used to calculate RHNA but does not agree that the allocation to South Pasadena is appropriate given our built-out condition and historic character. The Southern California Association of Governments used a formula based on the following framework: • Projected household growth; • Projected future vacancy need; • Projected replacement need; • Existing transit accessibility; • Existing job accessibility; • Existing residual distribution within the County; and • Social equity Based on that formula some similarly sized cities (i.e. San Marino, La Cañada Flintridge) have lower RHNA allocations compared to the City of South Pasadena. San Marino: 398 • Very Low - 149 • Low - 91 • Moderate - 91 • Above Moderate - 68 La Canada Flintridge: 611 • Very Low - 251 • Low - 135 • Moderate - 139 • Above Moderate - 87

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	Pasadena: 9,409 • Very Low - 2,739 • Low - 1,659 • Moderate - 1,562 • Above Moderate - 3,449
Do you have examples/locations of potential sites being looked at for this housing?	Vacant and non-vacant sites currently zoned to allow residential, additional vacant and non-vacant sites proposed to allow residential under draft General Plan and DTSP and any additional residential capacity under these plans, and sites that allow ADUs. The sites analysis is underway so information on specific sites is not yet available. We anticipate having a draft of the analysis in July.
During a budget crisis, the city is paying considerable sums to lobbying firms. How much of that money is being spent lobbying the state to reduce South Pasadena's RHNA requirements and push out the Housing Element deadline during COVID?	All lobbying contracts have been cancelled due to the budget cuts necessitated by the fiscal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The state's housing crisis has not lessened due to COVID-19, and may even be exacerbated by it; the state therefore does not intend to extend the Housing Element deadline beyond the original October 2021 due date. However, staff will continue to update the public on any changes or new information from the state regarding the Housing Element and the deadline for submission.
From the low to moderate income housing numbers that you showed, it seems like cities are having difficulty building units in this category. What are ways to ensure that the identified affordable units are actually built?	The City can keep its Housing Element up-to-date in order to remain eligible for State funding to build this type of housing and be proactive in reaching out to the developer community and property owners to identify strong opportunities for low and moderate income housing projects. Additionally, the City could consider adopting an Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, requiring that any proposed housing development include a specified percentage of affordable units.
Has the City looked at the occupied lot on the northwest corner of Huntington Drive and Kendall Avenue? It's a former gas station, now a mechanic shop. It's an eye sore and has potential for affordable housing opportunity.	Specific analysis of this site has not occurred yet. We will make sure it is on our list to analyze.
How many ADUs have been built so far and how are being rented? The first two ADUs in South Pasadena were built on our alley and neither owner has any intention of renting their ADUs out. The ADUs are located behind very small	15 ADUs received planning entitlements in 2019, 1 of which was proposed for renters, 14 proposed for use by owner, and 7 of which were issued Building Permits. 5 ADUs have been entitled so far in 2020. It is not known if they are proposed for renters or to be owner-occupied.

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houses and families are basically looking to expand their primary dwelling. One family spent 1.1 million for their house and has no interest in providing rental housing. I'm unable to access regular comments. I just think it's a mistake to assume that people are going to build ADUs (Both our neighbors spent over $10000 on theirs) and then lease them out as affordable housing. I meant to say both our neighbors spent $100k on their ADUs. They spent 1.1 MILLION and over 100K on each ADU.	There are various ways ADUs can contribute to housing affordability in South Pasadena. Many residents see ADUs as a way to age in place, either by renting out the unit, providing additional income in retirement that would allow people to stay in their homes; or to allow for multiple generations living on the property, by providing housing for themselves or their adult children who want to stay in South Pasadena but are otherwise priced out of the market. As well, the City is required in its Housing Element to incentivize and promote the creation of accessory dwelling units that can be offered at affordable rent. One way is to incentivize property owners to include affordability covenants on their ADUs which would add to the City's inventory of low-income units. The City's ADU ordinance could be also modified to include a square footage size-to-bedroom count ratio crafted to produce affordability even at market rate.
I'd hate to see all of our low density multifamily housing (i.e. bungalow courts) be lost in favor of higher density apartments and assume that any historic designations cannot be superseded by new housing mandates?	The Housing Element Update will analyze all sites to determine which sites will be the most feasible to satisfy the RHNA requirements. As an element of the General Plan, the Housing Element sites analysis will take into consideration the City's priority to preserve the historic character of its neighborhoods to ensure internal consistency.
If units approved before 6/30/21 don't count towards our new RHNA numbers, Odom's senior housing project and the Mission Bell site are out. Is the plan for the other larger development sites- Carrows, Public Storage and El Centro title company site to name a few- to NOT seek any approvals before June of next year in order to count?	While projects approved before 6/30/21 will not apply to the 6th Cycle, they can contribute to our 5th Cycle RHNA allocations. The Senior Housing project at 625 Fair Oaks will help the City meet its 5th Cycle RHNA requirements for low-income units. By law, the City must process all planning applications in a timely manner. Recent legislation SB330 takes this mandate further and requires that Cities process complete applications within 90 days (60 days for applicable affordable housing projects), and limits the public hearings to 5 total, including all commission meetings recommending and/or approving components of the project.
If we are appealing our RHNA numbers, what do we believe is our correct number?	The City is appealing the allocation that was attributed to the region as a whole to ensure the allocation is based on the Department of Finance's recently updated population projections instead of the State's goal of 3.5 million homes by 2025. In addition, the City is recommending that SCAG reinstate Local Input in the RHNA methodology which takes into consideration the unique demographics and development pattern of each jurisdiction. For example, Local Input for South Pasadena includes the preservation of historic resources, character and scale. Based on these

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	recommendations it is unclear what the "correct" number would be however, the allocation assigned to the City would be lower than the current allocation.
If we increased maximum density requirements would those minimums apply across the board down to ADUs?	ADU densities are regulated under state law, but some parts of the law still need to be clarified by State HCD. The City is currently interpreting the law to restrict a single family lot to one ADU except in specific circumstances that could allow a JADU and a detached ADU.
Is the City addressing how the potential increased units will increase our population and therefore tax the local schools in terms of an increased student population?	An environmental review will be conducted in conjunction with the Housing Element Update and General Plan Update. The environmental review will evaluate the impacts associated with the increased population.
Is the City working with SPUSD to evaluate the District offices and Oneonta sites for housing? The Hotel idea for district offices is interesting but should really be evaluated by an expert (Kallenburger and Jones, here in South Pasadena, are national consultants in the hotel field for banks and developers). Housing is a better bet for that site.	The school district is currently soliciting proposals for use of their site. At the appropriate time, they will approach the City to discuss any potential opportunities. The City is not currently working with the school district on any housing proposals.
It seems that the Golf Course is underutilized and could be a place for a lot of housing. Is it being considered? Has there been an analysis of amount and type of use of the Golf Course by residents of SP? Open space is nice but the impact of these rules will impact residents far more than the loss of a pitch and putt golf course.	The golf course is designated as open space and we are not currently making a recommendation to change that designation. If the preliminary sites analysis shows a large deficit in housing opportunities, this is one of the sites that could be re-evaluated for housing if the community prioritized it as such.
Many residents of South Pasadena resist most forms of development. Is RHNA and the state government policy the	The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is the state-mandated tool that requires local facilitation of new housing development at multiple income levels. In addition to RHNA, and in response to the statewide housing shortage, the California State legislature has been introducing more aggressive legislation over the

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only way to encourage new development?	last several years to further reduce local control in an effort to encourage more housing development. The Housing Element must address RHNA and respond to related state law, but it and the other components of the General Plan can and will include additional policies that are more locally-focused and reflect the community's vision for development.
The City is proposing to place a measure on the November ballot that will legalize Airbnb and other short term rental platforms in South Pasadena. It is commonly known throughout the United States and the world, that Airbnb is responsible for removing tens of thousands of units of affordable housing from the rental market. In Venice alone, 10,000 units of affordable housing was obliterated thanks to Airbnb. Legalization for Airbnb actually appears in the most recent General Plan draft. How is the City proposing that we meet our affordable housing needs while also opening South Pasadena up for a proliferation of unregulated Airbnb properties? How can the City prevent those using ADU's for Airbnb instead of affordable housing requirements?	This is a multiple-part question. The City has not yet determined if a measure to legalize Airbnb will be placed on the November 2020 ballot for voter consideration. However, City staff are recommending that the City's consultant conduct polling research on the UUT ballot measure as well as two other potential ballot measures for November 2020, including the legalization of Airbnb; and a limited height limit increase to accommodate the RHNA state-required housing units. The City Council will determine what will be placed on the November ballot at a regularly scheduled Council meeting in August. Short-term rentals are not currently allowed in South Pasadena; however, a community survey conducted in 2018 showed that a majority of South Pasadena residents are interested in legalizing Airbnb. Many residents see Airbnb as a way to age in place, providing additional income in retirement that would allow people to stay in their homes. If the City were to legalize Airbnb, in compliance with state law the City would require any rental of the ADU be for a term longer than 30 days. In general, Airbnb hosts also provide short-term rental opportunities within their primary residences. In regards to ADUs and affordable housing, your question highlighting the competing interests are important for the community to consider. If everyone followed the law (owner-occupying or using ADUs for rentals of over 30 days only), there would be no conflict. Therefore, the tradeoffs of legalization: allowing compliant residents a legal opportunity to generate income versus the increased burden on code enforcement - is an important point for further discussion. Regarding meeting RHNA requirements with ADUs, it is important to understand: • The State allows ADUs by right; • The City cannot require a property owner to rent out an ADU, but ADUs are not to be used for short-term rentals, in any event; and • RHNA does not currently discriminate on whether the units are for-rent or not;

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	The factors that will determine how many ADUs can be counted towards RHNA have to do with: 1. The number of ADUs already approved; 2. The South Pasadena market rate for ADUs (unit sizes and bedroom count could be balanced so that the market rate of the units fall within a range that is considered affordable by the state). US Department of Housing and Urban Development 2019 HOME Program Rent Limits for Los Angeles-Long Beach-Glendale: Very Low (50% rent limit) • Studio - $913 • 1 bedroom - $979 • 2 bedroom - $1,175 Low (65% rent limit) • Studio - $1,168 • 1 bedroom - $1,253 • 2 bedroom - $1,506 Fair Market • Studio - $1,158 • 1 bedroom - $1,384 • 2 bedroom - $1,791 3. How many affordable covenants are recorded on ADUs (if ADUs can be assured to be affordable through deed restriction then more ADUs can be anticipated and counted towards the RHNA)
What considerations are taken into account in looking at housing availability in relation to aging infrastructure?	An environmental review will be conducted in conjunction with the Housing Element Update and General Plan Update. The environmental review will evaluate the impacts associated with the increased population, including on infrastructure.
What streets are included on the potential sites map showing the corridor?	Mission Street, Fair Oaks Avenue, and Huntington Drive. However, that graphic is just an example of the idea of focusing on corridors and analysis to select those corridors has not yet been conducted.
Where can we find this presentation for review to ask questions for the Tuesday workshop?	Presentation materials will be posted on the City's Housing Element page: https://www.southpasadenaca.gov/government/departments/planning-and-building/2021-housing-element-update Please submit questions and comments to: HousingElement@SouthPasadenaCA.gov
Why was the Mission Bell project approved with increased density, but no affordable housing?	The Mission Bell Project approval falls under the current Mission Street Specific Plan, which is the zoning for the site. Based on the development standards (setbacks and maximum height of 45') in the current Mission Street Specific Plan, the project was designed to accommodate a density of 50 units/acre. The Housing Element

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	presentation notes that the Mission Bell Project would not meet the current Draft Downtown Specific Plan density maximum of 30 units/acre. Given the amount of housing the City must accommodate to meet RHNA, the city may want to reconsider the proposed density in the Draft DTSP and have it match 50 units/acre.
Will the general plan include the deed restricted design rules for the Altos de Monterey development?	The City will evaluate the CC&Rs for Altos de Monterey in order to incorporate them appropriately in the General Plan Update.

Comments:

- I'd definitely love to see more housing close to transit and transit oriented development in South Pasadena. That is environmentally sustainable development. Plus, the RHNA requirements are placed on us in part because we have good transit and good access to jobs.
- Enacting rent controls that are stricter that the current State laws will definitely reduce interest from developers in lower income housing, or any multifamily projects. So go for it if your goal is to reduce development. Otherwise, it is a bad idea.
- Because we are unable to see the actual questions, we have no way of knowing if all the questions are actually being addressed. This is not the most open way to do this.
- It seems that the easiest approach to accommodating more housing would be to allow affordable housing all commercial zones.