



July 9, 2021

Honorable Mayor Bill Bogaard
Housing Commission
City of Pasadena
100 North Garfield Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91101

Re: Pasadena Housing Element

The Board of Madison Heights Neighborhood Association (MHNA) is pleased to participate in the planning and shaping of the Housing Element for Pasadena. Many areas under consideration for additional housing are adjacent to our boundaries, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide the Housing Commission with our feedback.

Our organization takes the opportunity to shape the look and feel of our city seriously, and we are committed to helping get the planning right, in terms of adding additional housing, trees, community areas, and unique shopping destinations to our city. Ideally, the Housing Element will complement and continue to support what we love about Madison Heights: walkable streets, tree-lined sidewalks, a friendly neighborhood community, and historic architecture.

As a board representing over 1,700 Pasadena residents living near two transit-oriented districts (TODs), we ask you to consider the following points while preparing the Housing Element:

- 1) Parks, trees, and open space are imperative to creating great neighborhoods. We support additional housing under the premise that all varieties of housing have easy access to trees, green space, and parks.
- 2) Development setback standards are a considerable concern for our association. Minimal-to-zero setbacks do not allow for in-ground trees around the periphery of new buildings. We would like to see all setbacks increased to 10-15 feet when

developing near single-family neighborhoods. This adjustment will improve walkability, allow for in-ground tree plantings, and add an overall inviting neighborhood feel, especially near Arroyo Parkway, California Boulevard, and Lake Avenue. By allowing for more trees, we will create an environmentally friendly community, add beauty and shade, and honor our reputation as an “urban forest” city.

- 3) Drastic and disjointed increases in height and density adjacent to single-family neighborhoods must be avoided. Overall, substantial increases in density and height would be more appealing if the transition from single-family homes to multi-family complexes was done on a gradual basis.
- 4) We support reducing parking up to $\frac{1}{3}$ of typical allotments, but want to ensure that residents in new developments will **not** be allowed to park overnight on streets in our district, especially along Marengo Avenue, which currently has an exception to accommodate for older units with no parking garages. No permanent, on-street parking permits should be issued to future residents of these projects. This will also help ensure that the environmental motivation to reduce parking in new developments is not defeated.
- 5) A walkable greenway or bikeway from Art Center to Old Pasadena would be a nice way to alleviate the use of cars, especially for students and younger tenants of new TODs in the South Fair Oaks neighborhood. Adding significant density without proper support for local transportation issues is a huge point of concern for MHNA, and must be explored.
- 6) Maintaining commercial district designations for areas including Lake and Colorado is a priority for MHNA. We would like to see Lake Avenue remain at 50% commercial to retain the original purpose of the street as a pedestrian-oriented commercial street, including regional office space and local shopping. To maintain the commercial retail and service character of the South Lake Shopping Area, housing should not occupy more than 50 percent of total building floor area along Lake Avenue from Green Street south to California Boulevard. Housing would be a positive addition to stimulate and activate the area, but the floor area ratio (FAR) would need to gradually increase from 1 at California Blvd. to 2 at Del Mar.

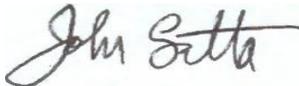
MHNA would also like to see the corners of Lake and California zoned solely for commercial use. There are aspects of our neighborhood that we would like to remain unchanged by retaining this type of zoning, which include: easy access to

grocery shopping, mountain views, and open green space where kids and families enjoy socializing. (Peet's Coffee is a great example of this.)

- 7) MHNA supports and encourages the idea of adaptive reuse. Many empty and underutilized buildings could be the key to creating additional housing units in order to meet our city's Regional Housing State Allocation (RHNA) in the most sustainable way possible.
- 8) Pasadena has been challenged to meet a state housing goal of 9,400 units, which MHNA fears is only achievable by creating concrete canyons of dense housing. It is imperative that the commission considers the reduction of quality-of-life with the addition of such huge density on our local infrastructure. We are most concerned about the potential for immovable traffic, ever-higher heat indexes, and less open space with the addition of these new housing units. MHNA does not deny the region's need for more homes in general, but the quantity requested by the state is daunting. We ask our city leaders to work with the state and exhaust every avenue to reduce the allotment to a point where we can build and grow within a more reasonable framework.
- 9) There is cause for concern that if the demand for dramatic housing growth dries up, it would be impossible to suddenly make the new inventory of construction in Pasadena disappear. Millennials currently lead the home-buying demand, but we must bear in mind that as aging seniors exit the housing market, the remaining supply could potentially outnumber the young homebuyers' demand. Changing demographics and household trends warrant important discussions on how we approach the supply of new building.

We would be pleased to meet with you, David Reyes, and other appropriate city staff and officials to discuss our proposed improvements to the Housing Element.

Thank you,



John Latta

Cc: David Reyes, Jennifer Paige, Mayor Victor Gordo, Vice Mayor Andy Wilson, Councilmember Steve Madison, Taka Suzuki and Pam Thyret