

## Molinar, Tess

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**From:** Nina Chomsky <nrchomsky@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 9, 2020 3:02 PM  
**To:** Molinar, Tess  
**Subject:** Planning Commission Meeting 9/9/2020: Agenda Item 4.A. Mansionization

**Please deliver to the Planning Commission for today's meeting, and post. Thank you.**

### Linda Vista-Annandale Association

Chair Felicia Williams and Planning Commissioners  
c/o [tmolinar@cityofpasadena.net](mailto:tmolinar@cityofpasadena.net)

Re: Planning Commission Meeting 9/9/2020; Agenda Item 4.A.: Single Family Development Standards, i.e. Mansionization

Chair Williams and Planning Commissioners:

The Linda Vista=Annandale Association (LVAA) has reviewed the Staff Report hoping for solutions to the "Mansionization" problems plaguing much of our single-family zoning areas, and we find little to support.

**The entire staff analysis and recommendations are rooted in the "limitations" of SB 330. Yet, a review of the entire legislation raises this issue: does SB 330, and its limitations and restrictions, apply to single family homes? LVAA's position is No. LVAA's view is that the plain wording of the legislation, when read in the context of the "four corners" of the statute, leads to the conclusion that SB 330 is intended to apply to Multi-Family development projects.**

As currently structured, the Staff Recommendations fail to solve the following Mansionization issues which challenge LVAA over and over in our non-Hillside areas: the general undermining of neighborhood scale and character of new houses and remodels that show no respect for the character and design qualities of adjacent homes; looming additions that may have no window issues, but simply loom and compromise the full enjoyment of neighboring properties; undermining of traditional setbacks and block faces. All of this can only be addressed by quality Zoning standards and Design Guidelines applied pursuant to a consistent, discretionary review process. Ministerial review should apply only to the most minimal of projects. This discretionary process should include requirements for story poles and digital design analysis; full notification to impacted neighbors, including making all plans fully available to the public; and, a clear Appeal process, including for ministerial decisions.

Relying on the Hillside Development process as if it is a clear success with respect to Mansionization issues is misplaced. The Hillside Overlay process is better than what came before, i.e., out of control hillside development, but the Hillside Overlay addresses scale issues with a certain level of success, not character. In fact, in light of a number of Neighborhood Compatibility failures in the last few years, the Hillside Neighborhood Compatibility process has been tightened with more required Findings. Yet, in our Hillside areas, out of scale and out of character houses and remodels continue to be built because the Hillside Overlay is nothing but a "numbers game" with little discretion applied to character and scale even though the Ordinance includes language that should be helpful. A good example of this situation is the staff recommendation that, just like the Hillside Ordinance, non Hillside applicants will "compute" Neighborhood Compatibility, and then get a 35% bonus over Median, which is better than the Average, but the bonus often has little justification. The lesson learned is that reliance on numbers as applied to envelopes, FAR, etc. does not address scale and character head on. Maybe, it is time to rethink how to achieve new development in all of our neighborhoods that is in "scale and character" with its surroundings. The take away from this observation? The staff proposed discretionary review process for "numbers" that exceed Neighborhood Compatibility in non Hillside areas is not going to accomplish much.

Thank you for your attention to our concerns.

Linda Vista-Annandale Association,

Nina Chomsky, President