



Participate Pasadena – Wednesday, March 14, 2018

The second Participate Pasadena meeting on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 focused on planning efforts currently underway in the City. The two main topics were Specific Plans and Mansionization in single-family residential neighborhoods. Below is a list of questions and comments from attendees. Attendees also left written questions and comments, which are also provided below.

QUESTIONS & COMMENTS FOLLOWING PRESENTATIONS

I. Specific Plans (Steve Preston)

- **QUESTION: What is form-based code?**
 - **Answer:** *An explanation was provided. Standard zoning focuses on uses that are permitted in a specific place. Form-based code focuses more on what the buildings look like – size, scale, massing – and the uses are less defined.*
- **QUESTION: How can we insure that everyone's voice is heard?**
 - **Answer:** *We can't insure it, but we hope through meetings like this and more information distributed about how to participate, more voices will be heard.*
- **QUESTION: How does the new California housing legislation affect Pasadena?**
 - **Answer:** *This is a big question! In general, the State is dictating more and more how much housing City's are to build or encourage and simplifying the process for building housing. This takes power away from cities to guide or control what is built. The Mayor indicated that City Council will be studying this issue in detail in the next few weeks to understand better what the impacts will be.*

2. Mansionization (Sue Mossman)

- **QUESTION: Why is mansionization being brought up as an issue now as opposed to ten years ago?**
 - **Answer:** *It has been going on for a long time, but right now the City is crafting new guidelines so it is timely because something is happening.*
- **COMMENT: Neighboring communities such as Arcadia have experienced widespread mansionization; comparatively, Pasadena has been spared.**
- **QUESTION: What is South Pasadena doing differently than Pasadena? Less mansionization appears to be occurring there.**
 - **Answer:** *Not sure but worth asking. Housing prices tend to be higher there so perhaps not as many flip opportunities.*
- **COMMENT: The proposed single-family residence at 300 South Arroyo Boulevard encompasses approximately 12,000 square feet and exceeds the size of neighboring**

home by four times. Perhaps the size of single-family residences should be determined by averaging the sizes of neighboring homes.

- **QUESTION: Is it true that by retaining only one load-bearing wall of an existing residence, a project can qualify as a “remodel?”**
 - **Answer:** *In Pasadena, the rules are stricter but we do see remodeling projects that progress beyond the original plans until it seems only one wall is left.*
- **COMMENT:** *In Los Angeles, developers can purchase properties and redevelop them faster than the new legislation can prevent them.*
- **QUESTION & COMMENT:** *Are there regulations in Pasadena pertaining specifically to view sheds?*
 - **Answer:** *Not currently, but perhaps a list of significant view sheds meriting protection should be compiled.*
- **COMMENT:** *The concept of Mansionization does not appear to be applicable to single-family residences only; oversized commercial buildings are also being built in commercial districts. Buildings near Vroman’s are an example.*
 - **Response:** *Generally larger projects require environmental review which at least provides a public forum and more analysis – not all but many.*
- **QUESTION:** *What is a Landmark District? How practical and effective are they as a solution to controlling development?*
 - **Answer:** *We just held a Landmark District workshop a few weeks ago. Information is available on the City’s website and we will direct you to it.*
- **QUESTION:** *What is the City Occupancy Program? Can it help prevent excessive development?*
 - **Answer:** *No, not really. Occupancy permits are generally very basic and are needed when a house changes hands or has been remodeled; occupancy inspections focus on life safety issues. All inspection reports and information on one address are kept in the file at the City for that address, so are available for others to reference.*
- **QUESTION:** *What are the criteria for designating a Landmark District?*
 - **Answer:** *Landmark Districts are neighborhoods of a cohesive character, style, or time frame. Property owners apply for their neighborhood to be considered; boundaries are drawn and contributing and non-contributing homes may be within them, but there must be a majority of contributors and a majority of homeowners who are in support of the designation. See the City’s website or call us for more specifics.*
- **QUESTION:** *A resident mentioned a house in Pasadena where Upton Sinclair lived. Would the surrounding neighborhood qualify as a Landmark District for its association with Upton Sinclair?*
 - **Answer:** *No, not unless it meets other criteria, but the house, itself, might be Landmark eligible because of its famous resident.*
- **QUESTION:** *What is Floor Area Ratio (FAR)? How does it apply to single-family residences?*

- **Answer:** A simplified explanation was provided. Single family homes have several kinds of restrictions – height, lot coverage, set-backs and FAR which dictates how much floor area a house can have – a bigger footprint if all one floor, a smaller footprint if two stories or more – per a formula.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS & COMMENTS (Answered During Presentations)

1. Specific Plans

- How long will this process take?
- Besides the workshops, how will the community be allowed to participate in the Specific Plan update process?
- We were promised form-based code in the Central District. When will this happen?
- What if my neighborhood is not in a Specific Plan?
- Commercial to residential transition areas need to be considered for Specific Plans.

2. Mansionization

- Why is mansionization now an issue? Who is creating this problem?
- “Mansionization” in commercial districts.
- Are FAR’s used for residential development? Does this help limit size?
- Document view sheds to be protected.

3. Miscellaneous

- Convert City to be California native plant friendly – they still plant invasive species like Mexican Feather Grass and Chinese Elm.
- Why did the City close its Neighbors Connection Office?
- Please do something to stop the destruction of Pasadena!!