August 28, 2020

To: Chair Schwartz and Planning Commissioners

Re: Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Amendments (September 5, 2020 Agenda Item III)

Allied Neighborhoods Association appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Accessory Dwelling Unit Ordinance Amendments.

We thought about the General Plan concept of "blend and balance" brought up by Chair Schwartz during her comments on the SWMP Amendments in July - and how that concept applies to the ADU Ordinance Amendments.

The staff recommendations for the Amendments, taken as a whole and working together, do a good job of blending and balancing goals, policies, values, and specifics.

Recent state housing law allows both a JADU and a Special ADU on each single family zoned lot, which is both a major change and housing incentive. Throughout the proposed Amendments is additional flexibility (in the specifics) for property owners.

Allied considers the Ordinance Recommendations for Historic Resources and for High Fire Hazard Area Development to be essential elements.

1) The Architectural Historian's review, described on pg.11, has worked well, and we strongly agree it needs to continue. From pg.12, *"Staff recommends that review of ADUs on properties with historic resources continue in the same manner that was identified in the former ordinance as the process worked well and, with small changes in the design, resulted in ADUs that benefit, rather than detract from, the City's historic neighborhoods and streetscapes."*

We appreciate the Staff Report reminding us of the importance of historic resources in the City Charter.

2) The High Fire Hazard Area Development Ordinance Recommendation (starting at the bottom of pg.10) is both appropriate and necessary, as we blend and balance the Amendments as a whole:

- The General Plan, Purpose and Need, starts out: *"The health, safety and welfare of the community are of primary importance to the City."*

- We have the benefit of the very recent Draft CWPP information (pg.10, top two full paragraphs*), which is very important. It starts out to say, we have *"…a complex wildfire environment that presents a significant wildfire risk…"* In a fire situation, not only is there evacuation to consider - but also the ability of large

fire-fighting vehicles (and, of course, other vehicles and personnel) to be able to get where they need to go, with numerous very narrow roads that pose serious ingress challenges in the Foothill and Extreme Foothill HFHAs.

- We agree Standard ADUs should be prohibited in the Foothill and Extreme Foothill HFHAs. Being the largest ADUs, we think there is no pressing need for up to 1,200 sq. ft; a special ADU and a JADU are already allowed by state law. And, as stated in the Memorandum, "this recommendation was intended to balance the provisions of state law with the prior ADU ordinance standards for high fire hazard areas and the City's General Plan policies for fire hazard areas, which recommend prohibiting ADUs and limiting new development."

Defensible Space. We have concern that the defensible space requirement (pg. 11, #3) may not be maintained. Between the Fire Department, Enforcement in Community Development, and Enforcement in the Attorney's Office there should be a follow-up plan to ensure compliance with the defensible space requirement. If there's already a plan, we would love to hear about it.

As the past few weeks in California point out again, fire safety is really important.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,
Allied Neighborhoods Association

Cc: Rosie Dyste, Daniel Gullett, Nicole Hernandez, Renee Brooke, Rebecca Bjork, Ariel Calonne, Paul Casey

** "The Draft CWPP confirms that the City and surrounding landscape exhibit a complex wildfire environment that presents a significant wildfire risk due to steep and varied terrain, a mosaic of different vegetation types, and a Wildland-Urban Interface development pattern. The draft CWPP modeled potential fire behavior in the City under extreme wind and weather conditions, consistent with conditions experienced during a Sundowner wind event. Other wildfire hazard variables were evaluated (terrain, weather, fuels, development patterns, fire department response, structure density, etc.) to confirm and/or identify new HFHAs of the City. Furthermore, the CWPP recognizes that California faces a dramatic increase in the severity and frequency of wildfires due to climate change.*

The main concern with the addition of ADUs/JADUs in fire prone neighborhoods is more people and cars needing to evacuate in an emergency situation, often on narrow, winding roads. Factors associated with evacuation, such as human behavior, population density, overloaded transportation routes, visitors, vulnerable populations, as well as the evacuation of pets and large animals, make the task of any evacuation more complex. Any combination of these factors may significantly increase the amount of time it takes to execute an evacuation."