

From: Kara Cox <>

Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 1:36 PM

To: Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: Comments in Support of ADU

Dear Planning Commission,

I am writing today in support of the changes proposed in agenda item three. The more flexibility homeowners have in building an ADU the more likely people are to build them. This will benefit homeowners, renters, and the city of San Mateo.

The city of San Mateo is experiencing critical housing shortages as well as consistently failing to meet our Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). ADU permit quick, relatively easy housing units compared to other development options. In addition, it allows homeowners to house relatives and childcare providers in a way that drastically reduces their vehicle miles travelled. It can also be rented out, providing additional income for the owner.

Another benefit of adding an ADU as opposed to traditional apartment complexes is that they do not fundamentally change the look and feel of neighborhoods, which is often a concern of more established residents. ADU allow for higher density housing while preserving the original character of our community. This is a win-win for both NIYMB and YIMBY advocates.

Kind regards,

Kara Cox

From: Eric Holm <>

Sent: Tuesday, September 7, 2021 3:21 PM

To: Joe Goethals <jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org>; Rick Bonilla <RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org>; Amourence Lee <alee.sanmateo@gmail.com>; Eric Rodriguez <erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org>; Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>

Cc: Phillip Brennan <pbrennan@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: Proposed ADU ordinance

Dear City Council Members,

I'm sorry this letter comes shortly before your meeting to review the issues tonight and I appreciate all the hard work you've done to get us here. I'd like to thank you for the thoughtful effort and process to develop a revised ADU ordinance in alignment with the State legislature and the City's goals. City Staff and the Planning Commission have proposed some bold changes based on community input and their own thoughts on encouraging and stimulating an increase in housing units that are desperately needed. The proposed direction of the ordinance is, in my opinion, an improvement over the discussions last spring but there are still some opportunities to capture.

I am an architect in San Mateo but I do not practice residential architecture. I am also a lifelong San Mateo resident. Below are some of my thoughts and comments on specific sections of the proposed ordinance and some reflections on conversations we are having at the local San Mateo Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) however the opinions expressed herein are my own.

27.19.050(c) State Exempted "By Right" ADUs.

The ordinance is not explicit in the application of the 800 sf of the state exempted "by right" area. The proposed ordinance states the additional 800 sf applies to NEW ADUs but does not address existing ADUs, or an ADU built before the FAR is maximized. An AIA lecture on this issue to our members highlighted that past practice of city staff and other cities has been to apply the 800sf allowed ADU area above the FAR only on NEW ADU applications and not retroactively on a lot when an ADU is present. This precludes a homeowner from building an ADU first and then remodeling their home, converting a garage into an ADU and then determining later that they would like to rebuild a garage, or building an ADU and then later deciding they need to remodel and add square footage to their primary residence.

When architects meet with clients, many homeowners would be interested in building an ADU to live in first and then remodeling their home. That is not possible under the practice. Without the added savings of living in the ADU during a whole house remodel, it sometimes is easier and more cost effective to scrape a site and build new. Typically, remodeling an existing home has tradeoffs in dealing with the existing structure vs building new. Those tradeoffs are considered in any project. As a result, in many more cases architects are recommending clients tear down their existing residence and build a new house and ADU at the same time rather than incrementally due to the tradeoffs and the unintended consequence of the sequence of building impacting your overall max buildable FAR and ADU Far on a site. This has an adverse effect of adding cost to a building plan as well as demolition of a structure that could otherwise be remodeled.

I strongly recommend that the 800 sf "by right" area be applied across the board to ADUs under 1200sf regardless of when they are built on a site. This would allow a homeowner to build the ADU first and then later make alterations to their home as long as the combined total did not exceed the FAR plus the 800 "by right" allotment. The 800 sf could then be looked at as a credit of 800 that can be applied to an ADU under 1200sf.

27.19.050(d) Maximum Unit Size

This modification proposed by the Planning Commission is a creative and essential change. This will allow lots with existing smaller homes to plan on a larger structure as the ADU rather than remodeling and enlarging the existing structure. This will be a critical piece in providing ADU housing capacity for families in our city as it will facilitate a three-bedroom ADU more suitable for families with children. With any development, often the hardest housing stock to build are the 3 or 4 bedroom units that families need. This will help fill that essential void for families that otherwise cannot

afford to live here. I think this modification makes a lot of sense and strikes a happy medium between building larger ADUs while at the same time preserving open space by not allowing the extra “800 by right” amount.

27.19.050(j)(2)(B) Architectural Standards of Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit- window placement

The requirement for offset windows in many ways negates the need for those windows to be obscured. There are numerous houses throughout the city that are built next to each other and aligning windows is typically not an issue. Additionally, several primary residences 2nd floor windows overlook backyards regardless of ADUs. While a homeowner that has not had a 2-story house next to them may object to the invasion of privacy, that privacy can always be changed via a second story addition to a primary residence. While standard R1 additions go through design review, they do not restrict windows from looking onto a neighbor’s lot nor do they require obscure glass. On the other hand, requiring obscure glass for the ADU will foster a lesser quality of the interior space in the ADU.

27.19.050(j)(2)(E) Architectural Standards of Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit- second story decks

The planning commission discussed the second story decks and balcony restrictions as originally proposed by the initial draft staff ordinance. The commission recognized the value that decks and balconies provide and struggled with the restriction of them. Similar to second floor windows, exterior space on the second floor provides an improved quality of the space of an ADU. They provide a moment of serenity to a hectic day, a chance to be above the world and take pause. The restriction of balconies provides privacy for homeowners in their backyards but a balcony on an ADU is no different than a balcony on a primary residence. Similar to the design review of windows, there are no restrictions on balconies or decks on the primary structure other than the daylight plane. A homeowner may object to a balcony looking into their property but the primary residence could do the same just as easily. If the city’s goal is to create the best dwellings possible, balconies should be allowed.

Personally, I gave three balconies that overlook my property due to my unique configuration. On the occasion that I see my neighbors on their balcony it is a chance for a neighborly waive.

27.19.050(j)(2)(F) Architectural Standards of Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit- daylight plane

The Planning Commission also struggled with the daylight plane and rightfully so. The daylight plane is an arbitrary concept that may or may not affect daylight in a space depending on orientation and building placement respective to adjacent properties. The goal of the ADU ordinance is to encourage infill housing and the proposed modifications allowing a 24ft plate height are intended to support 2 story ADU units. The addition of a daylight plane restricts that opportunity for 2 story building height. Effectively, the daylight plane requirements restrict the ADU to a 16’ plate height if built at the 4’ setback.

Several Planning Commissioners expressed a desire to remove daylight plane requirements. Given that most ADUs will be built 4ft from a side and rear property line, the daylight plane restriction applied to both property lines will limit overall building height and restrict roof and building forms to mansard roofs that follow the daylight plane rather than provide unique building forms with shed or gable roofs. In many cases, the ADUs that follow the daylight plane will start to take on a similar form across town as people stretch to reach 2 stories within the limiting confines of the daylight plane.

With the current provisions, an Architect can get creative with shed dormers or gable intrusions but that is a lot of gymnastics to create an interior volume that is desired when a much simpler form likely could have been built. Effectively the daylight plane requirements increase the cost of designing and ultimately building an ADU due to the added complexity of roof forms that have to be built to adhere to the arbitrary boundary. If the Council feels the daylight plane is absolutely necessary, they would serve the ADU building public better by requiring the daylight plane on one property line only which would allow more diverse roof forms and greater height flexibility.

Another reason to remove the daylight plane is an environmental one. The effective reduced building height of the daylight plane pushes more site development that makes it harder to maintain or incorporate trees and pervious landscaping in our built environment. While we must solve our housing challenges, the more we develop properties horizontally, the less room there is for trees and other vegetation in our community. The City’s commitment and

recognition of the benefit of trees to our overall well-being is expressly contradicted by the notion of limiting two-story ADU development via the daylight plane provisions.

In addition to the amount of green space and pervious landscaping, the varying weather patterns create more infrequent but intense storm surges. Restricting the daylight plane also limits 2 story ADUs to slab on grade construction. Many of our older homes are built 3-4 feet above grade making them naturally resilient in storm surge events. Removing the daylight plane allows homeowners to build their ADU structures in a similar resilient fashion with an elevated ground floor. At a minimum, if the City maintains the daylight plane, then it should adopt the exception similar to primary dwellings that give an additional 2 ft of daylight plane height when the primary house is 3ft above grade.

If you drive through some of our older single-family neighborhoods such as San Mateo Park, you will notice that many of the large houses were built before the daylight plane and setback requirements existed. Many of the stately, beautiful homes are 2 story, built within the required 7' setback (oftentimes as close as 3'), exceed the daylight plane (often by 10ft or more), and have balconies and non-obscured windows that overlook the adjacent property lines. Those homes and streets are beautiful. There is no reason allowing ADUs to be built in the same fashion won't be equally as beautiful.

I appreciate the tremendous amount of work put forth on this revised ordinance and believe the City has a chance to make some legitimate headway in the expansion of family housing in our great city.

Thank you,

Eric Holm
SM resident and Parks and Recreation Commissioner

From: Peter Mandle < >

Sent: Monday, September 6, 2021 9:39 PM

To: Phillip Brennan <pbrennan@cityofsanmateo.org>

Cc: Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: Questions about forthcoming ADU Ordinance Amendments

Mr. Brennan,

In advance of the discussion of ADU's at the Tuesday night City Council meeting, I had a few questions that I am hoping you can answer or forward to a staff member who can.

1. Does the 30-day minimum rental period in effect prohibit the rental of an ADU as an Air B'n'B apartment?
2. If an ADU is attached to an existing or proposed home can the wall separating the two be required to be permanent and impassable so that the ADU doesn't simply become an unregulated expansion of a home?
3. Can the Council restrict or limit the rent on an ADU? If ADUs are intended to be used by relatives then the rent should be near zero. If an ADU is to be used to improve access to housing then the rent should be below market rate. Seems like such a restriction would assure the that proposed ADUs are used as intended.

Thank you for your help.

Regards,
Peter

Peter Mandle

From: Clyde Preston < >
Sent: Monday, September 6, 2021 9:32 PM
To: Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: ADU/JDU Study Session, Sept. 7th

Diane,

I am writing about the ADU/JDU study session for the Sept. 7th. council meeting

These units will have negative impacts on our existing, older neighborhoods and pit neighbor against neighbor. Where will all of the cars be parked when you have a primary residence, a JDU and an ADU all on one property with only a single car driveway and two street parking spaces?

I ask that you limit/restrict these ADU/JDU laws:

1. No larger than 800 square feet and Maximum **16 feet height to top of roof.**
2. No windows on neighbors side if two story ADU.
3. Enforce **Daylight plane** requirements due to elimination of rear and side yard set backs.

The state calls these "Granny units and/or Granny flats." Well, lets keep them that way and "Granny" only needs 800 square feet. Please don't let them turn our neighborhoods into duplexes and triplexes under the disguise of ADU's.

The state legislature has eliminated rear and side yard set backs!!!**PLEASE imagine if one or more neighbors built one of these in their back yard, behind your home or next door to your home 4 feet from their back or side fence.**

I realize there is a housing imbalance, but we as residents did not create this problem. We have built too many office buildings and brought too many jobs to this region. Please do not allow ADU's/JDU's to destroy the quality of life/privacy/parking in our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Clyde Preston Jr.
Beresford Manor

From: [Christina Horrisberger](#)
To: [Zachary Dahl](#); [Phillip Brennan](#)
Subject: FW: ADUs in San Mateo
Date: Wednesday, August 25, 2021 12:12:46 PM

FYI

Christina

From: Alicia Woodfall-Jones <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, August 24, 2021 3:48 PM
To: Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Christina Horrisberger <chorrisberger@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Re: ADUs in San Mateo

Very good. Thanks to you both for your consideration.

Alicia Woodfall-Jones
650-703-8050

On Aug 24, 2021, at 2:08 PM, Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org> wrote:

Thank you Ms. Woodfall-Jones for your email.
Copying Community Development Director Christina Horrisberger here to ensure that your email is included in the record on this matter.
Very truly yours,
Diane Papan
San Mateo City Councilmember

From: Alicia Woodfall-Jones <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, August 23, 2021 5:16 PM
To: Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: ADUs in San Mateo

Dear Council Member Papan,

ADUs, while offering opportunities for needed additional housing, need not intrude on neighbors' privacy and enjoyment of their properties. For R1A zoned areas, we strongly urge that you use the discretion allowed by the state to:

- Limit height to 16 ft' required by state law

- Adopt design standards that are sensitive to the close proximity some units have to property lines, overlooking private, neighboring backyards.
- Understanding that one size does not fit all at the state OR local level.
- Allow San Mateo's neighborhoods input about how new housing development will be built to wisely blend into each distinct neighborhood.

I feel strongly that San Mateo needs SMART growth, not unmanaged growth. Thank you for your serious consideration to this very important issue.

Alicia Woodfall-Jones
+1 650-703-8050 mobile

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From: Peter Mandle < >

Sent: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 10:13 AM

To: Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>

Cc: Joan Diskin <diskin@cityofsanmateo.org>; Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: Re:

Hi Ms. Papan,

After watching last night's City Council meeting, I would like to go on record as supporting staff recommendations to establish a Daylight Plane and to limit balconies and unglazed windows facing property immediately adjacent to the ADU. My opinion is that the height of ADU's should be limited to two stories or about 20 feet--10' floor-to-floor is very comfortable. The higher limit--especially with dormer windows--would permit construction of three story dwellings, which I would be opposed to.

Prior to building new homes, I've often seen owners construct simple stick framing outlining the size and shape of the home. Would it be possible to require such construction prior to approval of a new ADU?

Better yet, to help the public and Council Members envision the implications of alternative floor plate and roof height limits, could the City's Public Works Department build an ADU stick structure (or structures) showing the heights now under consideration and their relationship to an adjacent building or dwelling?

Thank you for considering my comments.

Regards,
Peter Mandle