

St. Anthony Park Community Council / District 12

2395 University Avenue W, Suite 300E

Saint Paul, MN 55114

February 5, 2016

To Members of the Planning Commission:

**On January 14, 2016, the St. Anthony Park Community Council Board of Directors (the Council) unanimously passed a resolution in support of the Proposed Zoning Text Revisions regarding accessory dwelling units (ADUs) along the Green Line.**

This topic is not a new one for us. For the past three years, residents in District 12 have been considering whether ADUs are acceptable in this community. This has involved:

i) research, public meetings, presentation of design ideas, and draft ordinance language (April 2014) from the Land Use Efficiency action group of a Council subcommittee, the St. Anthony Park Transition Town initiative;

ii) discussion and public input at our Land Use Committee and Council meetings;

iii) formation of an official ADU Task Force by the Land Use Committee (August 2014) and research, public meetings, and a recommendation from that Task Force (draft delivered in October 2015);

iv) subsequent discussions and public input at Committee meetings; and

v) approval of the Task Force recommendations by the Land Use Committee (January 2016), which were forwarded to the Council.

There remain wide differences of opinion about whether to allow ADUs in our neighborhood. We do not have records of all the participants’ names, but estimate that, over the past three years, a total of 100 to 150 residents attended the community meetings and those of the Committee and Council, or provided written responses. Some opinions were submitted directly to the Task Force, others are available on the Council’s website <<http://www.sapcc.org/accessory-dwelling-units/>>, the Park Bugle website includes archived announcements and reports of some meetings <<http://www.parkbugle.org/?s=adus>>, and additional information is available on the Transition Town All St. Anthony Park website <[http://www.transitionasap.org/#!housing/c1d6p](http://www.transitionasap.org/%23!housing/c1d6p)>.

It appears that ADUs may help reduce per capita energy use, improve the usefulness of some large homes, provide needed housing for relatives, seniors, friends, and others, increase the population density somewhat and thereby improve support of local businesses and schools, allow seniors to “age in place,” and provide lower cost housing options that open the neighborhood to those who otherwise could not afford to move here. But there are concerns about possible abuse of rental regulations or building codes, a change in the feel or appearance of those parts of the neighborhood with lots zoned primarily for single-family use, excessive on-street parking, loss of green space, and loss of property value. There is unfortunately little quantitative data to substantiate any of these views.

The ADU Task Force considered this issue in depth, and found consensus that is described in their recommendation (attached). The Task Force recommendations align with all the proposed Green Line ordinance changes, *with the proviso* that there be “strict enforcement” of the ordinance standards and *with the exception* that the Task Force did not recommend the development of detached ADUs. Please note, however, that the Saint Anthony Park ADU Task Force recommendations, as presented, are meant to apply to all of St. Anthony Park/District 12; the Task Force did not issue a recommendation specifically to ADUs along the Green Line corridor. Subsequently, our Land Use Committee did not forward a position on the Proposed Zoning Text Revisions about ADUs along the Green Line.

**The Council approved our Task Force recommendations by unanimous vote. Because it’s our understanding that zoning changes like those our ADU Task Force recommended are not typically established for a particular neighborhood or District, we ask that the Planning Commission consider them when developing a citywide ADU ordinance.**

The Council is sensitive to the differences of opinion that exist in our neighborhood. To our knowledge, most communities in the US have similar ranges of opinion about ADUs. However, adoption of the proposed ADU ordinance along the Green Line may help speed three initiatives in our Strategic Plan that will improve economic equity in our community through affordable housing and choices in housing options, fair access to transportation, and preservation of local businesses. The Council also recognizes the need to make significant changes in the way we live to both reduce the causes of global climate change and to mitigate its effects.

On behalf of the SAPCC,



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