

**From:** Mike Czajkowski <jzmc@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Sunday, August 10, 2025 8:46 PM  
**To:** PC Public Comments  
**Cc:** ALFONSO BUITRAGO-JIMENEZ  
**Subject:** 2308 Santa Ana Ave., PA-23-14\_ Planning Commission Public Hearing\_ August 11, 2025

Good morning,

I am writing in reference to the proposed two-story development adjacent to our private backyard at 300 23rd St. Below are our main concerns and objections regarding this project:

## **1. Public Hearing Notice and Insufficient Time for Review**

We received the city's notice regarding the public hearing but no project documents less than one week before the scheduled date. Additionally, the project information—over 100 pages of reports, drawings, and other documents—was posted online less than 24 work hours before the hearing. We were given only a half-day to review these materials on our phones (while out of town), which made it extremely difficult to fully study, understand, and respond to the proposal.

The development reports and drawings have likely been in the works for at least a year. Yet, we as the owners of the affected property were given only one day to review everything. This is unreasonable, and we respectfully demand that the hearing be continued to allow sufficient time for us to consult and respond adequately.

## **2. Concerns About the Proposed Development**

### **A) Inconsistent Layout Impacting Privacy**

The proposed layout does not follow the established development pattern of the area. The existing two homes at 2308 Santa Ana are located closer to the northern property line, near the side yard of the multi-unit neighbors, leaving our property's backyard private. However, the new homes are planned to be positioned directly adjacent to our backyard, significantly affecting our privacy.

We request that the layout be adjusted so that the development follows the existing pattern, with the homes situated further away from our back yard property line to minimize the impact on the privacy of the single-story residences on 23rd Street.

#### B) Window Placement and Privacy Concerns

The design of the second-story bedrooms includes windows facing our backyard, which raises serious privacy concerns. These bedrooms already feature other windows facing the front and rear yards, which should be sufficient for natural light. The side-facing windows seem to exist solely to overlook our private backyard.

We demand that these windows, including the large hallway window, be eliminated. Prior to seeing the drawings, we spoke with Ms. Caitlyn Curley, the planner in charge, who assured us that any windows facing our backyard would be at least 5 feet above the floor and feature obscured glass. However, the drawings show otherwise.

The proposed Great Room has multiple windows and a sliding glass door facing its backyard, with two more large windows overlooking our property. This is a blatant disregard for neighborly privacy. The view lines shown in the drawings also misrepresent the layout of our house, further exacerbating the issue.

#### C) Drainage and Sewer Concerns

The proposed grading and drainage plan does not seem to adequately address the known drainage issues at 2308 Santa Ana. The property has a history of flooding and sewer overflow during rainstorms. It is unclear whether the new grades will exacerbate these issues by diverting stormwater onto our property.

The 1% slope with a 5-foot setback is insufficient to prevent stormwater runoff from reaching us. We insist that the proposed drainage system be reviewed by our engineering consultant to ensure it properly mitigates these risks and protects our property from flooding and sewer issues.

#### D) Protection of Existing Trees

We are also concerned about how the installation of the footing for the proposed block wall and trenches for the sewer lines will affect the existing trees on our property. We are particularly worried that the roots of these trees may be damaged or undermined, potentially leading to their death. We are reminded of a tragic incident several years ago on Irvine Ave. and 17th St., where the roots of a tree were compromised during curb installation, leading to the tree's collapse and the tragic death of a driver.

We request that a specific plan is developed insuring special care be taken to avoid damaging or undermining the trees on our property during construction.

#### E) Lighting and Glare

The drawings do not include any information regarding the proposed lighting design for the subdivision areas. We are concerned about the potential glare from this lighting and how it could affect the privacy and comfort of our home and backyard. We request clarification on this matter.

### **Conclusion**

There are many unanswered questions and unresolved issues regarding this project, particularly concerning safety and privacy. We, the owners of the adjacent property, respectfully request that the hearing be continued so that the developer can address these concerns. Additionally, we ask for more time to study the changes and respond appropriately.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Mike and Jing Czajkowski

949-254-4423

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**From:** Mike Czajkowski <jzmc@sbcglobal.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 11, 2025 5:06 AM  
**To:** PC Public Comments  
**Cc:** ALFONSO BUITRAGO-JIMENEZ  
**Subject:** Re: 2308 Santa Ana Ave., PA-23-14\_ Planning Commission Public Hearing\_ August 11, 2025

Dear Board Members,

In addition to the points below, I have several more major concerns and objections regarding the proposed development:

1. The property line and limits depicted in the drawings encroach upon my property, as they do not match the surveying map of my property, which I have in my possession. I request that the surveying maps be verified by an independent consultant.
2. The proposed building height exceeds the 27-foot height limit, as the finished grade is being incorrectly referenced, rather than the existing grade elevation.
3. The proposed development does not show a single tree to be planted along the two-story building side that faces our back yard and which is located just 5 feet from our backyard (less than 5 feet at the chimney).

These are serious legal and privacy concerns that should be thoroughly verified and properly addressed before the next hearing.

Thank you again for your attention to this matter.

Mike and Jing Czajkowski

949-244-4423

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 10, 2025, at 11:45 PM, Mike Czajkowski <jzmc@sbcglobal.net> wrote:

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the developer can address these concerns. Additionally, we ask for more time to study the changes and respond appropriately.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

Mike and Jing Czajkowski

949-254-4423

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**From:** Jennifer Tanaka <jletanaka@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 11, 2025 10:44 AM  
**To:** PC Public Comments  
**Subject:** Public Comment Re: New Business Item #1 (Study Session re: Zoning Code Amendments)

Dear Members of the Planning Commission and City Staff:

First, thank you very much to City Staff for agendizing New Business Item #1. Given the very long running list, publicly surfacing the provisions of the zoning code that have vexed city staff and the public alike appears quite overdue. However, I recognize that doing so may feel like "opening a can of worms", so I applaud your courage in doing it anyway.

Second, I wanted to express my support for a few ways to potentially proceed.

Parking is a running theme throughout the attached list. However, two items -- #19 (updating the code to reference AB 2097) and #22 (removing parking minimums) -- would likely moot or severely reduce the importance of the other parking-related items. Addressing parking minimums would likely be one of the most consequential reforms the city could undertake to improve land use flexibility, open the door to new development types and encourage creative retail and service business formation. For that reason I would strongly support prioritizing this "level 3" task as a threshold matter.

I would also encourage the Planning Commission to consider utilizing other city commissions and committees to gather community and best-practices feedback on certain items that border on "policy" rather than just land use planning. Policy setting calls for input from policy advisory bodies formed for such purposes. For example, #32 (murals) and #44 (Blanks Walls/Public Art) could be sent to the Arts Commission for comments and research, and #43 (bike storage facilities) and #56 (meandering sidewalks) could both be sent to the Active Transportation Committee.

I would also encourage the Planning Commission and city staff to consider bundling some of the items listed into alternative regulations for our pedestrian opportunity zones, which happen to strongly overlap with the Measure K sites. "Walkability" cannot be achieved through street design alone. Therefore, I believe there should be some ability/incentive for developers in these areas to enhance walkability through zoning and building standards. These standards might, for example, discourage the siting of new drive-throughs in such areas, reduce street setbacks, simplify the process to institute valet/shared/paid parking, reduce or eliminate parking minimums, loosen FAR restrictions, etc.

Finally, one matter that is not on the list is a review of our regulation of home-based businesses. Anecdotally, I have observed several businesses being run out of homes within R1 zones, with none being the wiser -- including the city, as many likely do not perfectly conform to our current standards and therefore are likely avoiding filing/paying for a business license. Bringing these businesses into the fold by loosening our standards, perhaps by outlining types of businesses considered "safe havens" that are deemed to be compatible, would improve city revenue, encourage residents to open their businesses to their neighbors, and provide more opportunities for above-board entrepreneurship.

The prohibition on the use of garage space to house business equipment seems particularly out of touch with reality. I would bet a survey of most R1 lots in Costa Mesa would reveal that many code-required off-street spaces are being used for private storage or other uses in violation of the city's off-street parking requirements. To hold small businesses (who would use the space to contribute to the economy) to a higher standard than private owners (who use the space for their private benefit alone) doesn't seem fair or consistent with the city's professed interest in flexible land use.

Thank you again to all who have worked so hard to bring this item forward. I am encouraged the city is even having this conversation and I look forward to the Planning Commission's discussion tonight.

Sincerely,  
Jenn Tanaka  
321 Broadway  
Costa Mesa

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## PARTIDA, ANNA

NB-1

**From:** TERAN, STACY  
**Sent:** Monday, August 11, 2025 10:49 AM  
**To:** PARTIDA, ANNA  
**Subject:** FW: Comments on Zoning Amendments  
**Attachments:** Toler PC Comments NB-1 2025\_0811.pdf

### Stacy Teran

Deputy City Clerk  
City of Costa Mesa | City Clerks Office  
Phone: (714) 754-5213  
Email: [Stacy.Teran@costamesaca.gov](mailto:Stacy.Teran@costamesaca.gov)  
77 Fair Drive | Costa Mesa | CA 92626



PLEASE CONSIDER THE ENVIRONMENT BEFORE PRINTING THIS EMAIL. THANK YOU!

**From:** Russell Toler <[russell.toler@gmail.com](mailto:russell.toler@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 11, 2025 10:46 AM  
**To:** CITY CLERK <[CITYCLERK@costamesaca.gov](mailto:CITYCLERK@costamesaca.gov)>  
**Subject:** Comments on Zoning Amendments

Hello Commissioners!

Please see my comments on Item NB-1.

Thanks!  
Russell Toler

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Chair and Planning Commissioners,

I appreciate the speed at which staff put together a more policy-oriented list of zoning amendments for the Commission to prioritize, and I trust that you have put the work into scouring the code and are not missing this crucial opportunity to improve both the *process* by which development is permitted and the *physical outcome* that the code allows/generates. I was on the Commission for four years and never got this chance!

I scanned the list of possible amendments (Attachment 1) and thought these to be important:

- **No. 14 Codification of residential design guidelines.** Yes—but first rewrite them. They are currently terrible. With all design-related code sections, we should lock in what matters and discard the rest. First—houses and larger apartment buildings are different, and should be treated differently. What matters when it comes to all of them, however, are *nice frontages*: building(s) oriented to the street, low fence/wall in front (*not 6' tall*), porches of a sufficient depth where provided, big windows, conspicuous front door(s), appropriate amount of privacy (ground floor elevation and setback are important for larger apartments where developers will place ground floor units awkwardly close to a sidewalk and then ["mitigate" with bushes](#)), etc. Garages should not be allowed in front where alleys exist, and where alleys don't exist they should be relegated to the back third of the lot, or at a minimum set a few feet behind the foremost plane of the house. Please lose all language on forced and arbitrary variation (modulation to elevation, plane breaks, changes in roof height, etc.) as this is more likely to get goofy results from reluctant designers and add cost. For houses, see [Marianne Cusato's Getting Your House Right](#). For larger multifamily projects, I've come to believe that trying to codify design standards so that they'll look good is just too difficult. It would be better to hire (or have on-call services for) someone with a background in architecture and urban design to work with applicants to get projects in alignment with a set of adopted design *principles*.
- **No. 22 Parking minimums.** As the late emeritus professor of economics at UCLA Donald Shoup said throughout his career:

*"...minimum parking requirements subsidize cars, increase traffic congestion, pollute the air, encourage sprawl, increase housing costs, degrade urban design, prevent walkability, damage the economy, and penalize poor people. Since then, to my knowledge, no member of the planning profession has argued that parking requirements do not cause these harmful effects. Instead, a flood of recent research has shown they do cause these harmful effects. Parking requirements in zoning ordinances are poisoning our cities with too much parking. Minimum parking requirements are a fertility drug for cars."*

Let's follow the lead of [other forward thinking cities](#) and *stop* the pseudoscientific practice of mandating off-street parking.

- **No. 30 Drive-throughs.** At a minimum new drive-throughs should be prohibited in what the General Plan calls “pedestrian opportunity zones.” Speaking of which, these zones should be given more to do. Within them (or along them), all auto-oriented uses, and any increase in the number of driveways should be prohibited. Frontage standards and requirements could also be enhanced.
- **No. 43 Bike storage standards.** This is an opportunity to strengthen our standards for comfortable bike access and parking for new, and even remodeled multifamily and nonresidential development. All the bike enhancements we make to our streets are futile if destinations fail to accommodate bikes well. (I know that you could say the same about cars, but there’s an astronomical difference in the myriad *costs* of accommodating car access and storage). This, like so many codes, has been created before. We can calibrate what others have done, and do not need to bear the time and cost of reinventing the wheel. See the [Essentials of Bike Parking](#), published by the Association of Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals, for example.
- **No. 51 FAR requirement review.** I believe that our city still currently regulates maximum FAR in relation to the amount of adjacent car traffic (see Table LU-3 and Policy LU-5.10). This is wild. I know that this current exercise is not intended to entail discussions of general plan policies, but I wanted to bring it up. This is something that traffic planners dreamt up and that may work in theory, but is not consistent with a thriving and market-driven city of opportunity. Existing traffic should not wag the dog.
- **No. 56 Meandering sidewalks.** Consider replacing this incentive with *wider* sidewalks. Meandering sidewalks look good in plan view and in renderings, but treat the timeless act of *walking* to your destination as a cute activity that enhances the visual appeal of the adjacent development (or something like that?). People typically want to get where they’re going when walking.
- **No. 68 Walls adjacent to arterial streets.** This topic is about 6-foot walls that seal off a development from the public realm (thus creating a positive feedback loop where there is then less incentive to better the street ([see Huntington for example](#)). But it’s also about the allowance of developments to orient their buildings inwardly and back up to our streets. As [principle 19 of the Charter of the New Urbanism](#) wisely states: “A primary task of all urban architecture and landscape design is the physical definition of streets and public spaces as places of shared use.” To our shame, we have allowed project after project that violates this principle. See [The Enclave](#), the new houses on [Harbor and Merrimac](#), and the new houses on [Harbor and Hamilton](#) just as examples.

Thanks for reading!

Russell Toler