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## Proposed Zoning Changes

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To Hoffman, Alex P. <HoffmanAP@elpasotexas.gov>

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To Mayor Renard Johnson and City Council Members,

As a resident of District 8 and - more specifically - the Sunset Heights Historic District, I would like to share my opinion on the proposed zoning changes currently in consideration.

**1. Parking Minimums** - I am in favor of lifting the restrictions for parking minimums on multi-family development. By allowing for more vehicles per square foot of housing, we can increase the density of our city's core and provide more housing to those seeking a more walkable and urban lifestyle. Sprawl is problematic, and this is a zoning change that can allow for more dense, urban development that our city is currently lacking in our central district.

**2. ADUs and Zero Lot Lines** - This is a much more complicated issue that requires a thoughtful approach. First, consider what the goals of these changes are: 1.) An increase in density, and 2.) An increase in affordable housing units. I do believe we need developments like this in central El Paso. However, **I do not believe Sunset Heights is a fit for this specific zoning change.**

### **Density in Sunset Heights**

Sunset Heights has a number of large commercial apartment buildings. In addition to the large developments, there have also been a number of historic homes converted to multi-family properties. Density is not a problem in our neighborhood. And the converted multi-family properties maintain the look and character of our historic district that ADUs simply would not match.

### **Affordable Housing Units**

A comparison of rental prices in Sunset Heights versus the city shows that average rents in Sunset Heights are already lower than the average of the city. A shortage of affordable housing units do not appear to be an issue in Sunset Heights either.

### **Safety and Privacy Concerns**

Our historic neighborhood's homes, many built near the turn of the century, still retain their original features like knob and tube electrical wiring, wood floors, wood windows, and ornate woodwork. As someone who has recently restored a Trost home, I can personally attest that these properties require significant safety upgrades to meet modern standards. The inherent fire risk in these aging homes is

substantial, and unfortunately, many Sunset Heights residents lack the financial means to completely update their electrical wiring.

Building Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) with zero lot lines and in close proximity to these historic, wood-filled homes poses severe fire risks. Zero lot line development would also impede our fire department's ability to effectively combat a fire by reducing the defensible space between buildings.

Furthermore, our homes are built in closer proximity than those in most other El Paso neighborhoods. Allowing ADUs to be built behind existing homes and at the same height as the principal residence would threaten our neighbors' privacy, as new windows could directly overlook their homes and yards.

In summary, I am generally in favor of progressive zoning changes, however a historic district requires special consideration and should not be lumped in with the greater central district.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

Matthew Guzman