

# What Altadena neighbors said about four proposed changes to the building rules

A report to LA County Planning and the focus group for the update of Altadena's Community Standards District (CSD), and to Altgether's block captains and every neighbor who took part. From Altgether's neighborhood survey of October 3 to 12, 2026. The four changes apply to lots zoned for single-family homes (zone R-1; §22.320.090, part D.1).

**616**

neighbors answered,  
one answer each

**99.7%**

lived in Altadena  
before the fire

**83**

zones and  
named areas

**483**

wrote comments  
in their own words

## The four changes, at a glance

| Change under consideration                                                                                                             | Agree / Disagree | All answers                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Yards</b><br>The same setbacks on every lot: 20 ft front, 5 ft sides, 15 ft back, and 10 ft on the street side of some corner lots. | 30% / 65%        | <div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| <b>Height</b><br>Houses up to 35 ft tall on every lot, as in the rest of the County.                                                   | 22% / 73%        | <div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| <b>Front fences</b><br>Front fences and hedges up to 6 ft, in place of today's 42-inch limits.                                         | 48% / 45%        | <div><div></div><div></div></div> |
| <b>Parking</b><br>Two covered spaces for every house, however many bedrooms.                                                           | 32% / 60%        | <div><div></div><div></div></div> |

☒ Agree with the change
 ☐ No opinion
 ☒ Disagree

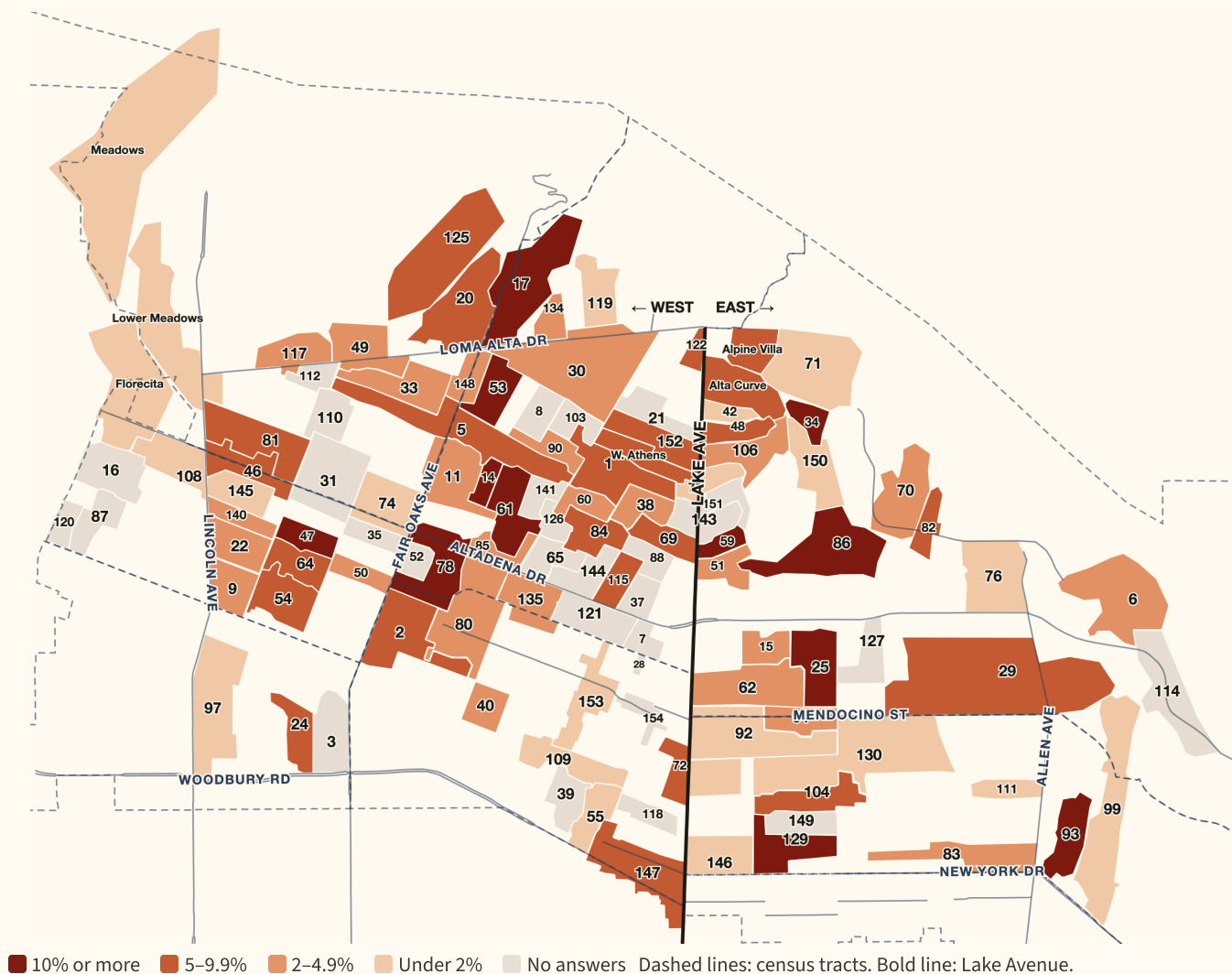
## Main findings

- **Most neighbors disagreed with three of the four changes:** height (73% disagree), yards (65%) and parking (60%). Front fences split almost evenly.
- **The pattern holds across Altadena.** Height drew majority disagreement in every census tract, and yards in every tract but Southwest Altadena (tract 4610, west of Fair Oaks and south of Ventura), where only 10 answered.
- **Fences is the one rule that divides by place:** west of Lake Avenue, 52% agreed with taller front fences; east of Lake, 54% disagreed.
- **Parking disagreement runs in two directions.** Some neighbors object to requiring covered spaces; others object to fewer spaces for large homes.

**Not a vote, not a random sample, and not representative of all of Altadena:** what 616 neighbors said, and where they live.

## WHO ANSWERED

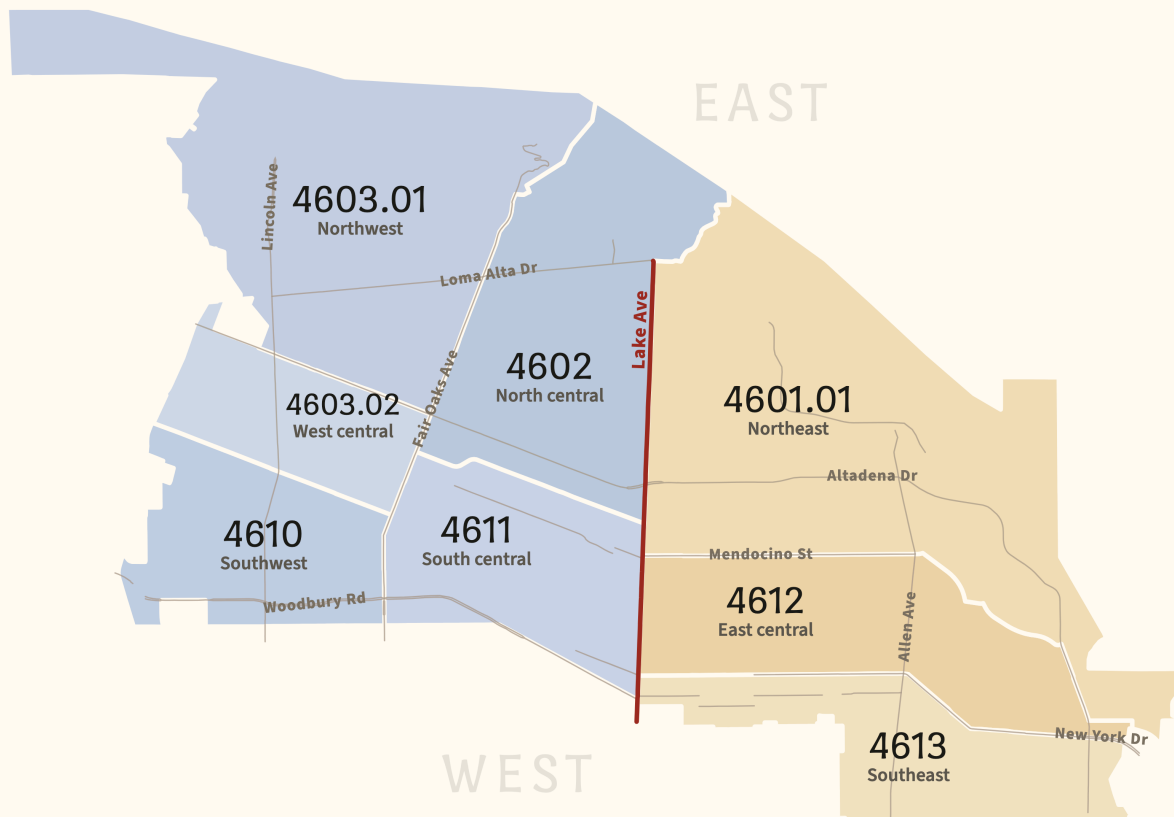
# Share of neighbors who answered, by zone



Answers as a share of the people in each zone, from Altgether's zone records (October 13); zone counts are approximate. Across all zones, 586 answers from 13,892 people, or 4.2%. Highest: Zone 86 (20%), Zone 129 (17%), Zone 59 (15%). Neighbors who gave cross streets instead of a zone are placed by the actual zone boundaries; 30 answers outside any zone, or too vague to place, are counted in every total but not on the map. Zone 154, added to Altgether's map after launch, had no link of its own and is not counted.

# Census tracts, East and West

In this report, West Altadena is everything west of Lake Avenue and East Altadena everything east of it, the way most neighbors think of it. The survey itself did not ask.



| Tract                      | Area          | Boundaries                                | Answers    | Households*  | Per 100 households |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|
| 4602                       | North central | Fair Oaks to Lake, north of Mariposa      | 162        | 1,933        | 8.4                |
| 4603.01                    | Northwest     | West of Fair Oaks, north of Altadena Dr   | 99         | 1,477        | 6.7                |
| 4603.02                    | West central  | West of Fair Oaks, Altadena Dr to Ventura | 62         | 1,638        | 3.8                |
| 4610                       | Southwest     | West of Fair Oaks, south of Ventura       | 10         | 1,640        | 0.6                |
| 4611                       | South central | Fair Oaks to Lake, south of Mariposa      | 52         | 1,721        | 3.0                |
| <b>West of Lake Avenue</b> |               |                                           | <b>385</b> | <b>8,409</b> | <b>4.6</b>         |
| 4601.01                    | Northeast     | East of Lake, north of Mendocino          | 149        | 2,194        | 6.8                |
| 4612                       | East central  | East of Lake, Mendocino to New York Dr    | 70         | 1,713        | 4.1                |
| 4613                       | Southeast     | East of Lake, south of New York Dr        | 3          | 2,434        | 0.1                |
| <b>East of Lake Avenue</b> |               |                                           | <b>222</b> | <b>6,341</b> | <b>3.5</b>         |

\* Households by census tract, U.S. Census Bureau, before the fire (American Community Survey 2020–2024). Measured instead against Altatgether’s resident counts by zone, East has a slightly higher response rate (4.7% to 4.0%). Tract 4602 is 91% west of Lake and counted as West; Zones 77 and 143 straddle Lake and are counted as East, where most of their area lies. Tract 4613 has no Altatgether zone; its answers come from neighbors who gave cross streets. 9 answers could not be placed.

WHO ANSWERED

Who they are

WHEN THEY CAME

610

lived in Altadena before the fire

4 did not say

2

moved here after the fire

THEIR HOME

416

lost in the fire

4 did not say

194

still standing

TODAY

599

own

4 did not say

13

rent

“Own or rent” describes today, not the time of the fire. Before the fire, about 22% of households in these tracts rented (U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2020–2024).

How each group answered

| Group                 | People | Yards     | Height    | Front fences | Parking   |
|-----------------------|--------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Everyone              | 616    | 30% / 65% | 22% / 73% | 48% / 45%    | 32% / 60% |
| West of Lake          | 385    | 35% / 58% | 22% / 72% | 52% / 41%    | 29% / 62% |
| East of Lake          | 222    | 21% / 77% | 21% / 74% | 39% / 54%    | 36% / 56% |
| Home lost in the fire | 416    | 32% / 62% | 22% / 73% | 52% / 41%    | 29% / 63% |
| Home standing         | 194    | 25% / 71% | 22% / 72% | 39% / 56%    | 37% / 53% |
| Owners                | 599    | 30% / 66% | 21% / 74% | 48% / 45%    | 32% / 60% |
| Renters               | 13     | 31% / 38% | 31% / 46% | 46% / 54%    | 31% / 62% |

Each cell: % agree / % disagree with the County’s change; the rest had no opinion. Only 13 renters answered, so read their row with care.

How they heard about it

| Link                       | Answers | Share |
|----------------------------|---------|-------|
| Block captains’ zone links | 449     | 73%   |
| Public link                | 73      | 12%   |
| Altadena Heritage          | 58      | 9%    |
| Day One                    | 23      | 4%    |
| Altadena Town Council      | 13      | 2%    |

# Yards

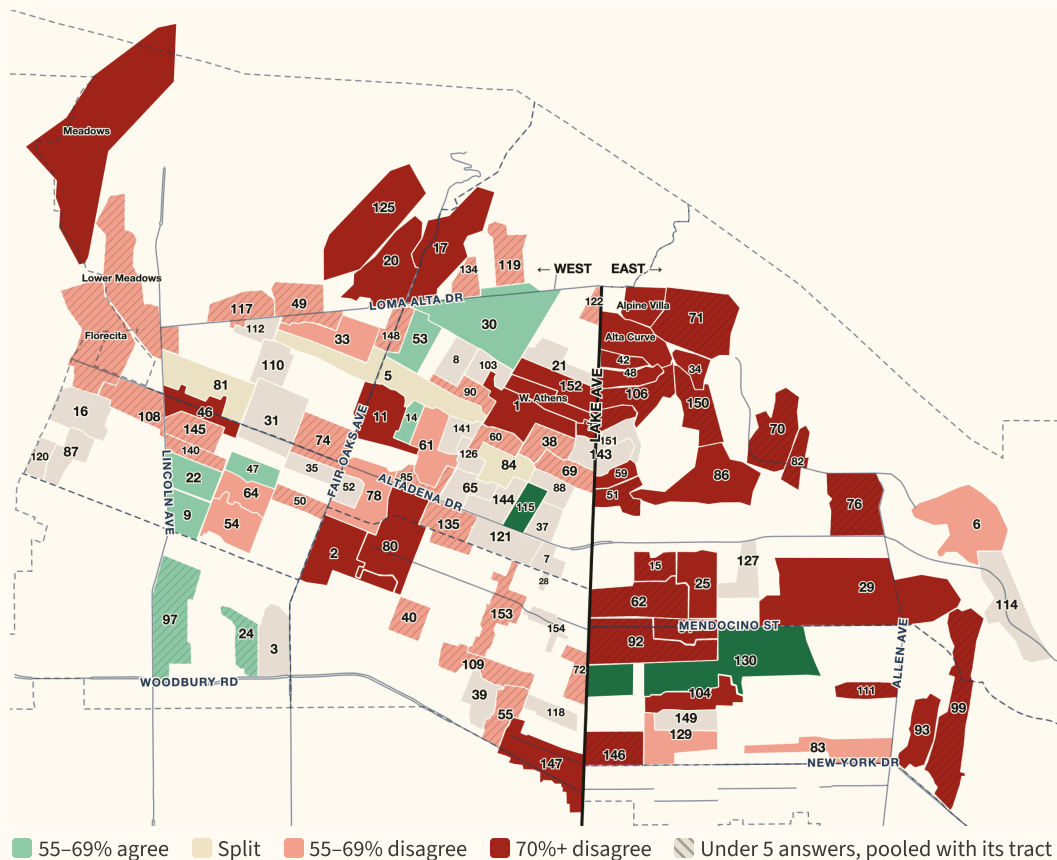
## TODAY IN ALTADENA

Front: at least 20 ft; the house on the block with the smallest front yard of 20 ft or more sets the minimum for the block. Back: 25 ft on most lots (35 ft on lots of 20,000 sq ft or more). Sides: 10% of the lot's width, at least 5 ft.

## UNDER CONSIDERATION

Use the countywide numbers on every lot: 20 ft front, 5 ft interior sides, 15 ft back, 10 ft on the street side of some corner lots.

30% agree · 65% disagree · 5% no opinion (609 answered)



| Tract                      | Area          | n          | Agree / Disagree |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------------|
| 4602                       | North central | 162        | 39% / 55%        |
| 4603.01                    | Northwest     | 99         | 29% / 66%        |
| 4603.02                    | West central  | 62         | 44% / 52%        |
| 4610                       | Southwest     | 10         | 60% / 30%        |
| 4611                       | South central | 52         | 23% / 62%        |
| <b>West of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>385</b> | <b>35% / 58%</b> |
| 4601.01                    | Northeast     | 149        | 16% / 81%        |
| 4612                       | East central  | 70         | 29% / 70%        |
| 4613                       | Southeast     | 3          | 33% / 67%        |
| <b>East of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>222</b> | <b>21% / 77%</b> |

**Which part they disagreed with** (397 who disagreed; more than one allowed): side yards 281, back yard 276, front yard 176. Several accepted a fixed 20 ft front while objecting to 5 ft sides and a 15 ft back.

# What neighbors wrote

Choosing Disagree opened a comment box that asked, “Which part do you disagree with, and why?” Neighbors who agreed or had no opinion could also add a comment. Themes are in our words; no comment is quoted.

| Theme, in our words                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Comments | From agree / disagree |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Overbuilt, oversized homes change Altadena’s feel</b><br>Smaller yards invite larger houses that fill the lot, crowd the street and erode Altadena’s open, semi-rural character; several note recent rebuilds already show this. | 81       | 0 / 79                |
| <b>Closer homes raise fire spread risk</b><br>Smaller setbacks put structures closer together, which residents see as raising house-to-house fire spread and shrinking defensible space after the Eaton fire.                       | 49       | 0 / 47                |
| <b>Less privacy, light and views</b><br>Reduced side and back yards bring neighbors’ walls and windows closer, cutting privacy, sunlight, air and views, especially next to taller new homes.                                       | 47       | 0 / 47                |
| <b>Less room for trees, gardens, green space</b><br>Narrower yards leave little room for shade trees, hedges, gardens and cooling green space, including fire-resistant planting between homes.                                     | 36       | 0 / 36                |
| <b>Back yard of 15 ft is too shallow</b><br>Specific objection to the 15 ft rear setback; many suggest keeping 25 ft or settling at no less than about 20 ft.                                                                       | 36       | 5 / 30                |
| <b>Houses would sit too close together</b><br>General objection that the countywide numbers would crowd homes against each other, without a specific reason given.                                                                  | 33       | 0 / 33                |
| <b>Side yards of 5 ft are too narrow</b><br>Specific objection to a flat 5 ft side yard; prefer keeping the width-based rule (about 6 ft or more on typical lots, wider on wide lots).                                              | 32       | 0 / 32                |
| <b>Fear of density, ADUs and developers</b><br>Smaller yards would enable more density, ADUs and developer-driven overbuilding rather than help rebuilding owners.                                                                  | 32       | 1 / 29                |
| <b>Keep current Altadena rules</b><br>General preference to keep the existing CSD yard standards unchanged.                                                                                                                         | 22       | 0 / 22                |
| <b>Supports countywide yard numbers</b><br>Supports the change or wants even smaller or simpler setbacks, often for rebuild flexibility or independence from neighbors’ setbacks.                                                   | 15       | 13 / 0                |
| <b>Rules should fit lot size and shape</b><br>One number does not fit Altadena’s varied lots: wide, narrow, deep, sloped, corner, flag lots, special setback streets, and like-for-like rebuilds of prior footprints.               | 15       | 4 / 9                 |
| <b>Fine with standard front, not sides/back</b><br>Accepts or welcomes a fixed 20 ft front setback in place of the prevailing-setback method, while objecting to the side and back changes.                                         | 12       | 0 / 10                |

242 neighbors wrote a comment; a comment can raise more than one theme. Also raised: Questions why and how this is changing (9).

# Height

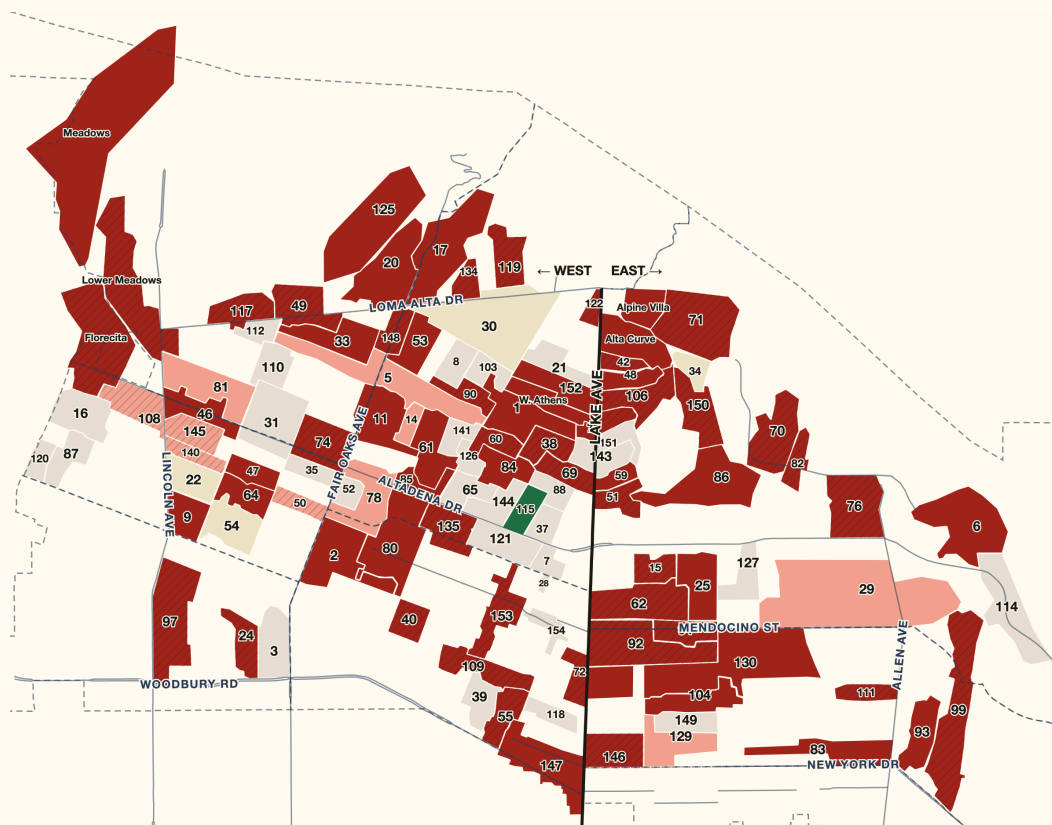
## TODAY IN ALTADENA

Up to 30 ft on most lots (under 20,000 sq ft, and flag lots). Up to 35 ft on lots over 20,000 sq ft.

## UNDER CONSIDERATION

Allow houses up to 35 ft tall on every lot, as in the rest of the County.

22% agree · 73% disagree · 5% no opinion (610 answered)



70%+ agree 55-69% agree Split 55-69% disagree 70%+ disagree Under 5 answers, pooled with its tract

| Tract                      | Area          | n          | Agree / Disagree |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------------|
| 4602                       | North central | 162        | 26% / 69%        |
| 4603.01                    | Northwest     | 99         | 19% / 74%        |
| 4603.02                    | West central  | 62         | 30% / 66%        |
| 4610                       | Southwest     | 10         | 20% / 80%        |
| 4611                       | South central | 52         | 10% / 81%        |
| <b>West of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>385</b> | <b>22% / 72%</b> |
| 4601.01                    | Northeast     | 149        | 22% / 74%        |
| 4612                       | East central  | 70         | 20% / 74%        |
| 4613                       | Southeast     | 3          | 33% / 67%        |
| <b>East of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>222</b> | <b>21% / 74%</b> |

# What neighbors wrote

Choosing Disagree opened a comment box that asked, “Why do you disagree?” Neighbors who agreed or had no opinion could also add a comment. Themes are in our words; no comment is quoted.

| Theme, in our words                                                                                                                                                                                        | Comments | From agree / disagree |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Blocked mountain views, sunlight and privacy</b><br>Taller houses would cut off neighbors’ mountain and sky views, sunlight (including on solar panels and gardens) and backyard privacy.               | 171      | 0 / 171               |
| <b>Too big and bulky for Altadena’s character</b><br>Taller homes read as oversized or “McMansion” scale, tower over single-story neighbors and erode Altadena’s small-town, open feel.                    | 122      | 0 / 120               |
| <b>Keep the current Altadena height rules</b><br>General preference to keep the existing CSD height limits as they are, often without further detail.                                                      | 30       | 0 / 30                |
| <b>30 ft already enough for two stories</b><br>The current limit already allows a generous two-story house, so the extra five feet serves no real need.                                                    | 28       | 0 / 28                |
| <b>Tie height to lot size or situation</b><br>A single countywide height doesn’t fit; height should depend on lot size, setbacks, prior house height or whether it affects neighbors.                      | 21       | 2 / 19                |
| <b>Slopes make tall houses tower further</b><br>On sloped and hillside lots, grade differences and raised foundations make a given height loom much taller over downhill neighbors.                        | 15       | 0 / 15                |
| <b>Unfair to those rebuilding under current limits</b><br>Changing the limit mid-recovery is unfair to residents who already rebuilt or are rebuilding to the lower limit, or who return to smaller homes. | 13       | 0 / 13                |
| <b>Developers, multi-unit builds and ADUs</b><br>Concern that more height benefits developers, multi-story or multi-unit projects and ADUs rather than returning households.                               | 10       | 0 / 10                |
| <b>Questions the reason, timing or enforcement</b><br>Asks why the change is happening now, sees it as arbitrary, or doubts the County can enforce height limits.                                          | 9        | 0 / 9                 |
| <b>Supports allowing 35 ft</b><br>Supports the higher limit, e.g. for like-for-like rebuilds, design flexibility or roof forms.                                                                            | 7        | 7 / 0                 |
| <b>Keep or revisit the 23 ft near-lot-line step</b><br>Comments about the lower height allowed within 15 ft of a property line, either as a safeguard to keep or as a cause of awkward roof designs.       | 6        | 3 / 3                 |
| <b>Fire risk and spacing between homes</b><br>Larger, taller structures close together add fuel and fire spread risk in a high-fire-severity area.                                                         | 6        | 0 / 6                 |

316 neighbors wrote a comment; a comment can raise more than one theme.

# Front fences

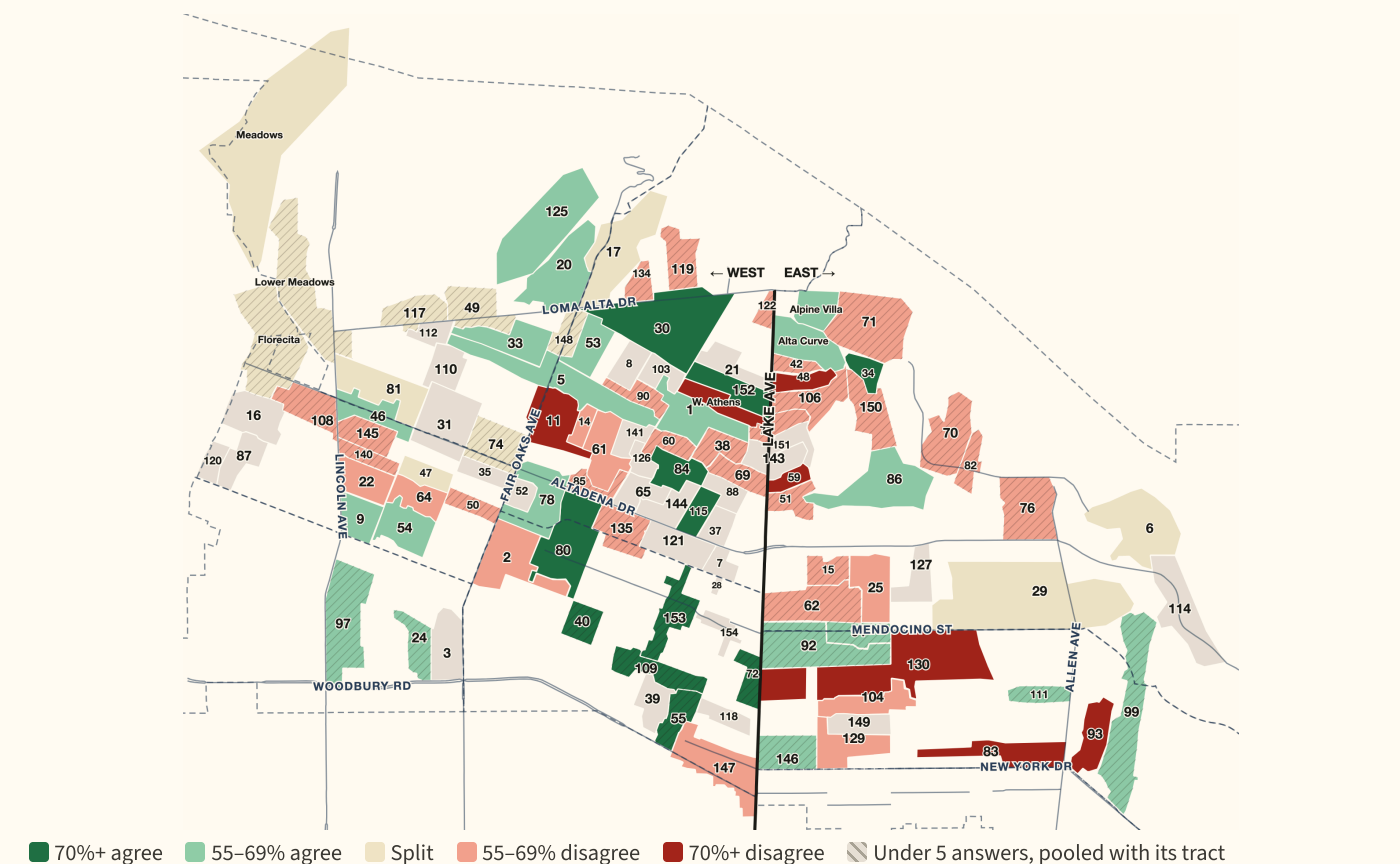
## TODAY IN ALTADENA

In the first 10 ft of a lot, measured from the edge of the public right-of-way, hedges up to 42 inches. On corner lots, fences and walls too. On other lots, a see-through fence up to 6 ft, not beside a driveway. Further back, 6 ft is allowed.

## UNDER CONSIDERATION

Remove the 42-inch limits in front yards and corner yards, and allow fences and hedges up to 6 ft. Rules beside driveways stay.

48% agree · 45% disagree · 7% no opinion (608 answered)



| Tract                      | Area          | n          | Agree / Disagree |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------------|
| 4602                       | North central | 162        | 51% / 40%        |
| 4603.01                    | Northwest     | 99         | 56% / 38%        |
| 4603.02                    | West central  | 62         | 50% / 45%        |
| 4610                       | Southwest     | 10         | 60% / 40%        |
| 4611                       | South central | 52         | 50% / 42%        |
| <b>West of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>385</b> | <b>52% / 41%</b> |
| 4601.01                    | Northeast     | 149        | 44% / 48%        |
| 4612                       | East central  | 70         | 29% / 68%        |
| 4613                       | Southeast     | 3          | 33% / 33%        |
| <b>East of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>222</b> | <b>39% / 54%</b> |

# What neighbors wrote

Choosing Disagree opened a comment box that asked, “Why do you disagree?” Neighbors who agreed or had no opinion could also add a comment. Themes are in our words; no comment is quoted.

| Theme, in our words                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Comments | From agree / disagree |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Tall front fences isolate neighbors</b><br>Tall front fences and hedges would wall homes off from the street, turn lots into compound-like enclosures and weaken everyday neighborly contact.                                                 | 99       | 1 / 96                |
| <b>Clashes with Altadena character and looks</b><br>Walled frontages would change Altadena’s open, varied streetscape and are seen as unattractive or out of keeping with the town.                                                              | 45       | 0 / 44                |
| <b>Blocks driver and pedestrian sightlines</b><br>Taller fences and hedges near driveways and corners would hide cars, cyclists and pedestrians, especially on streets without sidewalks.                                                        | 44       | 0 / 44                |
| <b>Taller screening gives privacy and security</b><br>Residents want taller fences or hedges for privacy, security, a usable front yard, keeping pets in and wildlife out, or screening from busy streets and the denser building now under way. | 20       | 15 / 3                |
| <b>Keep the 42-inch limit as is</b><br>Wants the current front-yard fence and hedge limit kept unchanged.                                                                                                                                        | 18       | 0 / 17                |
| <b>Middle ground: see-through, lower, or sides only</b><br>Open to change only with conditions, such as see-through materials, an intermediate height of four to five feet, low near driveways, or taller only on side and corner yards.         | 17       | 3 / 13                |
| <b>Walls hide crime, reduce eyes on street</b><br>High barriers are seen as giving cover to intruders and stopping residents from seeing or helping on the street, so they lower rather than raise security.                                     | 16       | 0 / 16                |
| <b>Supports allowing 6-foot fences</b><br>Supports allowing fences and hedges up to six feet in front and corner yards.                                                                                                                          | 13       | 13 / 0                |
| <b>Current limit unenforced, many already exceed it</b><br>The existing limit is widely ignored and not enforced, so the rule matters less in practice or existing fences should be allowed to stay.                                             | 8        | 3 / 4                 |
| <b>Hedges and trees add greenery</b><br>Taller hedges bring greenery, shade and cooling; some prefer the County encourage trees to restore lost canopy.                                                                                          | 8        | 6 / 2                 |
| <b>Tall hedges block views</b><br>Tall hedges and fences would block mountain and street views for neighbors.                                                                                                                                    | 6        | 0 / 6                 |
| <b>Questions why change and how decided</b><br>Questions the rationale and timing of the change or the use of the fire as a reason, or asks for more community discussion, including reaching displaced residents.                               | 6        | 0 / 5                 |

205 neighbors wrote a comment; a comment can raise more than one theme. Also raised: Fences add fire risk, hinder firefighters (3).

# Parking

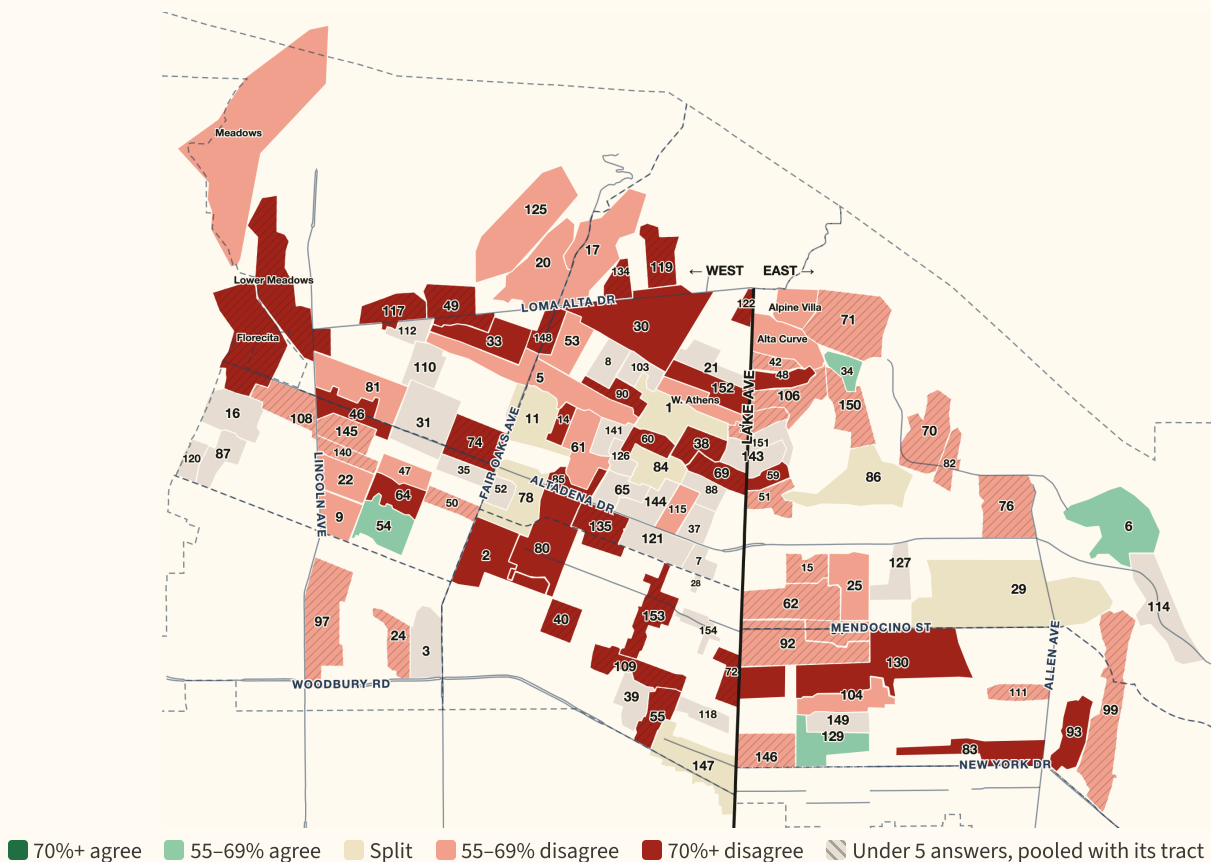
## TODAY IN ALTADENA

2 spaces for a house with one to four bedrooms, 3 for five or six bedrooms, and more above that. When 3 or more are needed, they may be open-air and one behind the other.

## UNDER CONSIDERATION

Require two covered spaces for every house, however many bedrooms, as in the rest of the County. Under the countywide rule, covered parking is not required on lots larger than one acre.

32% agree · 60% disagree · 9% no opinion (607 answered)



| Tract                      | Area          | n          | Agree / Disagree |
|----------------------------|---------------|------------|------------------|
| 4602                       | North central | 162        | 31% / 59%        |
| 4603.01                    | Northwest     | 99         | 27% / 64%        |
| 4603.02                    | West central  | 62         | 33% / 59%        |
| 4610                       | Southwest     | 10         | 40% / 60%        |
| 4611                       | South central | 52         | 22% / 68%        |
| <b>West of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>385</b> | <b>29% / 62%</b> |
| 4601.01                    | Northeast     | 149        | 39% / 53%        |
| 4612                       | East central  | 70         | 30% / 61%        |
| 4613                       | Southeast     | 3          | 33% / 33%        |
| <b>East of Lake Avenue</b> |               | <b>222</b> | <b>36% / 56%</b> |

**Disagreement runs two ways.** Some neighbors object to requiring the spaces to be covered; others object to large homes needing fewer spaces than today. Both answered “disagree.”

# What neighbors wrote

Choosing Disagree opened a comment box that asked, “Why do you disagree?” Neighbors who agreed or had no opinion could also add a comment. Themes are in our words; no comment is quoted.

| Theme, in our words                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Comments | From agree / disagree |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------|
| <b>Covered spaces unnecessary; uncovered off-street fine</b><br>Covering spaces adds nothing: garages become storage, workspace or ADUs, cars park in driveways anyway, and a covered structure should be the owner’s choice. | 98       | 4 / 92                |
| <b>More cars on narrow streets without sidewalks</b><br>Fewer required spaces would push cars onto narrow streets that lack sidewalks, endangering pedestrians and blocking emergency and evacuation access.                  | 79       | 6 / 72                |
| <b>Garage or carport adds cost to rebuilds</b><br>Building covered parking is an extra expense for fire survivors and owners of standing homes on tight or underinsured budgets; some want relief for owner rebuilds.         | 52       | 0 / 51                |
| <b>ADUs and lot splits need their own parking</b><br>ADUs, lot splits and added units are already straining street parking; parking rules should account for every unit on a lot.                                             | 42       | 4 / 36                |
| <b>Larger homes should require more spaces</b><br>Keep tying required spaces to bedroom count: cutting five- and six-bedroom homes from three spaces to two invites more street parking.                                      | 34       | 1 / 33                |
| <b>Keep Altadena’s current parking rule</b><br>The existing Altadena parking standard works and should stay as it is.                                                                                                         | 27       | 0 / 27                |
| <b>Parking affects neighborhood look and feel</b><br>Rows of parked cars, carports or garage-dominated fronts would change Altadena’s appearance and character; views split on whether cars should be hidden.                 | 26       | 4 / 22                |
| <b>Narrow, small lots can’t fit covered parking</b><br>Many Altadena lots are too narrow or small to fit two covered spaces alongside the house, an ADU and setbacks, and other siting rules make it harder.                  | 24       | 1 / 23                |
| <b>Manage cars through street rules or transit</b><br>Suggests other tools, such as street parking limits, enforcement, transit, bike lanes and sidewalks, or worries the change leads to permit parking.                     | 17       | 0 / 16                |
| <b>Agrees with two spaces or covered parking</b><br>Supports the countywide standard in whole or part, such as a flat two-space rule or covering cars from view.                                                              | 10       | 5 / 5                 |
| <b>Questions rationale, accuracy or County handling</b><br>Doubts about why the rule is changing now, whether the survey’s description of current rules is accurate, and how permits have been handled.                       | 7        | 0 / 6                 |
| <b>Carports and garages add fire risk</b><br>Covered structures can be flammable and sit close to homes and neighbors, and crowded streets slow evacuation in a fire.                                                         | 6        | 1 / 5                 |

268 neighbors wrote a comment; a comment can raise more than one theme.

# The County's design standards

We asked: “Is anything in the design rules making rebuilding easier or harder for you?” The Residential Design Standards cover front-door orientation, porches and entries, windows, wall materials and a front-yard tree.

| Theme, in our words                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Comments |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Neighborhood character and scale</b><br>Neighborhood character, scale and keeping Altadena's feel; concern about oversized homes and homes built close together.                                                                                                          | 31       |
| <b>Lot splits, ADUs and developers</b><br>Lot splits, SB 9, ADUs, multiple units per lot, developers and speculators.                                                                                                                                                        | 29       |
| <b>Costly non-design mandates and site requirements</b><br>Other requirements tied to rebuilding, such as covered parking, driveways, undergrounding, sprinklers, stormwater, solar and floor-area counting, add cost or constrain layouts.                                  | 28       |
| <b>Front door, garage and walkway placement rules</b><br>Rules that the entry face the street, the garage sit behind the front door, or a separate walkway run from the street are seen as hindering practical layouts, especially on narrow, hillside or oddly shaped lots. | 24       |
| <b>Plan review slow, inconsistent and unclear</b><br>Plan check and permitting are seen as slow and dependent on the individual reviewer, with shifting answers, unclear rules and costly delays.                                                                            | 24       |
| <b>Trees, canopy and green space</b><br>Trees, canopy, landscaping and green space, including replacing lost and street trees.                                                                                                                                               | 20       |
| <b>Lot-specific flexibility and like-for-like</b><br>One-size rules don't fit Altadena's varied lots; want case-by-case options, and like-for-like rebuild allowances are valued.                                                                                            | 19       |
| <b>Remove or minimize aesthetic design rules</b><br>Homeowners should decide how their house looks; prescriptive design standards feel like an HOA and slow rebuilding.                                                                                                      | 17       |
| <b>Rebuilding cost and feasibility</b><br>Rebuilding cost, feasibility and speed.                                                                                                                                                                                            | 14       |
| <b>Fire safety, spacing and Zone 0</b><br>Fire safety, spacing between homes, Zone 0 and fuel modification planting rules.                                                                                                                                                   | 13       |
| <b>Required front-yard tree hard to place</b><br>The front-yard canopy tree requirement (how many, where, how close to the house) conflicts with small lots, utilities, overhead lines and protected oaks; some support it.                                                  | 12       |

205 neighbors wrote a comment; a comment can raise more than one theme. Also raised: Keep current Altadena rules (12); Facade material and style rules clash (9); Height envelope limits two-story rebuilds (6).

Neighbors split: one group asks for fewer, more flexible design rules and faster, more consistent plan review; another uses the question to ask for firmer limits on size, density and ADUs.

# What matters most

## Which change matters most on your block

| Ranked first          | Yards     | Height    | Front fences | Parking   |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Everyone (577 ranked) | 223 · 39% | 164 · 28% | 75 · 13%     | 115 · 20% |
| West of Lake          | 111       | 120       | 50           | 80        |
| East of Lake          | 108       | 43        | 24           | 33        |

## Why their top-ranked change matters most

| Theme, in our words                                                                                                                                                           | Comments |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Street parking, congestion and pedestrian safety</b><br>Narrow or private streets, missing sidewalks and on-street parking create safety and access problems.              | 28       |
| <b>Protect neighborhood character and scale</b><br>Changes would erode Altadena's varied, modest, open character and invite oversized homes.                                  | 24       |
| <b>Timing, motives and outreach of the process</b><br>Questions why rules change mid-recovery, whom it serves, and whether all residents including West Altadena are reached. | 22       |
| <b>Developers, lot splits and added units</b><br>Concern that developers, SB 9 and extra units will max out lots and override local standards.                                | 20       |
| <b>Varied lots need flexibility</b><br>Uniform rules fit poorly on narrow, irregular or steep lots; residents want lot-specific options or more freedom to build.             | 16       |
| <b>Spacing between homes for fire safety</b><br>Keeping distance between houses limits fire spread and fits defensible-space expectations.                                    | 13       |
| <b>Make rebuilding faster and cheaper</b><br>Rules should not add cost or hurdles for fire survivors trying to get home.                                                      | 13       |
| <b>Supports a proposed change</b><br>Favors a County change such as taller fences, uniform flag-lot rules or alignment with countywide standards.                             | 9        |
| <b>ADUs and extra units need own parking</b><br>Off-street parking should scale with units or bedrooms, including ADUs, rather than per house.                                | 9        |

115 neighbors wrote a comment; a comment can raise more than one theme. Also raised: Views, sunlight and privacy (8); Keep Altadena's current rules (8); Trees, yards and green space (7); Current rules are not enforced (5).

# Anything else the County should know

We asked: “Anything else the County should know about your block?”

| Theme, in our words                                                                                                                                                       | Comments |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Overbuilding and loss of character</b><br>Oversized, lot-filling new homes are changing the look and scale of blocks; keep things as they were.                        | 29       |
| <b>Parking, traffic speed and access</b><br>Narrow streets, scarce parking, speeding, detours and emergency access make streets unsafe.                                   | 26       |
| <b>Density, lot splits and developers</b><br>Worry about SB 9 / SB 1123 splits, multi-unit projects, ADUs and developers adding units on narrow lots.                     | 23       |
| <b>Lot-specific rules and exceptions</b><br>Small, narrow, hillside, flag and private-street lots need tailored rules or easier exceptions.                               | 22       |
| <b>Fire safety and spacing</b><br>Homes built close together or near lot lines raise fire risk; wish for fire-specific rules and preparedness.                            | 18       |
| <b>Sidewalks, curbs, roads, drainage, cleaning</b><br>Requests for sidewalks, curbs, street lights, resurfacing, storm drainage and fairer street-cleaning service.       | 18       |
| <b>Permitting speed, cost and inspections</b><br>Slow plan approval and inspection backlogs, costly engineering and financial strain delay survivors' return.             | 17       |
| <b>Trees, wildlife and green space</b><br>Replant shade and low-fire-risk trees, protect old trees, wildlife and open green spaces.                                       | 13       |
| <b>Views, light, privacy and security</b><br>Tall or raised new homes block views and sun and remove privacy; fences valued for privacy and protection.                   | 11       |
| <b>Undergrounding, sewer and water supply</b><br>Uneven Edison undergrounding, uncoordinated telecom lines, sewer access instead of septic, and hydrant water pressure.   | 11       |
| <b>Like-for-like and rules not enforced</b><br>New builds stretch like-for-like, encroach on lot lines and trees, or skip required canopy trees without County follow-up. | 11       |
| <b>Distrust of process and outreach</b><br>Frustration with rule changes now, uneven outreach, and doubts about County or utility motives.                                | 10       |

149 neighbors wrote a comment; a comment can raise more than one theme. Also raised: Strong block community (7).

# Questions only the County can answer

Neighbors raised these in their comments, on every question. We ask for a written answer to each that we can share directly with neighbors.

**30** = how many neighbors raised it. Each question is in our words.

## The process

- 25** How does the County verify and enforce setbacks, height, fence limits, like-for-like claims, required trees and covered-parking use on rebuilds, and what can neighbors do when a project exceeds them?

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- 23** Would changes apply to projects already built, permitted or in design, how would fairness be kept between earlier and later rebuilds, and will existing homes, fences and like-for-like rebuilds keep what they have?

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- 19** Why are these four changes being considered now, while many residents are still displaced or rebuilding, what problem is each meant to solve, and how does each compare with the countywide standard?

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- 13** How will plan review become consistent across reviewers, and will the County add staff to speed approvals and inspections?

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- 7** How will the County reach displaced residents, West Altadena and Residents of Color before deciding, how was this review publicized, and how would the changes affect different parts of Altadena?

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- 3** Where can residents find a plain-language summary of the rules, and of deed restrictions, before they design?

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- 2** What role do residents and the Altadena Town Council's Land Use Committee have in the decision?

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## Beyond the zoning code

- 10** Streets: what is the plan and timeline for sidewalks, curbs, street lights, drainage, and roads damaged by recovery truck traffic?

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- 6** Traffic: can the County add traffic calming, speed enforcement and detour signs for construction crews on cut-through streets?

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- 5** Street sweeping and parking: some blocks get no sweeping at all, while others object to tickets or new parking limits. What is planned for sweeping and parking enforcement during recovery?

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- 3** Community sites: what are the plans for the rebuilt school site and the closed golf course, and for street vending after the fire?

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# Questions only the County can answer, continued

**30** = how many neighbors raised it. Each question is in our words.

## How the rules work

- 28** Design standards: can the front-door, garage, walkway and facade rules bend for narrow or hillside lots, historic styles and prior layouts, how does the tree rule fit Zone 0 and utilities, and how is floor area counted?

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- 26** Height: how is height measured on slopes so homes do not tower over downhill neighbors, will the lower limit near side lines stay or ease for narrow lots, and does 35 ft allow a third story?

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- 23** Fire safety: how do 5 ft side yards, taller homes and fences, and carports fit Zone 0 rules and fire-spread research, and will Zone 0 planting limits near the house be revisited?

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- 20** Fences: would 6 ft front fences have to be see-through or could some be solid, how will sightlines work at driveways and corners on streets without sidewalks, and who handles overgrown hedges?

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- 19** Parking for added units: is parking counted per lot or per home, must ADUs, junior ADUs, duplexes and SB 9 units provide their own, and how do state ADU rules affect this?

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- 16** Varied lots: how would fixed yard and fence numbers apply to corner, narrow, flag, irregular and sloped lots, are added fill and hillside engineering reviewed, and was a lot-coverage limit considered?

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- 15** Covered parking: does Altadena's rule today require two covered spaces, what counts as covered, would standing homes have to add it, how does it fit the garage-behind-entry rule, and is there relief for fire survivors?

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- 10** Utilities: how are undergrounding boundaries and equipment placement set, who pays on private lots, will telecom lines follow, and can blocks on septic connect to sewer where a new system cannot fit?

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- 9** State law: which Altadena standards still apply to SB 9 lot splits, SB 1123 projects and ADUs, and can the County limit units per lot or protect blocks of older homes?

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- 6** Special setback streets: would countywide numbers override special setback districts, recorded CC&Rs, streets with long-established deep front setbacks, or the Altadena Historic Area?

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- 5** Fire access and water: as Altadena rebuilds larger, are single-access roads, emergency access on private streets, hydrant water supply and fire station capacity being reviewed?

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- 4** Would neighbors' solar panels and sunlight have any protection from taller homes next door?

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## Also raised in public discussion

From community forums, emails to Altatgether and the captain meeting, not counted from the survey.

- How were the focus group members chosen, and could the group be opened to more residents?

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- Will focus group meetings and materials be open to the public?

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- What happens to this input: who reads it, and how will residents see what was kept or set aside?

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- What is the timeline from here to a public draft, public comment and adoption, and how will displaced households be notified by mail?

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# Method

**Goals and values.** Our goal was to bring what neighbors think to LA County Planning, block by block, so differences between parts of Altadena are visible. Altgether did not take a position on the changes. Every answer, for and against, is reported in full. We reached neighbors through people they already know, in plain language and in English and Spanish, kept individual answers private, and share the method, its limits and the results back with neighbors.

## How it was done

- **The survey was Altgether’s own initiative.** The County asked focus group members to bring back what their communities think; Altgether chose to do that with a survey, and wrote and ran it. It was open October 3 to 12, 2026, in English and Spanish.
- It went out through 148 block captains in 111 zones, partner organizations, and a public link. Each answer is tied to a zone, or to cross streets placed on the map, and to a census tract.
- Each question showed today’s rule, the change, what it would mean, arguments for and against, and links to the code.
- Neighbors not sure of their zone gave cross streets. Each was placed by finding the intersection on the OpenStreetMap street map and checking it against the zone and census tract boundaries.
- Every comment was read and grouped into themes with the help of an AI tool, Claude. It was given each comment with its zone and situation, but not the email or phone number the person gave. Comments were otherwise used as written. Themes are in our words; no comment is quoted and no one is named.

## Counting

|                                                          |            |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Answers received                                         | 628        |
| Repeat answers from the same email or phone, latest kept | 12         |
| Of those counted, sent after midnight October 12         | 9          |
| <b>People counted</b>                                    | <b>616</b> |
| Gave cross streets instead of a zone                     | 78         |
| placed in a zone by its boundaries                       | 48         |
| outside any zone, placed in a census tract               | 21         |
| too vague to place                                       | 9          |

## Privacy

Individual answers were collected and stored in Altgether’s Google account, and only Altgether’s survey team had access to them. The County receives counts by zone, with small zones pooled. Emails and phone numbers were used only to count one answer per person and to send results back, and will then be deleted.

## Reviewed for

- Accessibility
  - Plain language
  - A native Spanish review
  - Technical accuracy
  - Ease of use
  - Unbiased user research
  - A trauma-informed lens
  - A community lens, by reviewers who live here
  - Accuracy against the County’s proposal
- Reviewers included volunteer neighbors, Altadena CoLab, a native Spanish speaker, members of the focus group, and LA County Planning, which checked the survey against what the County proposed. The County did not change the questions or the answer options.

# Limits, lessons, and what we ask

## Limits

- **This is not a vote, not a random sample, and not representative of all of Altadena.** It shows what the neighbors who answered think, and where they live.
- **Reach was uneven.** Across Altadena’s zones, about 4 in 100 residents answered (by approximate zone counts): none in 28 of 111 zones, and up to 20 in 100 in the best-reached. By census tract, answers ran from 0.1 to 8.4 per 100 households. Read the totals with that in mind.
- **Small zones are pooled.** A zone with fewer than 5 answers on a question is combined with the other small zones in its census tract, or with the smallest zone in the tract when that is not enough, so no one’s answer can be picked out.
- **One open question about today’s parking rule** (whether the two spaces must be covered) is listed for the County to confirm.

## What we learned, and will change

| What happened                                                                      | Effect                                                                                                     | Next time                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Home options overlapped (“living elsewhere for now,” “not sure yet,” “rebuilding”) | We do not report who is or is not rebuilding                                                               | Separate questions: home lost or standing; rebuilding or not; where you live now                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| “Own or rent” was asked in the present tense                                       | Unclear whether it means today or before the fire                                                          | Ask both: before the fire, and now                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| The “why do you disagree?” box opened only on Disagree, and could look required    | The extra effort may have nudged some toward Agree or No opinion                                           | One optional comment box for every answer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| No address lookup for zones                                                        | 78 neighbors typed cross streets; 9 could not be placed                                                    | Look up the zone from the address                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Reach depended on active captains                                                  | 28 of 111 zones had no answers; tract 4613 has no Altatgether zone                                         | Work on broadening our reach, especially in zones without an active captain                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Some invitations said the County “is planning” changes                             | Overstated the County’s position                                                                           | A suggested message for captains that says “considering”                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Captains had a link and a message, but little time to prepare                      | Only 15 neighbors talked the rules over at a block gathering; 110 talked informally                        | Time to coach captains and help them facilitate block conversations before each round opens                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Nine days, on the County’s timeline                                                | Felt rushed: little time to reach beyond the captain network, and little room for thoughtful collaboration | Ask for more time: rerun this round with wider reach, and lengthen Rounds 2 and 3, which are also scheduled for about two weeks each. Plan timing and outreach with LA County Planning, the Altadena Town Council and its Land Use Committee, and community organizations |

## What we ask in return

Neighbors were promised they would hear what happened to their input. We ask LA County Planning for a written answer to each question in this report that we can share directly with neighbors. For each of the four changes, we also ask what the County kept, what it set aside, and why.

Contact: [input@altatgether.org](mailto:input@altatgether.org)

# Answers by zone: West of Lake Avenue

n: answers. % of residents: answers as a share of the people living in the zone. Each rule cell: % agree / % disagree with the County's change. Zones with fewer than 5 answers are pooled with the other small zones in the same census tract; where those still total fewer than 5, they join the smallest zone in that tract. Grouped by census tract. The same numbers are in the CSV that accompanies this report.

| Zone                                                                           | n  | % of residents | Yards   | Height  | Front fences | Parking |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|
| <b>Tract 4602 • North central: Fair Oaks to Lake, north of Mariposa</b>        |    |                |         |         |              |         |
| 1                                                                              | 16 | 8%             | 25 / 62 | 25 / 62 | 56 / 38      | 44 / 50 |
| 11                                                                             | 6  | 4%             | 0 / 83  | 17 / 83 | 17 / 50      | 33 / 33 |
| 14                                                                             | 9  | 13%            | 67 / 33 | 44 / 56 | 33 / 56      | 22 / 78 |
| 17                                                                             | 24 | 12%            | 29 / 71 | 25 / 71 | 42 / 50      | 33 / 58 |
| 30                                                                             | 13 | 4%             | 54 / 31 | 54 / 46 | 69 / 23      | 8 / 69  |
| 53                                                                             | 17 | 11%            | 53 / 35 | 12 / 82 | 59 / 41      | 35 / 65 |
| 61                                                                             | 13 | 12%            | 38 / 62 | 15 / 77 | 38 / 54      | 31 / 62 |
| 78                                                                             | 16 | 12%            | 38 / 50 | 38 / 56 | 69 / 31      | 50 / 50 |
| 84                                                                             | 6  | 8%             | 50 / 50 | 0 / 83  | 67 / 17      | 33 / 33 |
| 115                                                                            | 7  | 9%             | 71 / 29 | 71 / 29 | 86 / 14      | 43 / 57 |
| 152                                                                            | 10 | 8%             | 20 / 70 | 0 / 100 | 60 / 20      | 20 / 70 |
| Pooled: 38, 60, 69, 85, 90, 119, 122, 134, 135                                 | 19 | 3%             | 37 / 53 | 26 / 68 | 37 / 47      | 21 / 68 |
| West Athens                                                                    | 6  | 6%             | 17 / 83 | 0 / 83  | 17 / 67      | 33 / 50 |
| <b>Tract 4603.01 • Northwest: West of Fair Oaks, north of Altadena Dr</b>      |    |                |         |         |              |         |
| 5                                                                              | 23 | 6%             | 43 / 52 | 30 / 57 | 65 / 30      | 35 / 52 |
| 20                                                                             | 17 | 7%             | 24 / 65 | 6 / 76  | 59 / 29      | 29 / 59 |
| 33                                                                             | 6  | 3%             | 33 / 50 | 17 / 83 | 50 / 33      | 0 / 83  |
| 46                                                                             | 8  | 8%             | 0 / 100 | 12 / 88 | 62 / 38      | 0 / 75  |
| 81                                                                             | 12 | 5%             | 42 / 50 | 33 / 58 | 42 / 50      | 33 / 67 |
| 125                                                                            | 8  | 8%             | 25 / 75 | 12 / 88 | 62 / 38      | 38 / 50 |
| 136 (The Meadows)                                                              | 9  | 2%             | 11 / 78 | 0 / 89  | 44 / 44      | 44 / 56 |
| Pooled: 49, 74, 117, 148, Lower Meadows, Florecita Farms                       | 16 | 2%             | 38 / 62 | 19 / 75 | 44 / 50      | 12 / 75 |
| <b>Tract 4603.02 • West central: West of Fair Oaks, Altadena Dr to Ventura</b> |    |                |         |         |              |         |
| 9                                                                              | 5  | 4%             | 60 / 40 | 20 / 80 | 60 / 40      | 40 / 60 |
| 22                                                                             | 6  | 4%             | 67 / 33 | 50 / 50 | 33 / 67      | 33 / 67 |
| 47                                                                             | 11 | 14%            | 55 / 36 | 18 / 64 | 55 / 45      | 36 / 45 |
| 54                                                                             | 13 | 6%             | 38 / 62 | 46 / 38 | 69 / 31      | 54 / 38 |
| 64                                                                             | 14 | 10%            | 29 / 64 | 14 / 86 | 36 / 50      | 14 / 71 |
| Pooled: 50, 108, 140, 145                                                      | 10 | 2%             | 30 / 60 | 40 / 60 | 40 / 50      | 30 / 60 |
| <b>Tract 4610 • Southwest: West of Fair Oaks, south of Ventura</b>             |    |                |         |         |              |         |
| Pooled: 24, 97                                                                 | 9  | 2%             | 56 / 33 | 22 / 78 | 56 / 44      | 44 / 56 |
| <b>Tract 4611 • South central: Fair Oaks to Lake, south of Mariposa</b>        |    |                |         |         |              |         |
| 2                                                                              | 21 | 9%             | 29 / 67 | 14 / 76 | 38 / 52      | 19 / 67 |
| 80                                                                             | 7  | 3%             | 29 / 71 | 14 / 86 | 86 / 0       | 0 / 71  |
| 147                                                                            | 10 | 5%             | 0 / 50  | 0 / 90  | 40 / 60      | 40 / 40 |
| Pooled: 40, 55, 72, 109, 153                                                   | 12 | 2%             | 33 / 50 | 8 / 83  | 67 / 25      | 17 / 83 |

# Answers by zone: East of Lake Avenue

n: answers. % of residents: answers as a share of the people living in the zone. Each rule cell: % agree / % disagree with the County's change. Zones with fewer than 5 answers are pooled with the other small zones in the same census tract; where those still total fewer than 5, they join the smallest zone in that tract. Grouped by census tract. The same numbers are in the CSV that accompanies this report.

| Zone                                                                     | n  | % of residents | Yards   | Height  | Front fences | Parking |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----------------|---------|---------|--------------|---------|
| <b>Tract 4601.01 • Northeast: East of Lake, north of Mendocino</b>       |    |                |         |         |              |         |
| 6                                                                        | 6  | 5%             | 33 / 67 | 17 / 83 | 50 / 50      | 50 / 33 |
| 25                                                                       | 18 | 12%            | 6 / 94  | 17 / 78 | 28 / 50      | 33 / 56 |
| 29                                                                       | 31 | 7%             | 29 / 71 | 32 / 65 | 45 / 48      | 45 / 52 |
| 34                                                                       | 6  | 12%            | 17 / 67 | 50 / 50 | 83 / 0       | 50 / 33 |
| 48                                                                       | 6  | 7%             | 0 / 100 | 17 / 83 | 0 / 83       | 17 / 50 |
| 59                                                                       | 10 | 15%            | 10 / 90 | 30 / 70 | 20 / 60      | 30 / 70 |
| 86                                                                       | 25 | 20%            | 4 / 96  | 16 / 80 | 56 / 40      | 44 / 44 |
| Alpine Villa                                                             | 8  | 9%             | 25 / 62 | 12 / 75 | 62 / 38      | 38 / 50 |
| Alta Curve                                                               | 10 | 7%             | 30 / 70 | 20 / 80 | 60 / 30      | 40 / 50 |
| Pooled: 15, 42, 51, 62, 70, 71, 76, 77, 82, 106, 150                     | 24 | 2%             | 17 / 67 | 17 / 75 | 29 / 62      | 33 / 58 |
| <b>Tract 4612 • East central: East of Lake, Mendocino to New York Dr</b> |    |                |         |         |              |         |
| 83                                                                       | 9  | 4%             | 33 / 56 | 22 / 67 | 11 / 78      | 11 / 89 |
| 93                                                                       | 11 | 10%            | 18 / 82 | 18 / 73 | 18 / 64      | 18 / 64 |
| 104                                                                      | 13 | 8%             | 23 / 69 | 8 / 77  | 38 / 62      | 31 / 62 |
| 129                                                                      | 18 | 17%            | 33 / 67 | 33 / 67 | 33 / 67      | 56 / 39 |
| 130                                                                      | 5  | 2%             | 80 / 20 | 20 / 80 | 20 / 80      | 0 / 60  |
| Pooled: 91, 92, 99, 111, 146                                             | 7  | 1%             | 14 / 86 | 29 / 71 | 57 / 43      | 43 / 57 |