

Santa Barbara Happenings



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Santa Barbara Airport Goals, Plans and New Director



The new director of the Santa Barbara Airport, Chris Hastert, has managed airports in Oxnard, Camarillo and Santa Maria.

There has been an increase in commercial air travel at Santa Barbara Airport since 2021, when Southwest Airlines came in. Additions to the airport are planned, in particular more concessions and more parking.

Director Hastert notes that noise is one of the greatest concerns with regard to the airport. He points out that part of the issue is that the airport is nearly surrounded by residential neighborhoods which makes it difficult to avoid disturbing residents. According to Hastert, there is not much that can be changed as far as schedules (the times of take-off and landing) as these are largely determined by the East Coast so early morning noise is an issue not just for Santa Barbara but for the entire West Coast. Still, Santa Barbara Airport will continue working with the airlines to find solutions such as utilizing new technology or different routes in order to minimize disturbance.

Increased Road Repair Funding

According to the County Budget Director, Paul Clementi, budget shortfalls in the roads operation fund are due to increasing expenditures, liability insurance, and other increasing costs. In the face of these shortfalls, the County Board of Supervisors has voted to allocate more funding to the county roads operations fund. The fund is currently maintained by permit fees, among other things, and so part of the increase in funding will likely be created by raising fees for encroachment permits. Maybe they will even fix a road near you.

Microcredentials v. College Degree

Microcredentials refer to shorter, skills-focused pro-

grams that are increasingly being sought, usually in addition to, traditional four-year degrees. These programs are typically offered by accredited universities partnering with online learning platforms, although some are offered by non-academic companies.

Are microcredentials a fad or can they revolutionize higher ed? I think it could be the latter. Imagine a world where instead of having to hire someone who has been through 4 years of indoctrination, you can hire someone with the needed knowledge and skills. Could be a game changer.

SB City Council Makes it More Difficult to Evict Tenants

The Santa Barbara City Council approved supposed "emergency" changes to the city's just cause eviction ordinance in response to the perceived impact of 'renovictions' during the current housing crisis. A so called 'renoviction' is a just cause evictions where it is claimed landlords are evicting tenants in or to renovate the property but tenants allege that their true motive is to evict current tenants so that they may charge someone else a higher rent whether or not they make renovations.

In response to these claims, the City Council voted to change the language of the just cause eviction ordinance as well as the requirements landlords must adhere to if they wish to evict someone in order to remodel a property. Previously, the ordinance only required an intent to renovate or take the house off of the rental market but now this intent must be 'in good faith'. If the landlord is going to renovate the property, they must get all of the required permits and make copies of these permits along with an explanation of the scope of the work and the reason it cannot be safely completed with the tenant living there, available to tenants before they ask them to vacate the unit. Other changes to the local landlord tenant laws were also made.

Study Describes Consequences of Rent Control Laws

According to study conducted by NDP analytics for the National Apartment Association, rent control policies can have unintended negative impacts on a community's housing market. The report contained a survey of housing developers and providers from three different housing markets that have implemented rent control policies: Saint Paul, Minnesota, Santa Ana/ Santa Barbara, California and Portland/Eugene, Oregon.

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The study, which was conducted between December 2022 and February 2023, included information gathered from an online opinion poll with 1039 respondents from all over the United States. The poll focused on the availability of housing, residential construction and policy perspectives and found that rent control policies can cause problems that are perceived as detrimental by renters and landlords. *Specifically, many landlords choose not to develop properties or to take them off of the rental market due to rent control policies making them less profitable. This ultimately reduces the amount of housing available.*



Many who were surveyed also pointed out that although it is believed that rent control policies primarily benefit low-income residents, there is evidence that higher income residents tend to stay in rent-controlled apartments and pay under market rates.

This freezes supply and new households fall out of the market because there are no units for them to move into. Overall, the study found that “reducing barriers to new construction and rehabilitation, expanding tax policy that encourages multifamily investment and increasing investments in vouchers and program administration of the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program” are better ways to improve housing availability.

Santa Barbara Considers Prosecution of Illegal Short-term Rentals

The Santa Barbara City Council Ordinance Committee recently voted to forward a pilot project for consideration by the entire City Council. The proposed project would address the problem of illegal short-term rentals in Santa Barbara. It is estimated that if these short-term rentals were registered with the city they could contribute between \$150,000-\$320,000 in annual tax revenue from transient occupancy taxes and business license taxes.

The proposed pilot program would cost \$1.4 million and would allow the city to use means such as

private investigators in order to find residents who are illegally running short-term vacation rentals. Let’s spend \$1.4 million to raise \$320,000. Does this make sense? An even more controversial part of the project is that the city would then criminally prosecute those residents. Another part of this controversial project would allow the city to criminally prosecute those residents with illegal short-term rentals.

New Sites Proposed for Housing



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Many new sites have been proposed for housing development in Santa Barbara recently, including 19 new sites that were added for consideration in the latest edition of the Santa Barbara County Housing Element Update. Two sites which have recently been proposed for housing include using the Santa Barbara County Probation office on East Carrillo Street as well as a proposal to build a 27-unit housing addition to the historic Cantwell’s Market on State Street.

The plans for the proposed housing to be built over Cantwell’s Market call for 15 one-bedroom and 12 two-bedroom units which average about 800 square feet. There are also 34 parking spaces, an arcade and an outdoor dining area for Cantwell’s included in the plans.

The changes to the Santa Barbara Housing Element Update add a total of 2,151 units. The previously proposed agricultural sites in Goleta (the Glenn Annie Golf Club and San Marcos Growers sites) are still included for consideration even following the public’s reluctance. The 2,151 units would include: 578 low-income, 666 moderate income and 967 market rate units.

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