

# Santa Barbara Happenings



Terry A. Bartlett – Reetz, Fox & Bartlett LLP

## 82 Unit Milpas Housing Project Approval

The Santa Barbara Architectural Board of Review approved plans for an 82-unit apartment building that will replace the Capital Hardware building on Milpas. The building was proposed by developer Ed St. George along with partners Jay Bjorndahl and Alan Bleeker. It will be in the Spanish Mediterranean style and include 16 moderate income affordable apartments.



Image RRM Design Group rendering

## State Street is Needs Fixing

The State Street Advisory Committee, which was established in 2021, has been attempting to oversee the creation of a planning document that will provide a “conceptual layout” for State Street, according to the city’s website. So far, they have spent \$780,000 to hire a consulting firm which, after a year, has yet to develop a plan that the committee and community members approve of. The proposed plans for State Street largely center around turning lower State into a closed pedestrian mall, but many Santa Barbarans are against this. Community members created the website: [fixstatstreet.org](http://fixstatstreet.org) in order to voice their concerns.

Most cities that have attempted the implementation of closed pedestrian malls have failed. The businesses and downtown areas involved generally do not end up more successful, prosperous or vibrant. In some cases, such as that of the Third Street Promenade in Santa Monica, these once bustling commercial areas become hubs of vagrancy where shoppers are afraid to go.

Those in the community who don’t want a closed pedestrian mall also cite cost as a factor. Instead of spending more money to create something that mostly fails, they suggest expanding the sidewalks along a greater area of Sate Street to allow for

more permanent outdoor dining space that will be more attractive than the current parklets in the street. These community members also call for the re-instatement of designated bike lanes and for the allowance of motor-vehicles which will allow more people to support the businesses of State Street and the downtown area safely and confidently.

According to a recent missive from Mayor Rouse, he too is “frustrated” by the lack of progress and “concerned” by the prospect of a promenade due to their high rates of failure. He suggests an interim plan that allows for one lane of vehicle traffic so that trolley access can be reinstated and those with limited mobility can navigate State Street. He also supports sidewalk dining and clear bike lanes.

## Social Media Control, Free Speech, and the Missouri v. Biden Ruling

On May 5, 2022, state attorney generals filed suit with the United States District Court against 67 named defendants including Dr. Anthony Fauci, FBI special agent Elvis Chan, Eric Waldo of the Surgeon General’s Office, and President Biden, alleging violations of the First Amendment in the form of coercing and colluding with social media companies to censor certain views regarding COVID lockdown measures and the election. On July 4, 2023, the Plaintiff’s motion for Preliminary Injunction was granted. Judge Terry A. Doughty ruled that the U.S. government and agencies must not meet with or contact social media companies with an intent to “induce in any manner the removal, deletion, suppression or reduction of content containing protected free speech posted on social media platforms”.

## 22 Unit Apartment Project for Downtown Santa Barbara Wins Support

Developer Craig Minus submitted a proposal under the city’s AUD Ordinance for a 22-Unit apartment building at 932 De La Vina Street. The AUD Ordinance (Average Unit Size Density Program) supports the construction of smaller residential units near transit and commerce centers. The proposed three-story apartment building would include 14 2 bed-2 bath units, 7 1 bed -1 bath units and 1 2 bed 1 bath unit as well as 21 covered vehicle parking spaces and 22 bike parking spaces and would stand at a height of 47.4 feet which is 2.4 ft higher than the maximum height currently allowed in Santa Barbara. This density is significantly higher than the surrounding neighborhoods.

*Continued on page 35*



Image Henry Lenny Design Studio rendering

### Tik Tok Reveals Information about Users and Those Around Them

Social media application TikTok is under increased scrutiny in the U.S. for years now because of the amount of data it collects on users, and anyone connected to the Wi-Fi networks of those users, whether or not they are using TikTok. A prompt that pops up when you open TikTok says "TikTok would like to find and connect to devices on your local network" which sounds innocuous. In fact, when you allow a device to "discover and connect to devices on the networks you use", you are allowing the app to collect information that is used to create a detailed profile of you, the areas you frequent, and the others who connect to the networks you use. The app maps out the users of the network by getting each device's media access (MAC) address and internet protocol (IP) address.

### UCSB Plans to Build Alternative to Munger Hall at Development Site in Shakeup of Student Housing

According to an advertisement posted on July 24, UCSB is looking for "qualified professionals interested in providing detailed project programming, full design services [and] construction administration services" for the UCSB Student Housing Infill and Redevelopment Project which has an estimated budget of \$600-750 million. Phase 1 of this project is a student residence hall to be built on the site that was previously reserved for Munger Hall, a \$1.4 billion project, into which UCSB has sunk millions of dollars since 2006, that was to be partially funded by billionaire Charlie Munger.

Munger had offered to contribute to the housing project under the condition that his mostly window-

less and communal 1.5 million square foot design was followed. After nearly 20 years of development the project has not been approved and UCSB is facing lawsuits over its failure to provide an adequate amount of housing for a growing number of students. According to a spokesperson, it appears that UCSB is continuing the development of Munger Hall alongside the new Housing Infill and Redevelopment Project.



Image Santa Barbara independent

### Bill Proposes Separate Charges for Rent and Parking

An assembly bill that passed assembly on May 31 would 'unbundle' rent and parking for qualifying residential units, defined as residential units that have been issued a certificate of occupancy on or after January 1, 2025, consists of 16 or more residential units, and is located within the County of Alameda, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, Shasta, or Ventura.

Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo who advanced the bill believes that this would "give renters the freedom to choose whether or not to incur the costs of parking, while promoting alternative modes of transportation." One study cited by her communications director found "mixed support for the idea that units without parking are smaller and offered at lower prices."

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