

Santa Barbara Happenings



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UCSB has New Housing Plans for 2027

UCSB is set to begin construction on the San Benito Housing Complex in 2025 which would be open for housing in 2027 and would provide at least 2,000 beds. The university is currently being sued by the County of Santa Barbara for over-enrolling and under-housing students. The County of Santa Barbara and the City of Goleta have both pursued litigation against UCSB for contributing to housing scarcity and a deficit in hotel tax. The stipulated deadline for the university to provide 2,000 additional beds is 2025 meaning that the San Benito project will likely be done too late to prevent UCSB from having to pay the County for not providing enough housing.



UCSB had been attempting to build the proposed Munger Hall dormitory but that plan was rejected in 2023.

SB Water Rates Go Way Up

The Santa Barbara City Council recently voted 6-0 to raise water rates significantly over the next 4 years. The plan outlined for water would mean increases of 12% in 2025 and 2026 and 9% increases in 2027 and 2028. The increases proposed for wastewater rates are 10.5% in 2025, 10% in 2026 and 2027 and 9.5% in 2028. Although this plan has received initial approval from the City Council, it will still have to go before the Water Commission and the Finance Committee before it can return to

the City Council (likely in July) for a final approval.

Santa Barbara's Paseo Nuevo Redevelopment

Santa Barbara City Council recently approved a project agreement for the re-development of Paseo Nuevo which would include 500 residential units and 1st floor commercial space. The project agreement is between the city and the mall's leaseholder AllianceBernstein Commercial, which took over the lease when the previous lease owners defaulted on a \$120 million loan. The mall owners could still sell the project to another developer or build something without city partnership under the project agreement. It is unclear how many of the 500



units of proposed housing will be "affordable" with rent and price controls.

Proponents of affordable housing, alongside the Housing Authority, advocate 30-40% affordable units for the project. This issue, along with portions of the proposed development far exceeding the height limit in Santa Barbara, have been the subject of much discussion.

Homeless Day Care Center Set for City of Santa Barbara

A three-year lease was recently approved for 621 Chapala Street. The proposed project for the site is a Daytime Care Center for the homeless that will be run by the non-profit Santa Barbara Alliance for

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Community Transformation. The Center will offer a variety of services (including community gathering rooms, helping people get documents and clothes for job interviews, offering showers, mental health services, help with resumes, computers, and applications) to the homeless with the hope of getting them into a position to find and remain in stable housing. The project will be partially funded by Measure C funds and philanthropic contributions and costs will be offset by providers of the various services offered who will sublease office space on the second floor.

Santa Barbara Airport Improvements Planned



The Santa Barbara Airport recently submitted an update to its Master Plan. Airport officials are predicting 878,000 annual passengers by 2041 but are optimistically planning for up to 1.1 million.

They expect that 90.66% of the project will be covered by the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) airport improvement fund. The updated plan includes a new terminal, a three-story parking garage, \$50,000 in curb improvements and many other additions. At some point in the next few months the final draft of the Master Plan is expected to be ready for presentation to the Planning Commission, after its approval, there will still be additional work on the plan as well as public input before it can be submitted to the FAA. FAA approval could take anywhere from a few months to a year.

Santa Maria Council Approves New 55,000 sq foot Hotel for North End of City



(image Santa Maria Times)

A four story, 93 room Holiday Inn was recently approved by the Santa Maria City Council. It will be located at the northern end of the Roemer Court cul-de-sac (off of exit 173 on the 101 N) and include an indoor pool, lounge, meeting room and outdoor patio space. New fast-food restaurants are also being built in the area.

Chris Sneddon Appointed as County Public Works Director



Chris Sneddon became the new Santa Barbara County Public Works Director on April 1st. He replaced Scott McGolpin who was director for 16 years and with the County for 35 years. Sneddon has been with the

County for over 20 years in other positions, including deputy director of transportation. He has a civil engineering degree from the University of Notre Dame and a master's degree from the Colorado School of Mines.

Is This the Solution to State Control of Local Land Use Decisions?

Following loss of local land use control to State, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors recently approved a development agreement approving an apartment complex in Orcutt. The original plan which proposed a 61-unit development was submitted under state law that limits local involvement in the land use and approval process in order to increase the amount of housing being built. Development agreements are a possibility for plans that are not considered acceptable to local law makers but are submitted under State laws. The approved agreement is for a 99-unit project.

SLO Airport is Adding More Flights

San Luis Obispo Airport is will no longer offer the direct flight to Las Vegas that has been offered since December. The route was offered to assess its popularity. Five direct flights will be added including flights to Portland, Seattle, and Dallas Fort Worth. The airport already offers a direct flight to L.A. and to San Diego and an additional flight to each will be added.