

Santa Barbara Happenings



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Goleta Protests County Idea to Fudge on Traffic Impacts of Thousands of New Homes



Image Independent.com, Traffic in Goleta

Santa Barbara County Planning and Development pointed out recently that local traffic rules could affect the development of housing to meet the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) assigned to us by the State. The City of Goleta, however, believes that local traffic standards should not be changed to facilitate development.

The County would require developers to prepare a traffic study identifying issues that could arise in the area were they add units. Generally, County Supervisors and the City of Goleta are concerned about the effects on traffic that could arise from the fact that many of the proposed developments are in Eastern Goleta Valley.

Hidden Costs Lead to Sky High Electricity Rates

Since 2020, PG&E and Southern California Edison residential rates have risen 38% and 40% respectively, after adjusting for inflation. These prices are much higher than the national average.

Net zero emission requirements, shifted fire responsibilities onto utilities, and new unproven technologies are fueling the rise. These are being exacerbated by the installation of rooftop solar panels which allow the owners of those panels to consume less energy from the grid and, in turn, contribute less to the fixed costs of maintaining the grid (vegetation management, grid hardening etc.). As fewer kWhs are sold from the grid, retail rates rise in order to cover these fixed costs.

Bottom line: Sacramento and Washington have been subsidizing activity that make supporting the electrical grid unaffordable while pushing for the electrification of virtually everything.

Downtown Waterfront Shuttle for Summer

The downtown-waterfront electric shuttle will be reinstated for summer 2024. Before the COVID-19

pandemic, shuttles operated on this route for 30 years. The shuttles will now only operate Friday, Saturday and Sunday between 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and the downtown portion will be on Chapala and Anacapa instead of State Street due to poorly planned vehicle prohibitions.



Image, Noozhawk.com

Downtown Santa Barbara Community Benefit Improvement District Proposed

Recently, the implementation of a downtown Community Benefit Improvement District (CBID) was discussed by the City Council, members of the Downtown Organization, the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce and State Street property owners. If created, the CBID's \$2,000,000 annual budget would be funded by raising property taxes for downtown property owners. In order for the CBID to become a reality at least 50% of all downtown property owners must vote for it. The votes are weighted according to the amount of property that a person owns so that those who own more property will have more influence over the outcome.

SLO County Supervisors Approve Nipomo's 1,470-Home Dana Reserve Development



Image, Noozhawk.com

The San Luis Obispo County Planning Commission approved the plans for a 1,470-unit housing project called Dana Point Reserve which has been in development since 2020. The project will be lo-

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cated on Highway 101 near Willow Road in Nipomo and will include homes at varying prices, space for a grocery store, commercial center, medical center, fire station, and a dog park. Construction of the development is set to begin in 2026. It will likely take a decade to complete.

People Who Rent Will Likely Decide the 2024 Presidential Election

According to the Consumer Price Index 'rent of primary residence' data (the category which most accurately reflects what renters pay) rent has risen 0.4 percent each month for 31 months. This means that it will be likely be the primary concern of those who rent as they vote in the 2024 election. Also worth noting, HUD announced that it will require new homes to follow the 2021 International Energy Conservation Code Standard which the National Association of Home Builders says can add as much as \$31,000 to the price of each new home. Both renting and homeownership are becoming too expensive for younger generations of voters making housing a primary concern. Is the American dream of owning your own home dead?

Unnatural Natural Disasters

Natural disasters in appear to be becoming more frequent in our area. Cloud seeding, for instance, is a planned weather modification process whereby the moisture in clouds is induced to coalesce into either rain or hail using chemical compounds such as silver iodide, potassium iodide or sodium chloride (salt).

Experiments and re-search into cloud seeding date back to the 1940s and our cloud seeding program in Santa Barbara has existed since 1981. According to the Santa Barbara County Website, we use ground seeding stations to inject silver iodide into the clouds (although specially fitted aircraft may also be used). And, according to KEYT, cloud seeding continued in the 2017-2018 season despite higher-than-average rainfall that winter. This likely contributed to some of the later flooding, just the County's failure to empty existing basins and make them bigger likely contributed to the severity of the debris flows caused by the flooding.



In terms of cloud seeding, there is also evidence that the silver iodide collects in sensitive environments killing beneficial microorganisms in soil as well as water and hurting trees and plants. We have yet to determine what effects this pollution could have on human health but if it is negatively affecting other life forms, we can expect that it will

most likely negatively affect us. There are always these pesky unintended consequences of government actions.

Board of Supervisors Selects Sites for Future Housing

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors finally decided which potential rezone sites in North and South County would ultimately be rezoned for housing to meet the allocation assigned to Santa Barbara County by the State of California.

10 sites in North County and 18 in South County were chosen, as well as 9 sites owned by the county. The North County sites are: Apollo (Vandenberg Village), Blue Sky Center (Cuyama), The Boys and Girls Club (Orcutt), Chumash, LLC (Santa Ynez Valley), Key Sites 1, 3, 10, and 11 (Orcutt), Hummel Cottages (Orcutt) and Element Church (Orcutt). The South County sites are: Bailard, Van Wingerden 1 and 2, Hope Church, St. Vincent's East and West, San Marcos Growers 1 and 2, Tatum, Montessori, St. Athanasius, Scott, Ekwill, Caird 1, 2 and 3, Friendship Manor, and Glenn Annie. The County owned sites are: Flag Lot, Probation Building, Juvenile Hall, Page and Fire, Hollister Lofts, Child Family Services Lot, Archives Parking Lot and Above Behavioral Wellness Deck.

The development of the Giorgio family's avocado and lemon orchard near Goleta Cottage Hospital which was proposed in partnership with developers Jeff and Jason Nelson was not selected. This project was recommended for removal by the Planning Commission but the developers can still move forward with the project under the builder's remedy law. The project would consist of 1,771 units, 444 of which would be low-income.

Results of Banning Smartphones in Schools

A study conducted in Norway using data from 2010 to 2018 found that banning the use of smartphones in middle schools significantly reduced the incidence of psychological consultations and bullying in the schools and also led to higher GPAs and increased academic engagement, especially among girls. As such, the study's author suggests that "banning smartphones could be a low-cost policy tool to improve student outcomes."



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