

Santa Barbara Happenings



Terry A. Bartlett – Reetz, Fox & Bartlett LLP

SB City to Add More Housing Near Tri-County Produce and Railroad Tracks

A housing project proposal by developers Austin Herlihy and Chris Parker for the area behind Tri-County Produce at 535 S. Milpas has been revised to maintain the entirety of the market instead of having the market reduced in size to add more units.

Initially, the developers had proposed 99 units, with the revision to maintain Tri-County produce there will only be room for 53 units: 10 studios, 18 1-bedroom units, and 25 two-bedroom units constituting in four stories.

The proposal was presented to the Architectural Board of Review and stylistic changes were suggested. Increased parking and traffic congestion were not addressed. With the revised plan, Tri-County would be able to remain open for most of the construction period.



Noozhawk image, Cearnal Collective rendering

City of SB Pushes for More Affordable Housing in La Cumbre Plaza Development

The Santa Barbara City Council voted in August to begin negotiations with developers Matthew and Jim Taylor to increase the amount of affordable housing in the proposed 642 unit La Cumbre Plaza re-development project. The initial proposal included 54 affordable units with affordable being defined as intended for people earning 80-200% of the area median income (\$119,100 for a family of 4).

Instead, the City Council is trying to negotiate having 10% of the project be for those earning less than 80% of the area median income and 15% of the project be priced for people who earn between 80 and 125% of the area median income.

The proposed re-development would take the place

of the Macy's building and parts of the building would be six stories high.



SBIndependent.com image

Developer Proposes 255-Unit, Eight-Story Apartment Project Next to Santa Barbara Mission



Los Angeles County developer, So Cal Industrial Equities doing business as The Mission LLC proposed 255-unit apartment, 8 story apartment building with 434 parking spaces near

the Mission at 505 Los Olivos Street under the Builder's Remedy.

The City deemed the project incomplete in August and gave the developers 90 days to respond. Many in the neighborhood are against the proposed development.

City of SB Creates Objective Design Standards to Streamline Approval for Housing Projects

In 2021, the city received a \$300,000 grant from the state Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to draft a more objective set of design and development standards which were then revised over the last few years.

The city planning team gave a proposed final draft to the Planning Commission on August 29th. The Planning Commission has recommended amendments to the Objective Design Standards.

The proposed standards would allow 3 architectural style groups: Mediterranean, Craftsman, and Contemporary.

Alejandra Gutierrez Says 'Rent Control is Not the Solution'

Alejandra Gutierrez, who is running for re-election

Continued on page 29

for the City Council in November, Eastside District 1, recently said in a podcast interview that she “doesn’t think rent control is the solution for housing. It is a temporary Band-Aid. The only ones who will benefit are the ones who have a home now.”



Her opponent, Wendy Santamaria, has said that she supports rent control at a 2% annual increase.

Woodill and the Goleta 3rd District

Ethan Woodill, a candidate for running for the Goleta City Council seat in District 3, recently discussed the construction (Project Connect) in Old Town Goleta that includes restriping of Hollister Avenue, the construction of multiple roundabouts and the extension of Ekwill Street and Fowler Road. He says he feels there’s a rush of construction and said that many Old Town business owners are concerned.

Woodill expressed concern that City Council members were losing touch with the desires of the community.

Potential Threats to Santa Barbara County’s Economy

Recently, the Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce hosted the 4th annual State of the County event where local business and government leaders discuss the future of Santa Barbara County’s economy.

The County is anticipating an economic downturn and is concerned about how California budget shortfalls will affect the funding of social services as well as increased costs due to natural disasters.

Peter Rupert of UCSB also discussed the potential effects of changing demographics on our local economy. Specifically, middle-aged residents have been leaving with their children which could have long term effects on the economy. Will we preserve and develop family housing to correct this trend?

Santa Barbara Council OKs Funding Plan to Rebuild Police Station

The Santa Barbara City Council voted to borrow nearly \$135 million to build a new police station at the corner of Cota and Santa Barbara Streets. The new headquarters will be 65,000 square feet and some of the money borrowed will be used to renovate Dwight Murphy Field.

The City plans to use Measure C funds to pay back the money at a rate of about \$8 million per year.

Highway 101 Construction Update

Three of the four phases of the Highway 101 high-occupancy-vehicle lane project are complete. The project aims to widen and redevelop the High-

way between Mussell Shoals in Ventura County and Milpas Street in Santa Barbara.

Recently, work began between Olive Mill Road and Hermosillo Road which is expected to be finished in 2026.



Image edhat.com

The Lockdown Wasn’t Worth it

We have forgotten that bizarre period when people were self-diagnosing so that, if they could not take time off work they would self-diagnose as being all clear, and if they felt like a little time off, they would claim to have been infected. We got into the worst kind of sunk cost fallacy. In fact, the Secretary of State at the time explicitly used that argument: we have been through so much, so let us not let it all be for nothing.

By then, almost everything was pushed into a retrospective justification for the measures that we and other Governments — with one exception — had taken. If infections went up, everyone said, “Well, we can’t relax the restrictions. It would be extremely dangerous.” If they came down, everyone said, “Oh, it’s working. We just need to carry on with this.” People kept on saying, “Follow the science”, but the one thing that we were not doing was applying the normal scientific method. Karl Popper defines science as something that can be disproved, but woe betide you if you even asked the most basic questions at that time about whether there was proportionality. We already had the evidence by the end of April 2020 that Sweden had followed the same trajectory as everywhere else: that the infections had peaked and declined in a place where there were only the most minimal of measures, banning large meetings but otherwise relying on people to use their common sense.

Sweden suffered less of an economic hit in the pandemic than it did in the 2008 financial crisis. The Swedish budget was back in surplus by 2021. People still do not like to face the fact that for the better part of two years we paid people to stay at home, we borrowed from our future selves, and that money would eventually need to be paid back.

At the time we were told that there would be an almost civilizational collapse there. The argument was not that Sweden might end up with a slightly better or worse death rate than other countries, but that there would be bodies piled up in the streets. The end result is that Sweden actually did better than the rest of us.

Terry A. Bartlett is a real estate, housing, and landlord-tenant attorney at Reetz, Fox & Bartlett LLP in Santa Barbara.