

Santa Barbara Happenings

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SB City Council Passes “Renoviction” Tenant Protection Bill

With a 4-2 majority vote, the Santa Barbara City Council passed the “renoviction” ordinance, which include penalties on landlord improvements. These are: a 10 percent cap for rent increase after renovations, adding a requirement for a third-party contractor to confirm that the removal of tenants is necessary to complete any renovations, and a one-year break between the property owner’s purchase of the property and renovations or demolitions for properties with 5 or more units.

While this ordinance looks to help tenants, property owners and developers feel these amendments restrict their ability to improve their properties and disincentivize their desire to do so.



Image Santa Barbara City Council Youtube channel

New Project for More Storage Units and Micro-Apartments in Downtown SB

The Santa Barbara Planning Commission has approved a construction and renovation plan in Downtown SB that will add 760 self-storage units and 44-micro apartments. The micro-apartments will each cover about 360 square feet in the 102 W. De la Guerra St. building. Two units will be dedicated to moderate-income individuals and two to very-low-income individuals. The self-storage units will be in a new building as well as a renovated building on West Canon Perdido Street and Chapala Street. 44 bicycle parking spaces will be included, though no vehicle parking spots are currently planned to be added.

As more and more housing units are being added in Downtown SB, the city will need to improve parking availability as problems continue to get worse.



Image, Multi-Story Project Proposed, 102 W de la Guerra, Noozhawk.com

Developer’s Plan in Buellton

Developer and Landlord Ed St. George rolled out a conceptual plan for the recently closed Pea Soup Andersen’s Restaurant. St. George purchased the iconic property five months after the restaurant had closed. The developer has stressed that nothing is final and the plan for 125 one-bedroom condominiums, offices, a gym, and a restaurant is not final. The four-story Art Deco style building will pay homage to the former restaurant with its design style, while also possibly re-introducing the Pea Soup Andersen’s Restaurant as a favorite eating spot.

No matter what the final plan may be, the building will fit the Art Deco style that the city of Buellton has specifically outlined for the Avenue of Flags. Apartments and other buildings in the Art Deco style have already been approved by the city’s planning commission.



Image, keyt.com

Periodic Housing Inspections Approved for Properties in Isla Vista

Landlords in Isla Vista will now be held to the standards set by the government’s pilot rental inspection program put in place by the Santa Barbara

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County Board of Supervisors. Stemming from the county's emphasis on cliff safety, the rental inspection will cover mold, structural, plumbing or heating, and other minor violations across the 87% of Isla Vista residents which are renters. The board is planning for the program to only last one year, though they will evaluate their results and determine if more consistent inspections are necessary.

By June 28, Property owners and landlords need to report the units they rent out to the Planning and Development Department. Then, either the property owners or a landlord will be notified 15 days before the inspection of their property. In an example of government overreach and lack of respect for privacy, the inspection may proceed regardless of whether the property owner or a tenant of the property is present at that time. Inspections will begin on Del Playa Drive, though not every house in Isla Vista will be inspected. All inspections will be completed before UCSB students begin their fall session.

SB Unified School District to Build Affordable Housing Units

In conjunction with developers Red Tail Acquisition, the Santa Barbara Unified School District plans to build 136 total units meant for teachers and staff of the district. The plan consists of two developments, both of which include units for low-income individuals. Teachers have responded greatly to these plans and show major interest in living in these future developments. 63% of district employee households are moderate-income households or lower, making 120% or less of the \$101,000 median income of the area. So, an income of \$121,000 a year now qualifies you for taxpayers subsidized housing in SB.

106 units are planned to be constructed on the 4-acre Tatum property in the Eastern Goleta Valley, an undeveloped land adjacent to El Camino Elementary School on 5020 San Simeon Dr. All units will be affordable, though they range from one, two, and three bedrooms.

30 more units will be built at 915 E. Montecito St. designed for teachers to live in. These units hope to incentivize the retention of teachers in the district.



Image Noozhawk.com

SB City Council Plan to Improve "Right to Counsel" Program Approved

With the city council's approved plans and extended

funding, the Legal Aid Foundation has hired a fourth attorney and more staff to their organization. They plan to accept more cases regarding low-income households facing eviction. The foundation expects to hit their goal of taking on 80 cases by the end of September 2025.

In other words, the city has approved the use of tax-payer funding to assist people who do not pay their rent charges. While the program's spending is under budget, their spending will only increase as they begin to take on more cases. Though the program currently lacks the data to justify itself, the next year will be indicative of the program's failure or success.

Los Angeles Mayor Looks for Employee Reductions and State Bailout After Accruing \$800M Deficit

Karen Bass, Mayor of Los Angeles, plans to let go of 1,647 city staff employees, 2.7% of the city's total workforce. With an average city employee salary of roughly \$135,000, the layoffs would save just over a quarter of the city's \$800M deficit. For the current fiscal year, the city projects a revenue of \$140 million below original projections, and \$79 million less for the upcoming fiscal year. The city has already spent \$300 million more than anticipated for this current fiscal year. Let's not let this happen here.

The city has failed to adjust to the perverse incentives encouraging homelessness, the technological changes of the past 5 years, and the changing tastes of consumers, specifically regarding the entertainment industry. Maybe help for people with mental illness and substance abuse issues should be prioritized.

Declining Foreign Housing Buyers Providing Hope for Future American Homeowners?

Despite the rising housing costs, protections against foreign buyers purchasing American properties are non-existent. Many foreign investors are turned off by or selling their American properties. European, Asian, and Canadian investors are moving out at a rapid pace. The Canadian "Snowbirds" and real estate investors own roughly 13% of the homes purchased in 2024.

Though most illegal immigrants don't purchase homes, they do rent and occupy housing. Deportation and requiring lawful entry status play a major role in declining the demand of housing.

The demand for Airbnb's has dropped due to high taxes, high insurance costs, a drop in tourism due to inflation, and more. The sale of these homes, along with those owned by foreigners and illegal immigrants, will provide more availability for Americans looking to purchase.

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