

# Santa Barbara Happenings

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## **SB Council Removes Housing Development Barriers in Downtown Commercial Buildings**

The City Council voted unanimously to allow developers not to include affordable units when building housing in commercial buildings downtown. This change will increase the speed at which projects can be approved, thereby improving the overall housing production process. It will also make the entire process less expensive for developers. Currently, developers face challenges accommodating the commercial buildings to fit residential standards. Factors such as the walls, parking, yard, and more all make the process much less profitable for developers. The approved ordinance comes with economic benefits for developers, which will lead to additional housing in downtown Santa Barbara.

## **Carpinteria Residential Community Inspired by SB Polo and Racquet Club Hits Market**

Carpinteria Valley is adding a new residential community that includes 25 single-family homes and 15 townhomes. Six of the townhomes are assigned as workforce housing. The single-family homes come in at 2,292-4,085 square feet while the townhomes range from 1,375 to 2,000 square feet. The two- or three-bedroom townhomes start at a price of \$1.5 million.

The community's architecture embraces the Santa Barbara Polo and Racquet Club's aesthetic, building their homes in country ranch style. Also included are over 4 acres of open space, which contains trails, a creek, and areas for the residents to gather. Homes have been developed in a way that allows buyers to select the final touches to their future home, such as picking flooring and countertops.



*Image Coastalview.com*

## **Santa Barbara Councilmembers to Propose Even More Limitations on Property Owners and Renters**

Councilmembers Wendy Santamaria and Kristen Sneddon proposed a cap on how much property owners can increase rent. The cap proposed would only allow for property owners to increase rent by 60% of Santa Barbara's Consumer Price Index (CPI). Since the CPI is currently at 2.7%, this would mean rents could only increase by 1.62%. If the CPI is negative, no rent increases would be allowed. These councilmembers want to restrict property owners from managing their own private property. On a 4-3 vote send the program forward for additional work before it comes back for adoption.

If this proposal is ever approved, there will be many negative impacts. Developers won't build new housing, creating scarcity. The scarcity will inevitably increase rent. Rentals will shift to be short term rentals or other types of housing. Investors won't bother to put their money into Santa Barbara, continuing the increase of scarcity. Property value will decline, creating less property tax for the city to operate on. The government will own more housing, decreasing the revenue even more. There are many more negative outcomes, but the point is made: more rent control will create more housing problems, not solve them. (See SBAOR-SBRPA letter, page 9)

## **Citations to be Awarded for Citizens Illegally Camping on Public Property**

The City of Goleta will roll out enforcement of citations to citizens who dwell and camp in their vehicles on city property. This enforcement came as the result of a push from disgruntled residents that felt the city needed to fix this growing issue. Citizens pointed out roads like Cannon Green Drive and Pacific Oaks Road, citing safety concerns due to the campers



*Image Independent.com*

Enforcement will include fines beginning at \$100, which will increase to \$500 after the third offence. Offenders will have 72 hours to move their vehicle or be towed. If you think 72 hours is far too long, you aren't alone. Many think the City's regulations are not enough and need to be restricted even further. The City is considering reducing this 72-hour period, though no official changes have been made.

### **Paseo Nuevo Housing Projects Brings Concerns Due to Size**

The Historic Landmarks Commission has reviewed the proposed housing project at Paseo Nuevo and criticized the plan for being too large. They point out that the project's 75-foot height building is 15 feet above the limit listed in the City Charter. However, since the project falls under the state density bonus, it may exceed the height limit of 60 feet. Since the city owns the land of the proposed development, it will hold the ultimate power in deciding the maximum height of the project.

The development will consist of 233 units over 7 stories, spanning from the corner of State Street and Ortega Street to the corner of Chapala. There will also be six levels with 85 below market rate units on Parking Lot 2, located on the corner of Canon Perdido Street and Chapala Street. Of the 85 units, there will be 20 three bedroom, 21 two-bedroom, 23 one-bedroom, and 21 studio units.



*Image Independent.com*

### **UCSB Scores an F in Individual Rights and Free Speech**

The Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression (FIRE) Free Speech Rankings graded numerous colleges across the country, polling nearly 70,000 students throughout 257 colleges. UCSB, among many other California colleges such as UCSF, UCLA, UC Berkeley, UC Davis were awarded an F. The polls gathered student's opinions such as whether they believe it is okay to shout at guest speakers, whether the Israel-Palestine conflict is appropriate to discuss, and measures regarding violence towards those with differing views. The chief

research adviser for FIRE believes that schools are not meeting the minimum guidelines for providing neutral stances on political controversies.

### **City of SB Adding Five New Members to their Administrative Team**

The City of Santa Barbara has hired five new members to fill roles across varying departments. Brandon Beaudette has been appointed to be the city's Library Director, after filling in as interim for over a year. Similarly, former internal candidate Brian D'Armour will be the Public Works Director. Anthony Valdez is stepping in as the Deputy City Administrator and Michael Arnoldus will be the Human Resources Director. Finally, Joshua Haggmark will lead a new division, the Department of Water Resources, which now centralizes all water services into that one department.

These moves come after certain controversies over some of these positions. The city recently paid around \$800,000 in silent settlements to the former Library Director and Public Works Director. The city has never revealed why they paid this much money to these employees.

### **Entering the Renaissance Period for Nuclear Energy**

After countries fell for the fearmongering against nuclear energy, particularly regarding the danger and high costs of the plants, countries are re-evaluating their position on the power source. Specifically, the United States is slowly, but surely, working towards the deployment, re-opening, and production of nuclear power plants. Cost of electric power generation and 24/7 capacity are cited as important reasons for the renaissance. Both Presidents Biden and Trump instituted policies to incentivize production and reduce regulations of new reactors.

Over a dozen reactors have closed within the last 15 years, and no new power plants are in production. But there is still hope! As technology and funds increase and barriers decrease, nuclear capacity looks to quadruple by 2050. Many decommissioned plants such as Three Mile Island which was home to the worst power plant disaster in American history and the Palisades power plant in Michigan are both either active, or set to be active soon. The United States needs to get the ball rolling soon, as many other countries such as China, Russia, and the UK are also beginning to increase their nuclear capacity.

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