

Santa Barbara Happenings

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Out-of-Town Developer Proposes 18 Story Housing Project in Carpinteria.

The same developer behind the controversial complex behind the Santa Barbara Mission is now proposing an 18-story, 220-foot-tall housing complex at 5115 Ogan Road in Carpinteria. The developer, Ben Eilenberg, is utilizing the "Builders' Remedy" loophole, which allows him ignore city limits on height, density, and other requirements normally needing review. The complex, which is 190 feet taller than Carpinteria's current height limit, will contain 130 rental housing units, with 20% designated for "low income" households.



image: Coastalview.com

Carpinteria city officials criticize the proposals potential safety risks, as the city is not currently capable of adequately dealing with an issue that may happen on the top floors, such as a fire. The proposal is still in its early stages and will face much backlash from the city council and public. But without a change in state law which took local zoning decisions away from local government that may not matter.

Citation Ordinance for Individuals Living in Vehicles and Camps Nears Final Approval.

The Goleta City Council has re-written restrictions and begun developing a program for issuing citations to individuals living in encampments and vehicles. The City has been working on defining what vehicular homelessness looks like and distance restrictions for camping near a creek. To give a citation, officers must be able to prove cooking materials and makeshift bathrooms in or near the vehicle. The city is offering to forgive administrative fines if violators choose instead to enroll in services.

The ordinance is introduced to lower the vehicular

homeless people that has been increasing in Goleta for over two years.

Buying a Home in the United States? Tough Sledding for Today's Youth.

The National Association of Realtors reported that the median age of first-time home buyers reached 40 years of age, its highest ever recorded. 40 years ago, the median age of a first-time home buyer was in the late 20's. Median buyer age of all buyers also increased to its highest ever, at 59 years of age, three more years than last year. Only 24% of all buyers had children living at home, the lowest it has ever been.

These record numbers underscore the growing housing affordability crisis.

Development in Los Alamos Continues Through the Approval Process.

A mixed-use complex, filled with housing, office spaces, and commercial shops has had its application to build approved by the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission. The project, titled the Meyer Mixed-Use Project located on 580 Bell St., will be two stories tall and an area of nearly 16,000 square feet. The housing aspect of the complex will include cottages, short term rental spaces, and an apartment. There are also areas dedicated to small businesses and studios.

Though the project has not reached final approval, it is moving forward with support from the city and public.



image: ednat.com

Rent Control: Short-Term Success or Long-Term Failure?

With the demand for affordable housing in Santa Barbara constantly growing, "rent-control" often comes up as a remedy for this issue. Yet rent

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control, which blames landlords and property owners for causing the problem, does not yield positive results. Capping rent increases at 60% of the Consumer Price Index (which the most recent rent control plan proposed) fails to account for costs of utilities and insurance, inflations, prices and taxes. Properties that are 30 years old and over are especially susceptible to the risks and downsides of rent control, due to the need for repairs.

Santa Monica operates with a rent control system that costs their city \$6 million annually. Yet, their population that is like ours still struggles to find affordable housing. California voters voted against extreme rent control in the form of recent Prop 33, demonstrating that California voters know the long-term negatives to rent control. Why don't Santa Barbara council members think the same way?

California Ranks Among the Highest Electricity Costs in Continental USA.

Behind only Hawaii, California ranked as the second highest national electricity costs, in both residential and commercial user costs. High costs in California are likely due to supply deficits, progressive energy policies, and old utilities and buildings. California is not maximizing its. California only has one nuclear power plant operating out of four possible plants. Recent trends for "renewable energy" have driven up electricity costs for businesses and families in California more than any other state.

"Renewable energy" has also cost taxpayers and retirees over \$330 million dollars because of the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) \$468 million private equity investment into renewable energy, which they recently lost 71% of.

The Path to a Successful Career, Without College.

With both the costs of college tuition and the prevalence of artificial intelligence in the workplace, a large portion of the Gen-Z population has turned to construction work as an alternative. From 2019-2023, the percentage of Gen-Z workers in the construction industry doubled, from 6.4% to 14.1%. During the same period, the millennial share increased to 37.7% from 35.7%, with the baby boomer decreasing due to retirement.

Some Gen-Z'ers pursue a career in construction even with a college education. These college graduates were promised a job and middle-class lifestyle with a college education, yet they acquired it in ways they likely didn't expect. It is also probable that many careers a college graduate hoped to pursue have been heavily impacted by recent advancements to AI. As much as AI has advanced in the past couple of years, it is still a long way away from taking construction jobs. So, if construction wages continue to grow and the demand for labor persists, the Gen-Z population will continue to

make the switch from wearing caps and gowns to hard hats.

City and Public Claim 443 Unit Housing Project at Former Sears building is Too Much.

Recently, developers proposed a complex consisting of 443 apartments located on the lot of the former Sears building at La Cumbre Plaza in Santa Barbara. This is separate from the proposal on the other side of La Cumbre Plaza, which includes nearly 700 homes. The development consists of a team of architects and developers from Los Angeles and Orange County, who have designed the controversial complex. The developer proposes 443 rental apartments that contain 36 studios, 183 one-bedroom, 201 two-bedroom, and 23 three-bedroom units. It will have 466 parking spaces across a garage and an outdoor lot, with 10,000 square feet of space dedicated for leasing and amenities. 10% of the units will be dedicated for people earning "moderate incomes". Construction is not anticipated before 2028.



Image: Independent.com

The SB Planning Commission along with members of the public criticize the design, claiming that it is not in the Santa Barbara style. They ask for proof that the developers and architects studied the typical architecture found in Santa Barbara to see what was suitable. The developers have said they will take the commission's feedback and submit changes per their requests.

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