

Santa Barbara Happenings



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We Know What Not to Do with State Street. Does the City?

This month, City officials are discussing new iterations for State Street. The plan for State Street has been debated since 2021. Arguments surrounding whether State Street should be vehicle or foot traffic focused have been five years in the making, but the proof is in the results. Keeping State Street as a pedestrian focused street has killed the areas economic prosperity.

Now, city staff is discussing a new plan for State Street, one that they are calling "flexible". Currently, the proposed plan would maintain foot and bicycle traffic during the day but would open vehicle traffic from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. by using retractable bollards.

While the design layout is not officially confirmed, final designs will be prepared following the public review sessions in April. Let's stop wasting taxpayer money and go back to what works. Open State Street to automobile traffic.



Image, google

Restricted Short-Term Rental Plan Moves Closer to Approval.

The Santa Barbara Planning Commission approved an ordinance adding regulations and permit pathways for short-term rentals. The ordinance would only allow short-term rentals in specific zones of the city. The ordinance proposes a complete ban on zones including all inland residential zones, only allowing short-term rentals in non-residential zones or mixed-use residential zones such as Upper State Street. Homeshares would also be allowed in all residential and non-residential zones in the coastal zone. The coastal zone includes the waterfront, the Funk Zone, and the Coast Village Road area. Short-

term rentals are not allowed in single-family and two-family residential zones.

Short-term rentals would only have up to two guests per bedroom and up to six guests in the daytime. Homeshares would have a limit of four guests, not including the host. Homeshares are also held to the same limit of six daytime guests. Parking must also be supplied for each site. If there are four bedrooms, there must be at least two parking spaces. If there are five bedrooms, there must be three spaces.

SB Airport Ranked 1st Among 70 Small Airports in U.S.

According to AirAdvisor, the Santa Barbara Airport ranked number 1 out of 70 small U.S. airports, with the stats based on delays and disruptions. SBA recorded a total of zero flights with a delay longer than sixty minutes after 5 p.m.

The SBA recorded 1.4 million passengers in 2025, over 26 daily nonstop flights across 13 destinations. This was a 4.4% increase year over year leading to its highest number in history.



Image santabarbaraca.gov

One in Five Real Estate Agents Report Canceled Home Purchases in California.

One in Five real estate agents have reported that they were forced to cancel a sale due to potential buyers' inability to afford insurance. Insurance companies such as State Farm and Allstate have refused to sell to new potential buyers in the state in fire prone areas. While the Los Angeles County fires are affecting this, California's insurance issue goes much deeper.

The state instituted harsh interest rate caps that

Continued on page 39

ultimately led to tens of thousands of unrenewed policies. When insurance companies pay out more in claims than they take in in premiums they stop issuing new policies. Top insurers recognize the sinking ship that California is and have started to step away from the market. Once again, California policy cannibalizes itself. Maybe government officials should be required to take a course in basic economics.

SB City Discusses Property Tax Increase in an Effort to Increase Housing Costs.

The council has discussed adding a property transfer tax increase, hoping to add the measure to the November ballot. The city looks to generate more revenue to aid the diminishing reserves and major deficits caused by over spending. Two ballot measures were discussed, the first including a 2% increase of the TOT, going from 12% to 14% and the second was an increase of \$9.50 per \$1,000 on property transfers of more than \$3 million. The proposed measure would bring an additional \$2.9 million in 2027 and \$5.8 million in 2028.

New Public Transit Options for Commuters.

A new agreement has been made to expand passenger train services throughout Santa Barbara County. The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments approved the agreement with Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency (LOSSAN), along with the Ventura County Transportation Commission. The deal will fund two new daily train routes from SLO to LA. Santa Barbara County Association of Governments will be funding \$1,109,620 for the new agreement, an even split with the Ventura County Transportation Commission.

The train will stop in Goleta, Santa Barbara, and Carpinteria, running 365 days a year. No word yet on ticket prices

AI Bots Assisting Users with Violent Acts.

A test on 10 popular AI chatbots, including DeepSeek and Chat GPT, revealed that some of these bots enabled and assisted planning for violent attacks. ChatGPT gave advice in 61% of the tested cases, one involving the suggestion of shrapnel bombs for the best results. DeepSeek offered details about hunting rifles for political killings, while Meta's AI device gave the directions to the nearest gun stores and range when talking about harming women.

The effect of this is real and known. The perpetrator behind Cybertruck bombing in front of Trump International in Las Vegas received advice from ChatGPT. The same AI model gave input to a 16-year-old in Finland who went on to stab three classmates. While each programs developers

have pledged to fix the issues, it's become clear that they cannot control their own product.

On the end user side, when your only friend is a chatbot, you probably should see a mental health professional and find out why.

Vandenberg Space Force Base Boosting Workforce.

To assist the dramatic increase in launch rate, along with the vast increase in other missions, The Vandenberg Space Force Base (VSFB) has begun preparing for an increase in workforce. While mainly known for rocket launches, the base also conducts defense, commerce, and test operations to support their partners. This may also include the introduction of Air Force fighter jets to the Vandenberg base.

In total, the base launched 71 times last year, with the estimates expected to increase by triple the rate within five years.

The base expects to add 10,000 more jobs within 10 years, effectively doubling their current numbers. The Vandenberg base expects to execute \$2.7 billion in contracts and a total economic impact of \$5.5 billion.

Early Plans for Carpinteria Bluffs Project Released.

The Carpinteria Bluffs project, known as The Farm, have released their official plans for their 27-acre townhome and single-family housing project. The early plans include 191 for-sale, two-story residences: 94 townhomes and 97 single-family homes, ranging from 26 to 30 feet tall. Each unit has a two-car garage as well as on street guest parking, bringing the total parking spaces to 683. The single-family homes would have five bedrooms, between 3,146 square feet to 3,504 square feet. Meanwhile. The townhomes consist of three-bedroom units of 1,747 square feet to 1,822 square feet. 19 townhomes and 20 single-family homes will be designated for low-income households.



Image Noozhawk.com

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