

Santa Barbara Happenings



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City of Santa Barbara Met with Lawsuit Over Temporary Rent Freeze.

The Santa Barbara Rental Property Association, along with four property owners, have sued the city over the temporary rent freeze. The lawsuit claims the temporary ordinance is unconstitutional and lacks the potential for property owners to apply for exemptions related to emergencies or hardships. The city is concurrently moving forward with their permanent rent stabilization ordinance process.

The lawsuit claims that concerns from property owners were largely ignored during ordinance hearings, noting that some council members visibly laughed or rolled their eyes towards the property owner's comments. The suit also alleges that property owners need a way to seek allowance to raise rent based on economic or emergency situations, something that the ordinance does not allow. Economic projections disclosed in the lawsuit show that the four property owners represented in the suit will expect to suffer a financial loss this year due to the inability to raise rent.

New Santa Barbara Commuter Train Services.

Starting on May 4th, southcoast commuters will now have access to a round-trip Amtrak Pacific Surfliner train that will run through Santa Barbara County. The routes run from Los Angeles and San Luis Obispo counties but will now include stops in Santa Barbara County. The train runs 365 days a year, stopping in Carpinteria, Santa Barbara, Goleta, Lompoc, and Guadalupe. It will arrive in San Luis Obispo by 11:00 a.m., returning to Los Angeles by 6:00 p.m.

Riders in Santa Barbara or Goleta can expect to pay \$50 for 10 rides or a \$150 monthly pass.



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Mayor Randy Rowse Decides Not to Run for Re-Election.

Current Mayor of Santa Barbara Randy Rowse announced that this will be his last year at City Hall, as he will not seek re-election for the upcoming term. After serving nine years on the city council, Mayor Rowse ran, won, and held his position as Mayor starting in November of 2021. Rowse said his decision to step down was for personal reasons, not pointing to any specific issue at hand.

Mayor Rowse stated a few goals he hopes to accomplish before his term is finished. At the top of his list is opening State Street to vehicles, followed by resolving the rent control issue, and finally solving generic financial issues plaguing the city. Mayor Rowse has yet to endorse a future candidate.

Santa Barbara County Releases Pre-Approved ADU Designs.

Sets of Pre-Approved ADU construction designs are now available for free on the county website. The designs are standardized plans that match the county's building code, size, and height allowed pursuant to the zoning standards. The plans are specifically available for property owners in unincorporated parts of Santa Barbara County only. The program contains designs ranging from 480 square foot to nearly 1000 square foot ADU's. It also includes traditional and modern designs, such as California ranch, Mediterranean, and Farmhouse. This program can save property owners up to \$25,000 by avoiding creating and approving their own designs.

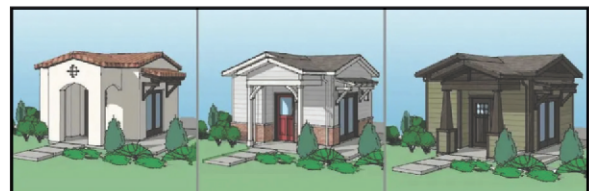


Image edhat.com

San Francisco Gas Prices Surpass \$8 Per Gallon for Diesel: Is Santa Barbara Next?

San Francisco is now the first city in the United States to ever pass \$8 per gallon of diesel. With the national average for gasoline at \$4.10 a gallon, and diesel at \$5.58, it is no wonder why California's averages are over a dollar more expensive for both.

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Santa Barbara gas prices are behind but closely reflect San Francisco's prices and are continually growing. California's failed "green" policies, efforts to lock out oil production statewide and close refineries along with the reliance on imported fuels from Asia are the biggest factors for the high prices.

California has the refineries, but due to the political blame put on oil companies, they are largely inoperative. It seems time to scale back these "green" policies.

Two New Neighboring Projects Brings More Housing to Goleta.

Two new residential projects will bring a total of 50 units to the Goleta valley. Opening at 80 North Patterson Avenue, the two-story complex will bring a mix of affordable and market rate units, totaling 23 studio apartments. The units will also contain some furnishings, solar panels, windows, awnings, and overhangs. New residents will receive new beds, tables, chairs, dressers, utensils, and cooking items, but are still welcome to bring their own items. The development will have a community center, outdoor seating areas, a shared kitchen, laundry room, bike lockers, and 19 parking spaces. Lack of parking is a serious flaw in this project.



80 N Patterson, image Noozhawk.com

27 more units will open this month at 5317 Calle Real, containing a mix of one-story units and two-story townhouse units. These units are considered luxury due to the included amenities, such as full washers and dryers, mountain views, and the location. The price of rent per unit is estimated to be \$3,500-\$4,500 per month. The complex includes a lawn area, bocce ball court, barbecues, and a playground. Every unit will have two parking spaces for themselves.



5317 Calle Real, image Noozhawk.com

SB City Reducing Single-Family Home Project Review Process.

The city has unanimously voted to approve a new process to approve single-family homes. The process will reduce the number of minor projects sent to the

Single-Family Design Board, simplifying the approval process for homeowners. The new rules outline that a project will some projects will no longer need the Single-Family Design Board to review their plan. A project's materials and design must match the existing style. The new rules also add new zoning standards for home improvements like porches, decks, fences, balconies, hedges, and more. Porch standards were a heavy focus by the ordinance committee. Now, the rules state that a new porch can encroach up to 10 feet into the front yard, so long as it is 5 feet from the property line. It can also be 16 feet wide by 10 feet deep. If it is wider than 16 feet, it can be up to the width of the building and 6 feet deep. Homeowners can also use their garage as an extra living space. Around 221 projects a year require review with the Single-Family Design Board. With these new rules, 54 of these projects could bypass this review.

Rent Control: Why it Fails, Courtesy of New York.

Under Zohran Mamdani, New York is implementing rent control policies that focus on limiting rent increases, expanding tenant protections, and increasing the government's hand in the action. While rent control does keep costs down for some existing tenants, it does not keep the cost down for property owners and landlords. Maintenance expenses, property taxes and insurance costs continue to rise every year. This ultimately causes owners to take their property off the market entirely and puts up barriers to new housing construction. So, the rental housing supply diminishes, mainly harming renters and tenants.

Overall, rent control removes landlord flexibility, especially harming small/family landlords. In turn, this hurts tenants and renters looking for housing as the market becomes even more restrictive. This certainly isn't exclusive to New York. Unfortunately, these policies are now coming to our front door as well.

Draft State Street Master Plan Now Available for Comment.

The City has released the Draft State Street Master Plan for public review. Community members are encouraged to review the Draft State Street Master Plan and Draft State Street Master Plan Appendices and participate in the upcoming City Council meeting, or submit a comment.

Now is the time to share your feedback to support the final design. Your participation matters, as you know downtown best. Written comments may be emailed to the city at StateStreetMasterPlan@SantaBarbaraCA.gov.

Restore State Street to its former glory. Open State Street to vehicle traffic.

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