



# City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

## PLANNING COMMISSION SPECIAL WORK SESSION MINUTES

April 7, 2008

### CALL TO ORDER:

Chair George C. Myers called the meeting to order at 3:40 P.M.

### ROLL CALL:

#### **Present:**

Chair George C. Myers

Vice-Chair Stella Larson (arrived at 4:05 P.M.)

Commissioners Bruce Bartlett, Charmaine Jacobs, John Jostes, Addison S. Thompson and Harwood A. White, Jr.

### CONSULTANT PRESENT:

Daniel Iacofano, Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. (MIG Urban Planning Consultants)

### STAFF PRESENT:

Dave Gustafson, Acting Community Development Director

Paul Casey, Acting Public Works Director

Bettie Weiss, City Planner

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

Rob Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner

Beatriz Gularte Project Planner

Peggy Burbank, Project Planner

Adam Nares, Planning Technician

Gabriela Feliciano, Commission Secretary

### CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Marty Blum, Helene Schneider, Grant House, Dale Francisco, Das Williams, Iya Falcone

**I. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Comments from members of the public pertaining to items not on this agenda.

Chair Myers opened the public comment at 3:52 P.M.

Lee Moldaver, Citizens Planning Association (CPA) board member – Posed three questions:  
1) What is best about the current General Plan? 2) What things do you wish were in the current plan and want to make sure they get included in the new plan? 3) What new innovative ideas have been heard in the community and from Staff that could be included in the new plan?

Chair Myers closed the public comment at 3:53 P.M.

**II. SPECIAL WORK SESSION:**

***Plan Santa Barbara Development Trends Work Session***

A. Welcome & Introduction: Daniel Iacofano, MIG Consultant

Based on City Council's 1999 and 2005 direction, Staff prepared a Development Trends Report ("the Report").

Mr. Iacofano reviewed the worksession objectives.

B. Staff Presentations:

(3:55) Bettie Weiss, City Planner, reviewed the following City Council goals:

Overview & Discussion Framework

Living Within Our Resources

Community Character

(4:10) Robert Dayton, Principal Transportation Planner:

Transportation

(4:25) Beatriz Gularte, Principal Project Planner:

Housing

Environment & Sustainability

(4:35) Bettie Weiss, City Planner:

Economics, Facilities & Services, Regional Collaboration

**ACTUAL TIME: 4:40 P.M.**

C. Commission Discussion:

The Commission held the following discussion:

- It would be helpful to see the Redevelopment Agency programs analysis.
- There is a lack of knowledge about mixed-use development potential unit numbers need to be restudied.
- Requested more detail of the intent on the proposal shown page 2, under Living Within Our Resources, to consider an economic study and standards for specific non-residential land uses.
- What is the survival rate of pending mixed-use projects looking back over eighteen years?
- What was the average number of applications submitted per year in comparison to those that were actually approved and built?
- Of the 40% homeowners in the City (versus 60% renters), how many are absentee owners?
- With regard to the City's goal of regional collaboration, how many are present from Goleta, Carpinteria, and other areas? One person from Goleta and one County representative was present.
- Requested updated housing graphs for the next workshop.
- Discussions regarding economic planning goals and targets should include how rental overlay zones can be structured to encourage their development and how unit sizes can be defined in multi-use complexes.
- Why are Gutierrez/Haley Streets not being considered the same as Haley/Milpas Streets or Upper State Street?

The Commission held the following discussion specifically with regard to:

**Living Within Our Resources**

- The Report needs considerable more attention in terms of synthesizing the information of the past eighteen years as to what it means in the context of where we are headed.
- The city's target build-out is not understood and it is a concern that must be addressed.
- In terms of sustainability, it is not a plan, but rather a dynamic happening.
- The long term water supply plan needs to be reviewed once again.
- Would like to have the City resources named in common language so that they are easy to understand.
- Transportation and circulation capacity is an endangered resource.

- Sustainability is more than counting potential build-out or unit capacity in the City.
- The commuter and visitor population needs to be considered in terms of sustainability; all users, including commuters and visitors.
- Categories of development are allowed in Measure E and re-looking at those categories is important.
- With Measure E, it may be important to allocate community priority square footage, not to commercial, but to affordable housing as another way to strengthen the tie between work and housing demands.
- The City should not be entertaining annexation proposals when it does not have enough resources to support the development potential in the City.

### **Community Character**

- The “conduct area corridor/special studies and improvements programs” shown in the Staff presentation is an important part of this process.
- The preservation of the Upper State Street area needs to be studied because it is different from the downtown area.
- The creation of revised Land Use and Housing Elements should include looking at the main commercial corridors, which include up-town, perhaps Haley/Milpas Streets, and Coast Village Road.
- Open spaces are alluded to in the Report, but amending the City’s open space network should be expanded upon. Resources should be identified to create parks and expand open spaces.
- When investigating setbacks in commercial zones, variable setbacks should also be looked at to give opportunity for more interesting commercial zone development. Pocket plazas, *paseos*, and outdoor cafes could be interspersed.
- The idea of building heights should be included in the Zoning Ordinance, rather than the General Plan, but it should be included in the public opinion survey to get feedback from the community.
- Form-based zoning in specific areas of the City encompasses much of what is included in Staff’s consideration list.

### **Transportation**

- Transportation is an area of greatest concern.
- Charter Section 1508 regarding unavoidable traffic impacts should be extended to relate to Section 1507 so that all projects need to be reviewed in light of the findings required that a project has mitigated its traffic impacts.
- The Santa Barbara Airport should be included in more areas of the General Plan update effort.
- The creation of a parking master plan is on the consideration list.

- Updating the Land Use and Housing Elements cannot be accomplished without looking into the transportation topic.
- An update of the SD-2 overlay zone should be part of the conversation, including the function it has had in terms of parking and transportation.
- The present and future transit corridors should be identified.

### **Housing**

- The discussion should include more clarity between rental and ownership units.
- A broader conversation with regard to “granny flats” (accessory dwelling units) should be included.
- The idea of rental housing overlay is an intriguing approach and it has great potential. Perhaps having different densities for rental housing, but not necessarily in specific zones. One approach could be to have rental units in ownership projects to assist in the affordability factor.

### **Environment and Sustainability**

- The Long-term Water Supply Plan must be included and looking beyond the existing supplies.
- A sustainability assessment or a finding that is included in a development plan approval, a tentative map, a re-zoning, or a general plan amendment can accomplish much to capture those categorically exempt projects that do not necessarily require environmental review.
- The preparation of a 50 - 100 year plan to address climate change, although it will be a very daunting task, cannot be ignored.
- A long-term wildland fire protection plan needs to include more community/consumer participation as back-up for the fire service. It would be a more cost-effective program.
- Sustainability should be included throughout the General Plan since it is in the charter.
- Giving incentives to those projects that build more within the City’s core and utilize the existing infrastructure would avoid building in high fire zones.
- Santa Barbara should continue to be a regional leader in environment and sustainability. Hopefully it will become a trend setter for the entire region since many of the issues are not only local.

### **Economy, Services and Regional**

- Under the economy topic, consider policies to formalize City support for small local businesses. More successful regions have a combination of local businesses and national chains.
- Under policies and programs to increase employer based workforce housing, scheduling flex time and other hours should be included, especially for large employers, to help decrease freeway congestion.
- Health and safety personnel should have a chance for employer workforce housing, such as police, fire, and other services.

Chair Myers called a recess at 5:45 P.M. and resumed the meeting at 5:55 P.M.

#### **D. Public Comment:**

Chair Myers opened the public hearing at 5:56 P.M.

1. Connie Hannah, Santa Barbara League of Women Voters – the City has been forward-looking and innovative; adopted smart growth principles before it became a national fad; the negative affects are shocking if the City does not make changes in preparation for future growth.
2. Gil Barry, Allied Neighborhood Association – dual density so that only those projects that provide a benefit to the community, such as workforce housing, get high density approval.
3. Cathie McCammon, SB League of Women Voters – further synthesizing the information in order to get the “big picture.”
4. Juan Ayala, local resident – reversal of process of integrating human behavior and communities into the natural environment; the City is a leader in some sustainable technology and should also be a leader in culture.
5. Mickey Flacks, local resident – what was missing from the Report.
6. Steve Yates, American Planning Association – transportation as a marker for what housing requirements might be; a health and wellness framework needs to be added to the Report, energy consumption, traffic impacts; parking requirements; variable density being analyzed on a per unit basis.
7. Mark Bradley, Transportation Circulation Committee – childhood obesity concerns; cut greenhouse gas emissions now; mixed-use units cut down on traffic; parking requirements for new residential development; consider low-income and homeless.
8. Naomi Kovacs, Citizens Planning Association – increasing costs for water desalination, sewers, and maintaining sufficient levels of City service employees; the rising costs of gasoline need to be considered; impacts for increasing traffic.

9. Debbie Cox Bultan, Coastal Housing Coalition – support for the creative policies for encouraging employer based housing and requested that it be kept a priority.
10. Frank Arredondo, Chumash representative – not present, but wrote an inquiry as to the lack of Chumash community involvement in this process.
11. Joe Andrulaitis, local architect – the City has not been living within its resources, a variable density formula based on unit size, not bedroom count would give developers more flexibility and opportunity for providing workforce housing; building heights; maintaining open space; improved sidewalk construction, bike lanes, and transit; granny units need to be expanded to all residential areas.
12. Bonnie Elliott, local resident – comments were read into the record: “In this process, I have never seen accessible housing mentioned.”
13. Bill Boyd, Transportation Circulation Committee – congestion pricing, strategies, and parking fees as they relate to transportation are of concern; overcrowding of existing housing is significant; housing code enforcement; condominium projects; student housing is an issue.
14. Eugene Wilson, local resident – the issues and needs of youth and young people in the community need to be addressed.
15. Bob Hansen, local resident – needs of the homeless; a report from the police department is needed to address what is happening in the community with the homeless.
16. Eric Lowela, local resident – more bicycle riding paths are needed; solar panels and a rain water catching system; consider the eco option of growing a food forest; challenge of homeownership; need for rentals that provide options to avoid the use of automobiles for transportation.
17. Richard Parson, local resident – business and environmental economics concerns.
18. David Jacoby, Outreach Committee and Santa Barbara Beautiful – public art is only slightly mentioned in the Report.

Chair Myers closed the public hearing at 6:48 P.M.

E. Conclusion & Next Steps:

**Conclusion:**

1. Rather than a per unit count analysis, the sustainable population and workforce need to be identified. This would assist in identifying the housing and transportation needs as they relate to people.

2. There are outside factors in terms of macro-economic influences on the community that show themselves as skyrocketing housing prices, and a long-distance commute that is causing concerns along our freeway corridors. There is a need to think about it differently, using creativity to act and listen differently. Neighborhoods should be encouraged to weigh-in with creative strategies.
3. The hard work of the commissioners has resulted in a more thorough review to make the process edgier, tougher and stronger.
4. The impacts and future growths in the neighborhoods should be looked at, as well as the impacts of growth of the region on the City. Some of those impacts should be captured in the process.
5. It would be important to define and break down what is meant by "region"; for example, consider what is within an easy commute and where is the farthest commuter coming from.
6. Concerns of families with children at home and youth should be included in discussions. The next generation is who we are planning for.
7. The quality of public comments is much appreciated. It is a collaborative effort. An educated and informed group of people are involved.
8. The most forward-looking comments from the public made an impact, such as conversation about rain water collection systems. They should be amplified as much as possible through this process.
9. There are outside factors influencing the City: 1) The peak oil situation and the inability to sustain ourselves as a community when some products cannot be imported. 2) Building heights is a topical issue. There are unintended consequences of limiting heights in the City, such as driving-out open space and setback possibilities.

**Next Steps:**

1. Once the Development Trends Workshops are completed, a draft Policy Options Report will be prepared for the City Council.
2. Further input will be received from the public at the Policy Preferences Workshops in July 2008.
3. A Policy Preferences Report will be prepared to present before the City Council.
4. A public opinion survey will be conducted to have a good understanding of the community's points of view on the different growth questions.

**III. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chair Myers adjourned the meeting at 7:02 P.M.

Prepared by Gabriela Feliciano, Commission Secretary.

Submitted by,

  
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Julie Rodríguez, Planning Commission Secretary

