



# City of Santa Barbara Planning Division

## PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES

January 29, 2009

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Larson called the meeting to order at 1:02 P.M.

### **I. ROLL CALL:**

#### **Present:**

Chair Stella Larson

Vice-Chair Addison S. Thompson

Commissioners Bruce Bartlett, Charmaine Jacobs, John Jostes, Sheila Lodge, and Harwood A. White, Jr.

#### **Staff Present:**

N. Scott Vincent, Assistant City Attorney

John Ledbetter, Principal Planner

Barbara Shelton, Project Planner/ Environmental Analyst

Gabriela Feliciano, Commission Secretary

#### **Staff Absent:**

Julie Rodriguez, Planning Commission Secretary

### **II. PRELIMINARY MATTERS:**

A. Announcements and appeals.

None.

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

Chair Larson opened the public hearing at 1:04 P.M. and, with no one wishing to speak, closed the hearing.

**ACTUAL TIME: 1:04 P.M.**

**III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) SCOPING HEARING**

**PLAN SANTA BARBARA EIR**

The purpose of the hearing was to receive public comment on the scope of analysis for the *Plan Santa Barbara* EIR.

**Project Description:** *Plan Santa Barbara* is a multi-year planning process underway to update the City General Plan, including growth management and land use policies to govern development to the year 2030. The initial General Plan update documents will include the Draft General Plan Framework and Draft Policy Preferences; Draft Land Use Element and Map, Draft Housing Element, and Draft Adaptive Management Program. Draft policy updates pertain to sustainability and living within our resources; land use and growth management; housing; circulation; historic resources and community design; environmental resource protection; public services and safety; and economy and fiscal health. The *Plan Santa Barbara* Draft Policy Preferences Report, City Council Direction (January 2009) is available at [www.YouPlanSB.org](http://www.YouPlanSB.org) or at the Planning Division office (630 Garden Street).

**EIR Scope of Analysis:** The City of Santa Barbara will be Lead Agency to prepare a Program EIR to evaluate effects on the environment that may occur as a result of future growth within the City over the next two decades under the proposed *Plan Santa Barbara* draft policies. The EIR will identify potentially significant environmental impacts citywide or to areas within the City, or cumulatively in the larger region. Mitigation measures that could feasibly avoid or reduce significant impacts will be identified.

EIR impact topics to be analyzed include: air quality; biological resources; geology; hazards (wildfire, safety hazards, hazardous materials); heritage resources (archaeology, history); hydrology and water quality; noise; open space and visual aesthetics, public facilities (water, wastewater, solid waste, utilities), public services (police, fire protection, parks, schools), transportation (circulation, traffic, parking); energy and climate change; growth-inducing effects (housing, population, employment, and land use); and socioeconomic issues (demographics, environmental justice, economy).

The EIR will also provide a comparative impact evaluation for a range of alternative future growth scenarios and policy options considered in the *Plan Santa Barbara* process. These will cover a non-residential growth range of 1-2.5 million square feet and residential growth range of approximately 2,000 to 5,000 additional residential units over the planning period to the year 2030. Three million square feet nonresidential and 8,000 residential units will also be evaluated to the year 2050.

**Public Comment:** In addition to public comment at this hearing, public and agency comment on the EIR scope of analysis may be submitted to the Planning Division, to be received no later than February 13, 2009. Mailing address: City of Santa Barbara Planning Division, Attn: Barbara Shelton, P.O. Box 1990, Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990. Email: [BShelton@santabarbaraca.gov](mailto:BShelton@santabarbaraca.gov). Planning Division Office: 630 Garden Street, Santa Barbara. Telephone: (805) 564-5470. Fax: (805)897-1904.

Case Planner: Barbara Shelton, Project Planner/Environmental Analyst  
Email: BShelton@SantaBarbaraCA.gov

Barbara Shelton, Project Planner/Environmental Analyst, gave the Staff presentation.

Chair Larson opened the public hearing at 1:15 P.M.

The following people spoke expressing concerns:

1. Christy Schuerch, Coalition for Community Wellness, suggested that the EIR should consider transportation congestion and mitigation measures from a health policy perspective, and advocated for increased public transit, bicycle and walking facilities to mitigate congestion of intersections and reduce air pollution. The primary congested intersections are those leading on to and off of the 101 freeway.
2. Russell Ruiz, Water Commissioner, speaking for himself, stated that the EIR baseline should not include water supply from the Desalination Facility, due to the high cost of its reactivation and operation. The General Plan that has sustainability as a theme should not be formulated on a water supply source that is speculative, extremely costly, energy intensive, and would carry an unacceptable carbon footprint. Water supplies from State Water and Gibraltar Reservoir also have constraints. There should be resolution of water service to the Coast Village Road and Goleta overlap areas.
3. Dianne Channing, local resident, expressed concern about the Adaptive Management Program as to lack of specifics and how public input will be gathered, and suggested surveys to neighborhood and business organizations.
4. Mickey Flacks, local resident, commented that the Alternative Policies #2 should be described as additive to the Plan Santa Barbara Project policies. The Extended Range Alternative is problematic; because there are too many unknown variables to project over forty years. Alternative Policies #2 is the environmentally superior alternative: increasing affordable housing at all levels would produce fewer car trips into and out of the area; higher downtown density, and development in the MODA should be encouraged; multi-family housing is more sustainable; a change from auto-oriented to multiple modes and less parking would result in a reduction of global warming.
5. Naomi Kovacs, Citizens Planning Association (CPA), commented that the day-time population of local residents plus commuters and tourists is much larger than those acknowledged to live in the city. This should be taken into account when EIR analyzes the existing conditions and various growth scenarios in terms of public facilities and public services. Environmentally sound benchmarks should be established for adaptive management, including jobs/housing balance, and social equity, e.g. proportion of affordable housing.
6. Paul Hernadi, CPA, commented that the EIR should evaluate the possible environmental disadvantages of increasing the allowable density in the Mobility Oriented Development Area (MODA), such as traffic and air quality effects. Mitigating measures, such as sizeable setbacks and other open spaces, should be required in locations where densification is proposed, yet site specific air quality

measurements indicate potential danger to public health. The EIR should also evaluate the City's growth in the cumulative context of predictable growth in areas outside the City. Examples are highway and surface street traffic; ocean tanker emissions; and alternative mode transportation mitigation.

7. Mary Louise Days, CPA, commented that most development involves demolition, and the environmental impact of demolitions should be analyzed, including solid waste, traffic congestion, air and noise pollution, the potential adverse impact on neighborhood character, and historical/archaeological resources. The EIR should weigh any possible environmental benefits of incentivizing secondary dwelling units in single family neighborhoods against the possible environmental disadvantages, such as increase in gas and water use with single meter; historical character, visual and economic effects to neighborhoods, and traffic and parking impacts.
8. Connie Hannah, Santa Barbara League of Women Voters, requested that the EIR include examination of: present and future water and sewer capacity; building of low and moderate-income housing; effects of building more luxury condos and the many impacts they have on the community; whether expensive condos would result in reduction of drivers; detailed traffic information and air quality effects; traffic and parking effects of secondary units; transit funding; whether anything is gained by encouraging secondary dwelling units if they are not required to be affordable. The League supports the use of adaptive management to see if resource capacity is being exceeded, but the community indicators that are used will be important.
9. Debbie Cox Bultan, Coastal Housing Coalition, commented that the Project Description uses the same number of new dwelling units as the No Project alternative, which doesn't help the jobs/housing balance. She recommends that the City should include upper-middle income in its description of affordable housing. She agrees with the cumulative analysis, which needs to look at commuting.
10. Cathie McCammon, Allied Neighborhood Association Executive Committee, commented that the EIR needs to address the actual use of public resources and services, including estimating the number of people living in illegal secondary units and the daytime population. The EIR should spell-out exactly how the adaptive management will work so that resources aren't used up. There should be an analysis of variable density changes, including the cost of market rate units necessary to subsidize the workforce units; the number of service workers needed to support the residents of luxury condos; and who is buying workforce housing by occupation and family size to determine how effective it is.

Chair Larson acknowledged receipt of correspondence from June Jones, Citizens Planning Association, Paula Westbury, Jean Holmes, League of Women Voters, Brian Fahnstock, and Joe Rution.

With no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed at 1:54 P.M.

*Plan Santa Barbara* Staff and Dan Gira, AMEC Earth and Environmental, answered additional Planning Commission questions about:

1. Projection as far as a timeline for completing the EIR process. Staff responded that the *PlanSB* team is on track with the planned estimate and it should conclude in one year. An updated timeline will be given at the February 12 City Council/Planning Commission joint meeting on the Phase III Work Program.
2. How the EIR will be analyzing the issues of increased density affect on traffic, air quality and the jobs/housing balance. Mr. Gira responded that the primary and secondary job creation impacts will be looked at, as well as impacts of different types of housing, to allow for mix and match among alternatives. The details behind the assumptions will be included.
3. Asked if the extended range alternative be excluded. Ms. Shelton noted that a more qualitative discussion of the extended range could be provided. Mr. Gira responded that having a programmatic discussion of full build out of the City and longer range implications of land use maps is necessary and would be beneficial. Staff added that global warming issues push for longer range planning.
4. Asked if the desalination facility be excluded in the water supply baseline equation. Mr. Vincent responded that the consideration of the Desalination Facility's place in the water supply plan is part of the EIR process. It would be more appropriate to allow time for the water supply managers to be consulted. There will be another opportunity to comment further on this issue once the water supply managers complete their analysis.

The Commissioners made the following comments:

1. The EIR should focus on key resources of water, waste water treatment, solid waste, and transportation.
2. Some Commissioners felt that the Desalination Plant should not be counted as baseline water supply because it is not being used and it is only an emergency source.
3. The Adaptive Management Program is a most important part of the General Plan Update and needs to be detailed to maximize functionality of the mitigation program. This will streamline staff's ability to expedite the review process, improve the confidence of the public in what is perceived as impacts, and give assurances that the City will not exceed its resources.
4. Adaptive management tools and how they are implemented need to be worked on.
5. The mitigation measures should be crafted and designed so that they will be applicable to the proposed Adaptive Management Program.
6. Requested that not much effort be spent on the extended range alternative. The timeframes for general plans are purposely shorter because trying to predict forty years into the future would likely be inaccurate.
7. The scope should be focused to be more functional. If there is an environmentally superior alternative it can be constructed out of the alternatives analysis.

8. The structure of the alternatives should be refined so that they are designed to mix and match. The ability to equate residential dwelling units and non-residential square footage in terms of resources could provide a “cafeteria” plan.
9. Full built-out should be discussed in the environmental sections, rather than the alternatives section, and further built upon in the Growth-Inducing Effects section.
10. Suggested that the EIR consider that an increase in crime resulting from higher density would impact the need for city services.
11. The daytime population versus the night time population needs to be addressed.
12. There is concern with the renting population. The issue of how Santa Barbara could be made a great place for renting so that people do not have to move away should be considered.
13. With regard to transportation associated with commuters, requested consideration of what environmental benefits could be garnered by improved commuter transportation and what can be done to decrease the impact.
14. The sphere of influence appears to be the same in each scenario. More adjustability should be built-in.
15. Some Commissioners questioned why the MODA has drastically shrunk since last presented, as well as the areas allocated for potential secondary dwelling units.
16. Suggested that the extended range element be excluded.
17. The project’s performance on areas such as water use, energy use, and traffic generation should be compared with the existing buildings on the ground, and both should be analyzed.
18. The collective community education facilities should be included as a resource.
19. In order to incentivize building smaller units, the allowable density for smaller units should be increased.
20. Requested that the historic element be separated from community design in the policy preferences report
21. Moving forward in the completion of the EIR is important. Requested a three month status report specifying what questions each section of the EIR will answer with the goal of expediting the process of the EIR completion.

**ACTUAL TIME: 2:43 P.M.**

**IV. ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA**

A. Committee and Liaison Reports.

Commissioner Jacobs reported that the Parks and Recreation Commission has two new commissioners: Scott Burns and Daniel Hochman. At the last meeting the need to charge body training facilities for the use of public parks when they choose not to exercise in a gym was discussed.

Commissioner Bartlett reported he attended the last Architectural Board of Review meeting. The Valle Verde project Master Plan was well received in terms of the site planning component. The alternate height limit charter amendment was presented by Staff with mixed reception.

- B. Review of the decisions of the Staff Hearing Officer in accordance with SBMC §28.92.026.

Chair Larson reported on the 411 E. Carrillo Street modifications that were granted.

V. **ADJOURNMENT**

**MOTION: Jostes/Jacobs**

To adjourn the meeting.

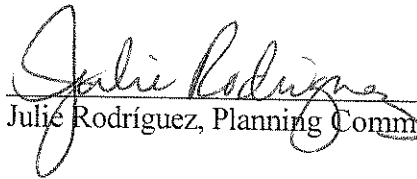
This motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: 7 Noes: 0 Abstain: 0 Absent: 0

Chair Larson adjourned the meeting at 2:45 P.M.

Prepared by Gabriela Feliciano, Commission Secretary

Submitted by,

  
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Julie Rodríguez, Planning Commission Secretary