

Allied Neighborhoods Association

P. O. Box 31064

Santa Barbara, California 93130

January 14, 2005

NPO Steering Committee
City of Santa Barbara, Community Development Department
630 Garden Street
Santa Barbara, California 93101

Re: Agenda, January 14, FAR

Committee Members:

Allied Neighborhoods Association (AAllied@) is an umbrella organization of neighborhood associations. Allied is composed of volunteers with the goals of neighborhood preservation, the protection of the people who live in those neighborhoods, the conservation of the environment with a focus on quality of life in our neighborhoods and the defense of Santa Barbara's zoning laws that have helped to create and preserve the beautiful neighborhoods and environment we now enjoy.

Allied supports the adoption of a meaningful FAR of 30%. The concept of an FAR is no different than other traditional land use limitations such as setbacks, height limitations and other restrictions. It should be recognized that setbacks have partially done the same thing as an FAR would do, namely they have reduced the amount of land upon which structures can be built. Allied stresses that many of the same limitations that would be imposed by an FAR already exist.

Allied supports having a lower threshold or trigger for design review. However, it supports a strict maximum, i.e. no exclusions which would increase the actual FAR and no deviations from the maximum unless there is compliance with strict variance standards.

Michelangelo managed to work within the limits of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling where it was not merely the size of the entire ceiling but the size and shape of its various "subdivisions" that challenged his creativity. We may not expect our architects to create such unique masterpieces, but the City should adopt a strict FAR to make it easier for them to explain to their clients the necessity of staying within the zoning rules and limitations in Santa Barbara rather than seeking modifications. Allied believes that Santa Barbara's fine architects and designers have the ability and creativity to meet the challenge of working within a meaningful FAR.

Santa Barbara was one of the first cities in the United States to adopt a zoning ordinance (Ord. 1203, 1924). Other cities and counties have had FAR limitations for more than 40 years. Santa Barbara was once in the forefront of planning, but that is no longer the case.

Thank you for your consideration.

Board of Directors

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