

DEVELOPMENT FEASIBILITY STUDY & DENSITY WORKSHOP  
July 23, 2009

My comments today reflect some, but not all of the concerns Allied has with the Strategic Economics study and the conclusions suggested in the staff report.

We believe the favored Scenario 4 is based on some questionable assumptions for a goal of affordable non-subsidized housing. Lot size – one acre is very hard to come by in this built out town. Lot price – the most expensive land in town. Parking -- a limited amount of unbundled parking which would probably result in more cars vying for the limited on-street parking available downtown. These cars would be either overflow or belong to people who chose not to rent parking spaces. If a project similar to Scenario 4 were built in one of the other locations suggested in the staff report, these cars would then impact adjacent residential neighborhoods.

There is also the matter of the incompatibility of such a building as proposed by Scenario 4 with the prized small town character of Santa Barbara. As Allied has noted before, this character is not only intrinsically valuable to its citizens but also economically important. The examples of dense housing noted by staff contain all small units, no larger market rate units, and serve people with a far lower rate of car ownership than the general population.

Furthermore the city's jobs/housing imbalance would not be improved because 60% more market units would be built than workforce and inclusionary units.

Clearly this study is not the answer to our problem. What works for San Francisco does not work for Santa Barbara. Instead we refer you to the excellent analysis from the CPA General Plan Update Committee and the very interesting proposal from Gil Barry for a Scenario 5.

(Presented by Jean Holmes on behalf of Allied Neighborhoods Association at a Planning Commission Meeting on 23 July 2009.)