

Why New “Smart Growth” Housing Developments Won’t Build Us Out of The Housing Dilemma

and

A Better Option

Presented by

Allied Neighborhoods Association

September 2008

Two Options

“Smart Growth”

Build and Grow our way
into balance



Playa Vista Award-Winning Smart Growth

“Protect and Preserve”

Maintain and Enhance, but
not Risk, existing qualities



Santa Barbara Award -Winning Public Housing

We Want ...

- Affordable housing
- Open space preservation
- Less traffic
- Fewer commuters

We Also Want ...

- A low density residential city
- Low profile cityscape
- Small town ambience



“High buildings are inimical to the ... character of the City”

City Charter Sec. 1506



“Maintain ... a low density residential city”

Santa Barbara General Plan

“Sustainable”

Sustainable plan =

Promises + Ability to deliver on promises

Not Sustainable

Great little city + Risky plan =
Cure worse than the Disease

Target Problems

- Housing prices
- Traffic congestion
- Commuters coming into the city
- Shortage of buildable land in the city
- Development threatening outlying open space

Fatal Flaw #1

Fly In The Ointment:

SANTA BARBARA'S DESIRABILITY

We're a "globally marketed commodity"

The logo for 'The New York Times GREAT HOMES' is displayed. 'The New York Times' is written in a black, serif font, and 'GREAT HOMES' is written in a larger, blue, serif font below it. The text is set against a light gray rectangular background.

The New York Times
GREAT HOMES

“... is the listing agent for a home three miles north of Montecito, Calif., near Santa Barbara, with ocean views and rows of avocado and lemon trees spread out on 80 acres.”

Fatal Flaw #2

Too little “Cure”
to produce
Sufficient Results

(A “Tipping Point” problem)

“We Can’t Build Our Way Out of the Housing Crisis”

Too few affordable units will be ever be built to have a significant impact because:

- Resources are limited
- Community sentiments have always overwhelmingly favored limiting growth

“Smart Growth” Promises are Impossible Dreams

- “Affordable by design”?
- Weaning off cars and reducing traffic?
- Reducing commuting?
- Inducing “Green” behavior?
- Cultural rewards?
- Preserving open spaces?
- Facilitating public transit?

The Cost of Failure



Betrayed by the promises of “smart growth”, Santa Monica residents initiated a ballot measure because of the projects’ traffic generation.

(LA Times, May 19, 2008)

Sustainability

Sustainable plan =

Promises + Ability to deliver on promises

The Reasonable (and Feasible) Option: “Protect and Preserve”

- Maintain community character
- Avoid strategies that encourage growth
- Implement *“Living Within Our Resources”*



Photo by Sheila Lodge. Used by permission.

Preserving Housing Stock

- Restrict condo conversions/protect rentals
- Prevent expensive condo developments that displace middle-class units
- Control “mansionization” and “gentrification”
- Preserve existing community character (historic neighborhood preservation, etc.)

“Market” condos displace modest, traditional housing.

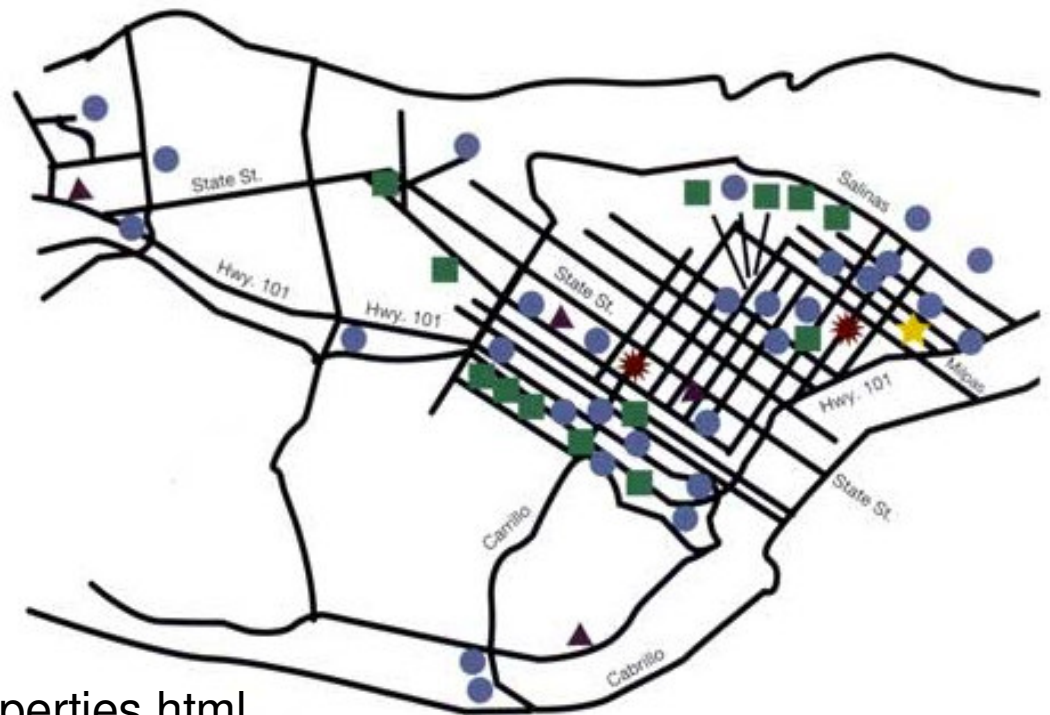


Create Truly Affordable Units In Smaller, Well-Integrated, Scattered-site Projects

- S.B. Housing Authority sets excellent example
- Promote self-help, innovative financing, and employer-assistance

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

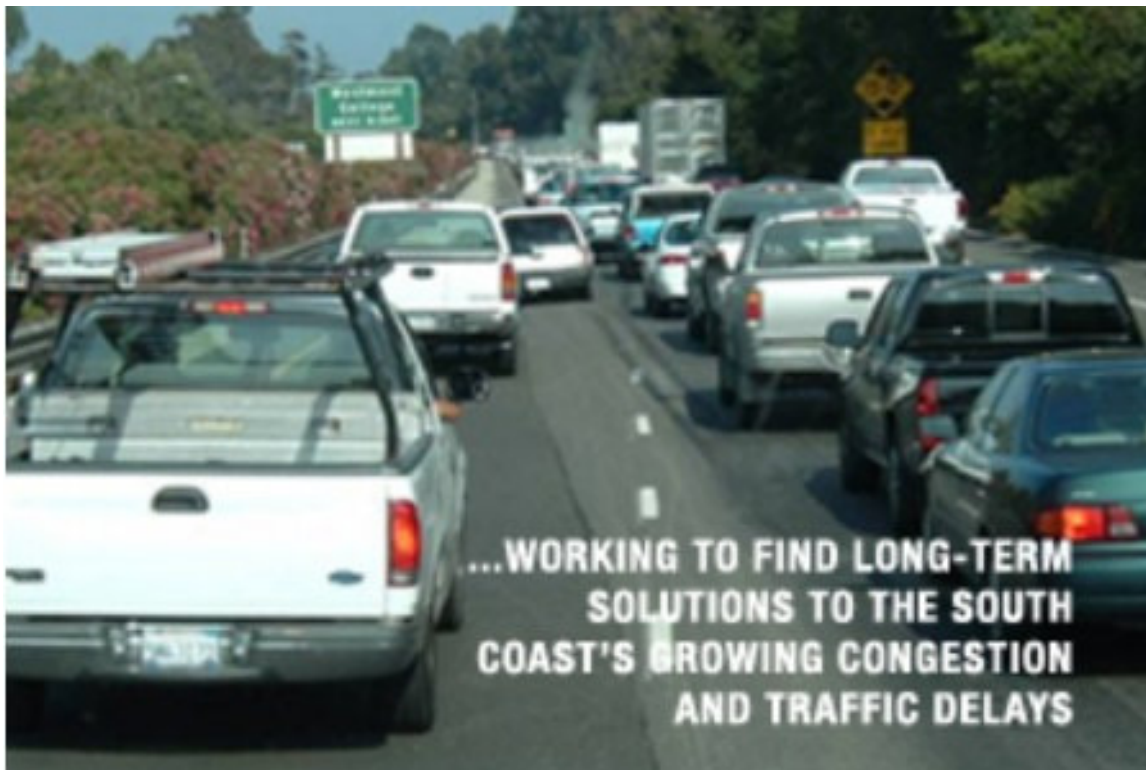
- Public Housing
- Private (Non-HUD)
- ▲ Other
- ☀ In-Planning
- ★ Under Construction



Excerpted from
<http://www.hacsb.org/housing/properties.html>

Stabilize the Jobs/Housing Imbalance

- Extend “Measure E” with strict job-creation limitations
- Promote an economy that does not rely on “growth”



<http://www.101inmotion.com/>

“ Grow Our Own Middle Class Instead of Importing One”

Jane Jacobs, *Death & Life of Great American Cities*

- Prepare locals for local jobs
- Get locals into local jobs



School of Culinary Arts of Santa Barbara City College



University of California, Santa Barbara

Creative Affordability

(Without Risk to the Community)

- Converting existing units into “affordables” (“buying” rights to limit resale prices)
- Novel zoning models (“dual density” plan)
- Transfer fees or parcel taxes (recoup “windfalls”)
- Land banking (acquisitions for potential housing sites)
- Voluntary efforts (“Alternative Budget” contributions)

No More “Market Rate” Housing

- Use “build out” potential for affordable units only
- Abandon “inclusionary” approach
- Challenge RHNA market unit allocation

- One, two and three-bedroom flats and townhomes from \$1,149,000 to \$2,595,000
- Private garages
- Fireplaces
- Patios for entertaining
- Ceiling heights of 9' to 10'



Excerpted from <http://www.paseochapala.com/>

Give Teeth to “Living Within Our Resources”

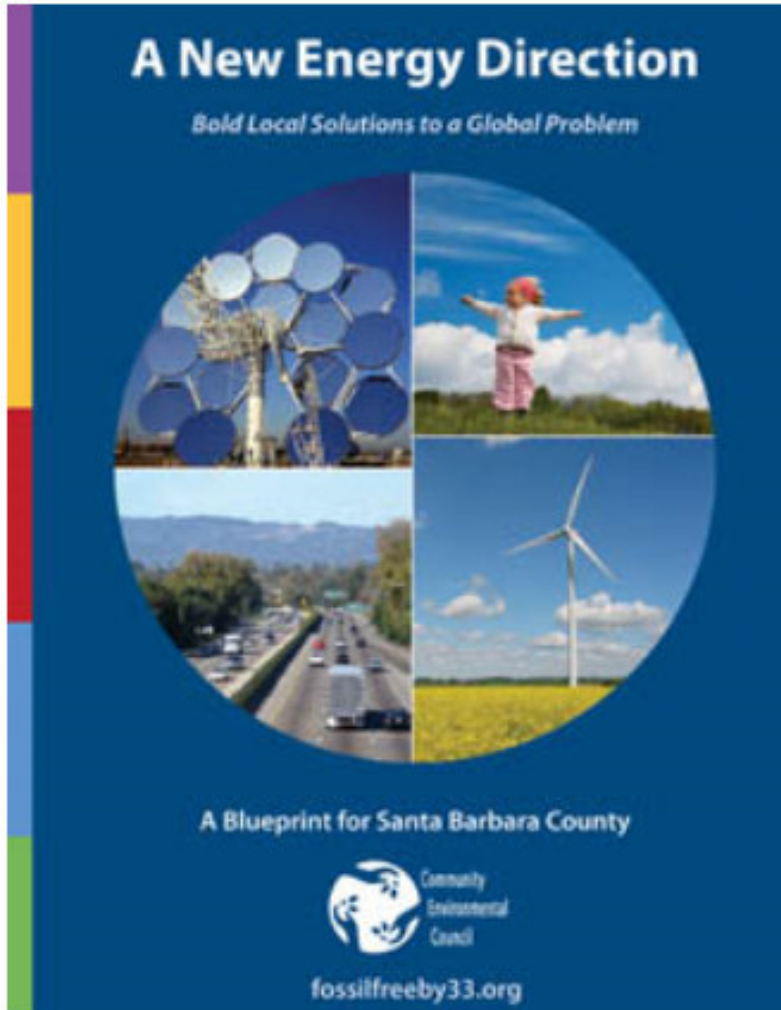


GoogleEarth Imagery: NASA

Better Public Transit ... Without the Big Housing Projects



“Sustainable” and “Green” Require Education First



↑
<http://www.santabarbaraca.gov/Recycling-Trash/>

← <http://www.communityenvironmentalcouncil.org/>

The Bottom Line

An approach based on realities, rather than utopian hopes and dreams:

- No sizeable housing projects of big and/or tall buildings
- No more market rate housing
- Measures based upon realistic expectations
- Measures based on traditional values, rather than risky transformation

Santa Barbara's Tradition (and Key to its Success): **Citizen-Based Planning**

- The General Plan has traditionally been the Citizens' Plan
- In 1975 the voters overwhelmingly passed advisory ballot measure A-2 calling for public votes on policies potentially influencing growth
- The citizens deserve the opportunity to vote on this Plan

Thank you!

Allied Neighborhoods Association