

## **Allied Neighborhoods Association**

March 1, 2011

RE: Plan Santa Barbara, the General Plan

The following are comments that have been compiled from our members. Many of us are concerned that there are a number of issues that have not been discussed at public hearings and are in the document that is before you for adoption. We would appreciate the opportunity to have a full discussion of these issues.

Parking issues: Since the city cannot control how many people live in a unit or their age etc the proposal to have parking maximums has serious impacts on residential areas. The potential exists for the streets to be parked up with cars, impacting the appearance of the neighborhoods and limiting access for emergency equipment. Observation of neighborhoods which do have parking requirements, show that even these streets are full of cars, so the existing requirements are not adequate.

We know that during the last fire, the Fire Department and Police Departments wanted the streets cleared of vehicles (and extended the area of evacuation for that purpose). As a result, putting more cars on the streets has the added problems of slowing fire and police response and evacuations in areas such as the Riviera.

Secondary units are proposed for all areas that are not in the high fire area. This is a broad paint brush of the majority of single family areas. Relaxing the requirements such as parking, will result in impacts on adjacent neighbors. Reducing open space and set backs will affect the quality of life that is expected when one buys into a single family neighborhood. Again the city has no control on how many people live in a unit. This current proposal appears to include changes which differ from what residents of several areas of the City were told would be included in this Plan Santa. Representatives from several neighborhoods were led to believe that these changes would not happen in their neighborhood, yet the language still applies to all.

To use city resources to recruit and retain employees of any business outside of the city limits is a questionable use of funds and could be identified as inserting the City into areas where the City has no jurisdiction.

Any new fees proposed should be carefully examined as to their purpose, effectiveness and sensitivity to economic circumstances, which do change. Off street paid parking could affect the ability of downtown merchants to survive, given the competition and available free parking the stores in Goleta have to offer.

The proposed requirements that all employers provide bus passes and pay bonus to employees sound good, but again the question is can marginal employers afford this expense. Also what is the cost of policing all employers to make sure they meet these requirements? For example, was the program put in place during the construction of the Granada effective? Was it not scrapped due to lack of participation?

The current bus system is not sustained by its ridership. The question of additional costs of expansion as well as raising the fees could result in the bus system being unsustainable. The ideas to reduce the use of cars by reducing parking requirements etc are theories which could well result in more and more cars on the streets.

The State is by nature is very conservative in establishing standards. The 500 foot setback from the freeways is established with both study and data. Is it the rush to build, build, build that moves the staff to make the setbacks at 250 feet? Is the overriding concern of the staff to stuff people into areas regardless of health issues? This is potentially a basis to invalidate the EIR.

So what is the policy? Is it to have smaller units to make buildings smaller? Or, the market demand of larger units for bigger families? There appears to be a contradiction in the document.

The reduction of the noise impact by increasing what is acceptable and the averaging over 24 hours makes this consideration of noise impacts a joke. The result is that there will be no impacts. Do we really want to increase impacts and thus reduce the quality of life, for new units and residents.

The question of flexible standards is an open question. What standards are being talked about and where is the staff considering this?

There needs to be a reality check on the proposed changes and what their cost will be in actual dollars, increased staff, and demand on resources. Our city cannot be everything to everyone. There are limits.

In summary it would appear that the proposed changes in the general plan are designed to facilitate new residents into the city. There is virtually no respect or protection of existing residents for their quality of life.