

**Santa Barbara General Plan Update
Findings of the Allied Survey
September 2007**

Allied Neighborhoods Association, an alliance of neighborhood associations, has been working for almost four decades to preserve and protect the City of Santa Barbara and its neighborhoods through conservation and good planning. In the winter and spring of this year as the City was preparing to initiate its public outreach effort in connection with the General Plan Update, Allied prepared and distributed a questionnaire (Figure 1) to gauge the sentiment of neighborhoods to a number of important choices facing our city. Allied has received and tallied responses from more than 120 households. Both the survey and a spreadsheet with the responses are available at Allied's web site: sb-allied.org. In the summaries provided here references to questions (and the associated response details) are indicated by number(s) in brackets, e.g., [1].

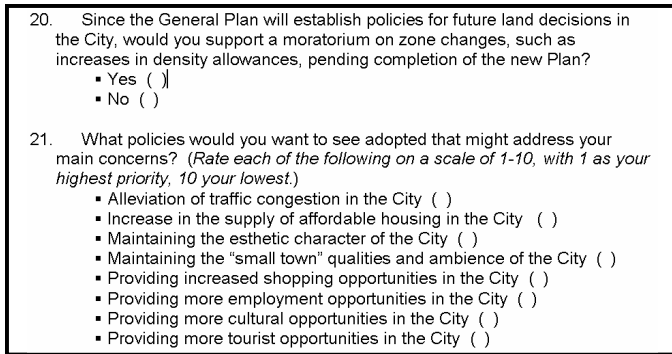


Figure 1. Portion of the questionnaire circulated by Allied Neighborhoods Association [20,21].

Respondents Our shortage of resources limited the extent to which we could distribute the questionnaire, although we sent it, in electronic form (e-mail), to all our member organizations, with instructions for it to be forwarded in turn to their memberships, as well as anybody else who might be encouraged to complete it. This somewhat limited the size and breadth of the sample: the respondents were mostly 50 and older (86%) [1], and predominately homeowners (93%) [3].

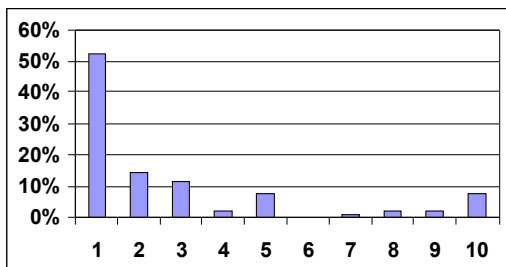


Figure 2. Histogram of responses to "How important do you consider the issue of City growth in the new City General Plan. (Rate on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the most important issue.)" [9].

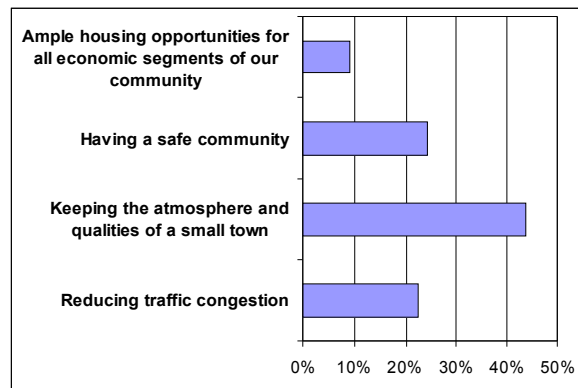


Figure 3. Breakdown of responses to "Of the following, which one would you rate as your highest priority concern" [12].

Greatest Concerns Over half of the respondents gave growth a #1 rating, 1 being the most and 10 least important, for the new General Plan (Figure 2) [9]. When asked to

provide a relative ranking of their concerns, keeping the atmosphere and qualities of a small town was most often selected (Figure 3) [12]. 85% of the respondents would support the use of regulatory measures to limit city population [11]. 92% would support the continuation of building height restrictions [13] and 72% would support even more restrictive height regulations [14].

On Building An increase in building is perceived as negative by 81% of the respondents [22]; likewise an increase in population is perceived negatively by 84% [23]. Auto traffic generation and a feeling of physical crowding are most often cited as the reason [24].

Priorities When asked to rate the priorities of various community policies (1 most to 10 least important) those involving ambience – esthetics and small town qualities – were deemed most important as shown in Table 1 [21].

Table 1. Breakdown of respondents giving highest priority ranking to specified City policies [21].

Policy	#1
Maintaining “small town” qualities	44%
Maintaining esthetic character	41%
Alleviation of traffic congestion	39%
More affordable housing	10%
More shopping opportunities	4%
More cultural opportunities	3%
More employment opportunities	3%
More tourist opportunities	2%

Affordable Housing Nearly two thirds of the respondents indicate some knowledge of the City’s current affordable housing programs [18], but slightly fewer than 40% of the

respondents would support City subsidies to promote an increase in “affordable” housing (other than for very low-income housing) [17]. 71% of the respondents were skeptical that the housing programs promoted by the City can succeed in providing a significant additional amount of housing [25]. 68% are skeptical that developing high-density housing near public transportation can succeed in reducing traffic congestion [26].

Decision Making The respondents preferred that fundamental decisions on planning policies, including City growth questions, be made by ballot (50%) compared with neighborhood associations (27%), City Council (18%), or commissions (18%) [19].

Key Findings The key findings are listed in Table 2 below:

Table 2. Key findings.

Limiting the city’s population continues to be a major concern
Our small town qualities are important to protect
Regulatory measures should be employed to meet these concerns
Increases in building and population are viewed negatively
Affordable housing programs are viewed as incapable of supplying the potential demand
Ballots are the preferred method for making major decisions

Conclusion We feel this survey indicates a strong need for the City to conduct an independent survey to establish what the residents want for the future of their city paying particular attention to the difficult choices involved.