

## **Allied Neighborhoods Association**

December 10, 2009  
Planning Commission  
City of Santa Barbara

### **RE: Plan Santa Barbara**

The Allied Neighborhood Association appreciates the Planning Commissioners' comments that are attached to the Staff Report. We especially want to commend those done by Sheila Lodge, Charmaine Jacobs and Stella Larson.

We believe that one of the most important goals for the General Plan is to maintain Santa Barbara's unique character: its charm, small town feel, diversity and historic resources. These are the qualities that the people have said over and over again they want protected, for it is these qualities that set our city apart from other coastal cities and are the basis for our financial viability.

We agree that to achieve sustainability, Santa Barbara must live within our resources. We agree with Commissioner Lodge that "The most sustainable thing Santa Barbara can do is to continue on its slow growth path."

Water supply is critical and the limits of this resource are highlighted by the recent announcement that the State Water Project will only be able to provide 5% of next year's entitlements.

Open space is a resource that will need creative solutions. Santa Barbara has a wealth of parks, but unfortunately they are not evenly distributed. This issue must be addressed to assure that open space is readily available where density exists.

We need to get smarter about our transportation policies and recognize that the best way to alleviate future congestion is to stop allowing projects and more intensive uses in the wrong places. We already know that certain intersections are severely impacted and yet we continue to allow more intense uses in their vicinity. For example, the proposals to change Elings Park to a regional park comes to mind, as does other increased density of uses in Hidden Valley.

We must recognize that failure to live within our resources will have very negative consequences for different aspects of sustainability. Higher density will bring us closer to the tipping point, where provision of resources to meet demand will become more expensive for all of our residents. This in turn will result in our city becoming an even more expensive place in which to live.

Affordable housing has and will continue to be a concern as long as Santa Barbara is such a desirable place in which to live. We need to be realistic and recognize that not everyone who wants to live here will be able to do so. We also need to realize that given our land constraints the type of housing desired by many commuters may just not be available. Commuters will probably always be a fact of life and we need to look for alternative means of transportation to deal with this concern.

We need to be clear when addressing the community that they understand that the types of affordable housing the city is concerned with producing is what many would term upper middle class housing and market rental housing. Contrary to previous staff reports, we believe that the best way of producing these types of housing is by maintaining the number of units allowed by variable density. This will allow for small projects scattered throughout the city and Gil Barry and Tom Bollay have shown how this can be accomplished. Their ideas are excellent examples of Santa Barbara type solutions to address Santa Barbara's problems. We oppose taking density out of the R-3 and R-4 zones in order to use it for the high density models that staff has proposed to you at past meetings.

We do not believe that there is the need to increase density. Our current zoning already allows for many more people than our resources can accommodate. What we need to do is study such items as adaptive reuse and rezoning our commercial zoning so that we can make better use of what we now have.

Without Santa Barbara type solutions for Santa Barbara's problems, we will sacrifice those goals and values that our citizens have shown to be important to their lives. Santa Barbara has a long history of stewardship that has made this a desirable and unique city. We urge you not to fall prey to the proffered non-Santa Barbara style ideas and theories.

Cathie McCammon, First Vice President