

#### 4. *Living Within Our Realities*

High-priced housing and a severe pinch upon the middle/working class are realities in every highly desirable city. We will never be able to build our way out of the problem.

We can never do more with “price and occupancy restricted” units than provide a relative token amount – and the negligible impact on the problem does not justify the negative effects the efforts have on our cityscape and coveted low density levels.

But we can assure preservation of at least an adequate (though not “ideal”) level of economic diversity by carefully stewarding our existing residential housing stock: the middle class neighborhoods will always remain as such if we preserve their essential characteristics. This can be supplemented with innovative ways to preserve their relative affordability.

And we should not forget: healthy cities “grow their own” middle class – rather than importing it – from existing population that is already housed there, before it becomes middle class. All it takes is a serious commitment to the inherent value of all segments of our community.

ANA.PAP.0807g

### Conclusions

- **Santa Barbara’s top three priorities:**

- 1. Preserve its small-town character and quality of life,**
- 2. Live sustainably and within our resources, and**
- 3. Provide affordable housing opportunities for residents.**

- **Santa Barbara’s circumstances – primarily its desirability factor – preclude a “smart growth”, high density housing approach as a way to “build our way out” of an inevitable affordable housing shortage.**

- **An aggressive effort to preserve our workforce and middle class neighborhoods and housing stock is the best and least problematic way to both preserve the ambience of the city and accommodate a significant segment of the workforce.**

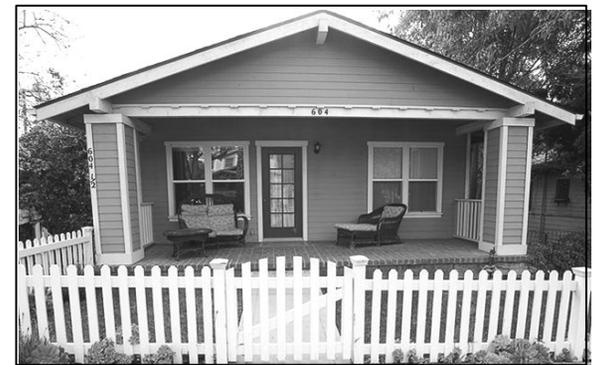
### Allied Neighborhoods Assn.

Allied Neighborhoods Association, an alliance of neighborhood associations, has been working for almost four decades to preserve and protect the City and its neighborhoods through conservation and good planning. Read more about the current General Plan Update at [sb-allied.org/PlanSantaBarbara.html](http://sb-allied.org/PlanSantaBarbara.html).



Attractive, low-density, public housing projects, such as the Castillo Cottages, maintain the small-city ambience of Santa Barbara while providing needed housing.

## Plan Santa Barbara: The Option to Protect And Preserve



*Preservation of traditional-style middle class housing should be a community priority.*

## 1. The Conflict

The conventional prescription to deal with affordable housing and sustainability – a “smart growth” high-density housing construction regimen – conflicts with Santa Barbara’s highest priority, the preservation of its small-town character.

The high densities are at odds with many of the most coveted qualities of this unique community, as well as a cityscape that most residents desire to preserve.

A Protection and Preservation approach can serve both interests much less problematically, and much more in keeping with traditional and prevailing community sentiments.



*The “Smart Growth” plan would require tons more of this kind of density before it would achieve a dent in commuter traffic.*

## 2. Smart Growth Flaws

A “Smart Growth” option being promoted prescribes locating high-density development downtown and along transit corridors. However, the plan ignores our unique and extraordinary circumstances:

- The assumption that the units will be occupied by local workers is highly speculative. In a city as desirable as ours, those units will be competed for by many, many others wanting to live here, beside local workers.
- The number of units needed to house any substantial fraction of the over 25,000 daily commuters is well beyond the few thousand new units that our city can be expected to tolerate. We will never build enough to make a “dent”.
- In an area as desirable as ours, all the housing construction we could ever build in the downtown will not relieve the development pressure on outlying open spaces.
- The “smart growth option” will have the unintended consequence of increasing rather than decreasing the number of commuters because only a relatively small percentage will be affordable units, and the many more “market rate” units will increase demand for more new workforce than the projects will be able to house.



*If we nurture and preserve them, our modest neighborhoods will always be home to middle class workers.*

## 3. Protection and Preservation

- Low density is the primary factor in Santa Barbara’s top-priority quality of life value – small town ambience.
- Maintaining a low density puts the least strain on limited natural resources (water, clean air, views) and consequently is the most sustainable option.
- Limiting gentrification in our residential areas – preserving existing rental and ownership units – is the surest means of maintaining middle class housing.
- Small-town ambience encourages – rather than mandates – walking and other alternative ways of getting around.