



## MEETING SUMMARY FORM

Please fill out the following form as best you can. All information identified as public information will be summarized and published on the *Plan Santa Barbara* website ([www.YouPlanSB.org](http://www.YouPlanSB.org)).

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

**Meeting Date:** June 21, 2007

**Plan Santa Barbara representative(s):** Das Williams (City Council); Julie Bixby (City Staff)

**Host Organization:** The Sustainability Project

**Number of Participants:** 15

**Please take a moment to summarize the meeting. What were the overall themes? What issues arose? What concerns did the participants express?**

The discussion focused on how important it will be throughout this process to educate the community on the trade-offs and consequences of policy decisions. The Sustainability Project is an education-based organization and they were anxious to become more involved in Plan Santa Barbara. Councilman Williams encouraged the group to actively participate and to be specific in their comments and suggestions. They are going to submit a set of comments on behalf of the organization. Specific comments included:

- How can TSP help with education efforts related to Plan SB?
  - Try to explain the ramifications of decisions on housing, transportation and open space
  - Use local examples of higher densities that work (like Garden Court and Casa de las Fuentes)
  - Look for community-scale examples of places a little more developed than SB that are well done to help the community develop a vision.
  - Explain to the community how to understand our current general plan and how the policies work together toward a vision
- A key element of sustainable community planning is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and typically our zoning and planning policies are not that flexible, and that inhibits innovation in our community
- Consider an adaptive management model, set goals and track indicators of the Plan that are measured as we go along so we can make adjustments as necessary instead of waiting 20 years to update the Plan again.
- Projects need to be evaluated more holistically by weighing several different types of public

benefits that a project may provide

- Staff should look at other communities that provide good on-the-ground examples of what we want and then look at that communities General Plan to see what policies created that. This will help to lessen the unintended consequences of our policies.
- Sustainability should be the template for the whole Plan
- How are we analyzing the community comments? The City should invest in enough staff resources for this process so that when we reach the implementation phase we have staff that is already trained and implementation will go smoothly
- Who ultimately makes the decisions? Majority rules?

## FOR STAFF USE ONLY:

**Please provide any information that you feel is important for the *Plan Santa Barbara* staff to know but that would not be appropriate for public display:**



# The Sustainability Project

*Implementing Community Solutions*

## **Founding Organizations**

American Institute of Architects,  
*Santa Barbara Chapter*  
Architectural Foundation of  
Santa Barbara  
Community Environmental Council,  
*Santa Barbara*  
Renewable Energy Institute,  
*Cal Poly San Luis Obispo*

**September 26, 2007**

To: City of Santa Barbara  
From: The Sustainability Project  
Re: Comments on General Plan Update

## **2007 Board of Directors**

Paul Poirier AIA, LEED AP, *President*  
Magdalena Corvin, V.P.  
Jim Bell, *Treasurer*  
Guillermo Gonzalez, *Secretary*  
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Thea Van Loggerenberg, LEED AP

The Sustainability Project Board of Directors appreciates this opportunity to provide input on the City of Santa Barbara's update of its General Plan. Our mission is "to inspire change in the built environment of our region that will improve the quality of life, in harmony with nature, for this and future generations." We believe the City General Plan has a critical role to play in helping our community become more sustainable and self-sufficient while adapting to diminishing fossil fuel, water and food resources, and the ongoing effects of climate change.

### **A. Vision: Santa Barbara, A Model Sustainable City**

A necessary component of a sustainable future will be a sustainable built environment. We must transform how our communities operate. Imagine our City producing a surplus of energy, food, clean water and air; supporting healthy and biological communities; and enhancing its natural beauty in harmony with the Earth.

### **B. Basic Principles**

The Sustainability Project's fundamental recommendation is that sustainable principles be incorporated into each element of the General Plan.

Central to sustainability is the concept of meeting present needs while preserving resources for future generations. Sustainability may be defined as "a dynamic balance among mutually-interdependent elements: (a) protection and enhancement of natural ecosystems and resources; (b) Economic productivity; and (c) Provision of social infrastructures such as jobs, housing, education, medical care and cultural opportunities. A workable balance among these elements will depend on location and community values and will change as the environment and society change" <sup>i</sup>

The mission of The Sustainability Project is "To inspire change in the built environment of our region that will improve the quality of life, in harmony with nature, for this and future generations."

The definition of a sustainable community and the indicators that describe it are unique to each community. There are many definitions of what constitutes a sustainable community. We have found that a common thread in all of these definitions is the goal of achieving balance among five key “pillars of sustainability:”

- Housing
- Environment & Open Space
- Transportation
- Community Services
- Economic Vitality

In addition to the “pillars of sustainability” we recommend that the City consider the concepts outlined in the Ahwanhee Principles developed by the Local Government Commission in 1991.<sup>ii</sup>

It is essential to evaluate progress toward achieving these goals. This can be accomplished by developing “Sustainable Community Indicators” to identify community values, develop long-term goals and measure progress toward meeting them. Pertinent questions include: What percentage of our housing is affordable for the people living and working in our City? How much public transportation does our City provide and how much of it is being used by the people who live and work in our City? After periodic measurement of progress, adjustments and adaptations can be made as needed.

The development of “Sustainable Community Indicators” serves four valuable functions:

- Enables the community to identify what it values and prioritizes those values
- Holds individuals and the community accountable for achieving the desired results
- Builds democracy by engaging people in a community-building process
- Allows the community to measure what is important and make decisions based on those results. We can measure whether we are achieving what we want and whether the outcomes are improving our lives.

## **C. Goals for Santa Barbara**

### *1. Make Santa Barbara a Carbon Neutral City*

The General Plan should make a commitment to ensure that all buildings in the City be carbon neutral by 2030 ([www.architecture2030.org](http://www.architecture2030.org)). In addition, the City should identify methods for increasing the use of alternative energy sources with the goal of making the City “fossil free”<sup>iii</sup> as described in the Community Environmental Council’s new publication “A New Energy Direction / Bold Local Solutions to a Global Problem / A Blueprint for Santa Barbara County.”<sup>iv</sup>

### *2. Become More Self-Sufficient*

Identify steps for becoming more self-sufficient by developing locally and regionally based supplies of water, food, and energy. This would include programs promoting energy and water efficiency and conservation, local and regional renewable energy sources, local and regional food production, and the elimination of resource waste.

### *3. Encourage More Public Transportation*

Make local transit more convenient and user friendly. Prioritize public transit options instead of the private automobile by increasing frequency of bus and shuttle trips and improving bus turnouts and shelters. Develop regional commuter systems.

### *4. Promote Sustainable Neighborhoods*

Promote local neighborhood planning and design that emphasizes mixed-uses, transit-orientation and pedestrian amenities and connections. Consider using the U.S. Green Building Council's "LEED for Neighborhood Development" <sup>v</sup> pilot program as a tool to assist planning neighborhoods in the City.

### *5. Promote Sustainable Urban Open Spaces*

Promote the development and sustainability of our urban forest and landscaped spaces to save energy, incorporate habitat, and provide shade to foster a healthy, vibrant and livable community.

### *6. Plan Regionally*

Work cooperatively with other local governments and communities to move toward regional planning. For example, develop opportunities for revenue-sharing, transfer of development rights, local renewable energy systems, and regional transportation systems.

## **D. Policies**

1. Urban development is both a key contributor to climate change and an essential factor in combating it. Since 1980, the number of miles Americans drive has risen three times faster than the population and almost twice as fast as vehicle registrations. We support "Compact Development" with mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods that would create a diverse, livable and walkable community while reducing commuting time and the costs of new roads and other urban infrastructure. In light of this, we encourage the use and expansion of neighborhood markets (such as on Micheltorena, Olive/Victoria, Bath, De La Vina).
2. We believe the current zoning standards with a 60-foot height limit are appropriate. This encourages "Compact Development" within the urban core; which encourages the development of more effective public transportation opportunities, allows for mixed use development, allows residents to live in closer proximity to the goods and services they need, and protects open space in outlying areas of our community. It also helps to create a vibrant urban core with greater community amenities.
3. We encourage the City to adopt a form-based code. This would allow flexibility and creativity in the zoning ordinance creating more opportunities for community benefits as a part of projects in exchange for this flexibility and creativity. This approach is being used in downtown Ventura.
4. TSP brought Ed Mazria's inspiring Architecture 2030 Challenge<sup>vi</sup> presentation to Santa Barbara in October of 2006. Since then, the Santa Barbara 2030 Coalition, including several TSP Board members, has been working with City staff to develop an ordinance to increase the energy efficiency of local buildings beyond current Title 24 requirements. We recommend adopting this proposed ordinance immediately.

5. We recommend that the City continue to work with the private sector to facilitate energy efficiency and green building as part of meeting the 2030 Challenge. This could include facilitating pilot projects, creating financial incentives and incorporating green building programs such as LEED and Built Green Santa Barbara into the local building approval process to the greatest extent possible. Projects that require an EIR could also include a “carbon footprint” calculation with the goal of moving toward net zero green house gas emissions. We understand that the City of Santa Barbara prepared a similar study for all City facilities.
6. We recommend expedited planning approvals as an incentive for LEED and Built-Green private projects.
7. In order to meet the 2030 Challenge, solar photovoltaic systems should be encouraged on all buildings in all neighborhoods. We recommend that prominent placement of solar panels is permitted to demonstrate the commitment by our community to a sustainable future.
8. We recommend a program to subsidize energy upgrades for modest income homeowners as part of meeting the 2030 Challenge.
9. Current zoning-based parking standards over-prioritize auto use by requiring a large amount of parking. We recommend that parking requirements reflect the calculated parking demand of each project as the baseline for the maximum project parking requirement.
10. We recommend reduced off-street covered parking requirements in residential neighborhoods in order to give homeowners greater flexibility in planning modest additions. This will preserve the social fabric by encouraging families to stay in place. It will save the embodied energy of existing homes by encouraging their upgrading and reuse. It will help to preserve open space by reducing off-street garage parking.
11. We recommend encouraging more second residential units in single-family neighborhoods in order to create more affordable housing within the existing fabric of the City. We also recommend a program to upgrade and legalize the existing “hidden units.” These are low-impact ways to increase affordable housing in existing neighborhoods, thus avoiding sprawl.
12. We recommend creating opportunities for landscaped open space within the urban pattern using techniques such as landscape setbacks. We also recommend encouraging tree plantings in and around new developments.
13. We support the City’s efforts to install traffic calming devices throughout the City. We believe this will make our neighborhoods more pedestrian-friendly. This must be done in an appropriate and neighborhood-friendly manner.
14. Reduce auto dependence and impact with financial incentives for programs such as public transit, car-pooling, car-sharing, electric vehicles, bike fleets and bike lanes.

## **E. Plan for Santa Barbara**

The fundamental issue facing our community is how to manage growth. Should we attempt to stop all growth? We believe the answer is no. Overly severe restrictions on growth have unintended consequences. Over the last 30 years, various policies have slowed growth in the Santa Barbara area. By slowing growth, we have created a less-balanced community. For example, there is now a lack of affordable housing for a large sector of our community. The loss of housing affordability has caused more traffic congestion as more people commute from outlying areas, and a decline in enrollment in our schools as young families have left the area.

We believe we must manage growth over the next 20 years in a way that creates a better and more sustainable community. We need policies that will minimize or eliminate the impacts of growth. For example, developing more affordable housing will protect and enhance our environmental quality by eliminating sprawl and minimizing commuting distance. It will protect and enhance our economic vitality by supporting a stable, local workforce and it will protect and enhance our social fabric by keeping our community intact.

Our community will continue to be affected by the changes around us. We are faced with diminishing fossil fuel, water and food resources and the ongoing effects of climate change. By defining a reasonable amount of growth for our community and ensuring that this growth occurs in a sustainable fashion we will successfully adapt to these changes. By creating a sustainable, fossil-free, self-sufficient Santa Barbara, we serve our present interests and the interests of future generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide The Sustainability Project's comments as a part of the General Plan Update. We look forward to continuing to work with the City and the community in support of the General Plan process.

Sincerely,

THE SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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President: Paul Poirier

Vice President: Magdalena Corvin, Past President/ V.P.: April Palencia

Secretary: Guillermo Gonzalez, Treasurer: Jim Bell

Board Members: Robert Adams, Heather Allen, Carol Ashley, Jennifer Downing, Karen Feeney, John Kelley, Detty Peikert, Adam Sharkey, Thea van Loggerenberg

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<sup>i</sup> Zachary, Jill. 1995. **Sustainable Community Indicators: Guideposts for Local Planning**. Community Environmental Council, Inc. Santa Barbara, CA: Gildea Resource Center.

<sup>ii</sup> Authors: Peter Calthorpe, Michael Corbett, Andres Duany, Elizabeth Moule, Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, and Stefanos Polyzoides. Adopted 1991. **Ahwahnee Principles for Resource-Efficient Communities**. [www.lgc.org](http://www.lgc.org)

<sup>iii</sup> **Fossil Free by '33 is a program of the Community Environmental Council**. Authors: Tam Hunt, CEC Energy Program Director • [thunt@cecmail.org](mailto:thunt@cecmail.org) Bob Ferris, CEC Executive Director • [bferris@cecmail.org](mailto:bferris@cecmail.org) Sigrid Wright, CEC Community Relations Director • [swright@cecmail.org](mailto:swright@cecmail.org). [www.communityenvironmentalcouncil.org](http://www.communityenvironmentalcouncil.org)

<sup>iv</sup> Authors: Tam Hunt, CEC Energy Program Director, Sigrid Wright, CEC Assistant Director. 2007. **A New Energy Direction: Bold Local Solutions to a Global Problem**, A Blueprint for Santa Barbara County. [www.communityenvironmentalcouncil.org](http://www.communityenvironmentalcouncil.org)

<sup>v</sup> **LEED for Neighborhood Development** is a collaboration between the U.S. Green Building Council, the Congress for the New Urbanism, and the Natural Resources Defense Council. [www.usgbc.org](http://www.usgbc.org)

<sup>vi</sup> Founder: Edward Mazria AIA. **Architecture 2030 Challenge**. [www.architecture2030.org](http://www.architecture2030.org)