



community input summary report

Plan Santa Barbara

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COMMUNITY INPUT SUMMARY REPORT

DECEMBER, 2007

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Many thanks to the many individuals and community groups that took the time to participate in the workshops, grassroot meetings, and who submitted very thoughtful comments.

PLAN SANTA BARBARA OUTREACH

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Appendices available online at: www.youplansb.org, and at the Planning Division Counter at 630 Garden Street.



1 introduction

ABOUT THIS REPORT

This document summarizes the results of the *Plan Santa Barbara* public outreach process conducted between March 1, 2007 and August 31, 2007 by the City of Santa Barbara. This process utilized a variety of outreach strategies, including community workshops, separate grassroots meetings with a variety of community organizations, a website and comment forms, in order to reach a wide selection of community members. This report identifies values, issues and ideas expressed about the future of Santa Barbara by residents through each of these outreach methods.

This report serves as a milestone document that reflects the community values and issues of our time. Although the community input does not stray far from the Council Goals that were set out to guide this process in 2005, people recognized the local, regional and to some extent, global challenges that threaten to erode the city's long tradition of quality of life and diversity.

The City's commitment to "Living Within Our Resources" has taken on new signifi-

cance as we struggle to understand and define a long-term sustainable future. The community expressed a general commonality of underlying values about the future of Santa Barbara, but with different ideas about how to get there. This report will be used as a benchmark throughout the *Plan Santa Barbara* process, as we develop policy options and adjustments to the General Plan that will guide growth and development over the next 20 to 30 years and beyond.

BACKGROUND

The two primary reasons for undertaking the *Plan Santa Barbara* process were to address the sunset of Charter Section 1508 regulating non-residential growth and to reassess the City's capability to construct more than the 40,005 housing units specified by the Housing Element.

In 2005, the City Council initiated the *Plan Santa Barbara* process with an affirmation and update of the 1988 General Plan Update Goals, including Goal 8:

"Encourage public involvement and participation at all levels of City planning and other governmental activities."

"This report will be used as a benchmark throughout the *Plan Santa Barbara* process, as we develop policy options and adjustments to the General Plan..."

Also in 2005, the City published the *Conditions, Trends & Issues Report* (CTI) as a baseline of existing resources, public services and facilities that affect growth in Santa Barbara. That document also highlights trends, constraints, and potential policy conflicts related to future growth and development. Issues discussed include air quality, creeks and storm drain systems, land use and housing, noise, parks and recreation, sanitary sewer, solid and hazardous waste management, transportation and circulation, water supply, fire protection services, library services, police services, public buildings and facilities, and schools.

In the spring of 2007, the City of Santa Barbara began the initial public outreach phase of its *Plan Santa Barbara* process to update the City growth management policy framework. Staff from the City Planning Division led this outreach effort in coordination with the *Plan Santa Barbara* Outreach Committee. The goal of the outreach effort was threefold: first, to inform the public about existing City land use and growth management policies; second, to announce related community events; and third, to gather input and gauge public opinion about City issues that matter most to them.



THE OUTREACH COMMITTEE AND PUBLIC OUTREACH PROCESS

In November 2005, the Council appointed a thirteen-member Outreach Committee, composed of City Council, Planning Commission and community leaders, to help guide the public outreach process. The Outreach Committee has served several functions, including: a review body for the various outreach methods and tools; an important means to identify key community groups, a sounding board for presentations, and an engaged and active group of *Plan Santa Barbara* ambassadors at the many local grassroots meetings.

Between March and September of 2007, well over 900 community members from across the City attended small group meetings and public workshops connected to *Plan Santa Barbara*. In addition, during the time period analyzed, the City received 546 individual comments cards sent by mail or submitted via the plan website. The various public outreach methods are described in more detail at the end of this report.

The public response confirmed the importance of a number of key issues previously identified by the City, including growth, housing, transportation and environmental protection. In addition, two new issues emerged from this process:

- **Sustainability:** Citizens are concerned about our ability to live within our resources across a wide spectrum of issues: energy, environment, transportation, economics and social equity. The City needs to more assertively pursue policies that define and implement sustainability principles.
- **Community Health:** There is increased awareness of and concern for how planning policies and subsequent development affect public health. The average Santa Barbara resident is beginning to understand the importance of health concerns within the context of City planning.

Participants clearly affirmed the underlying values that are central to their experience living in Santa Barbara. Confirmation of these issues and underlying values allows the City to prioritize goals and develop specific policy options with the assurance that they address prevailing public concerns.

2 what people have said

Based on the public responses received from the workshops, grassroots meetings, and comment cards, a number of themes emerged. This report provides a summary of the key issues and the range of comments heard in each topic area. For a complete picture of what we heard, readers are encouraged to review the following on-line appendices to this document.

- **Appendix A** - A summary of the public input from the four community workshops.
- **Appendix B** - A compilation of meeting notes from all the grassroots meetings.
- **Appendix C** - A comprehensive list of comments received on the brochure comment cards and through the website.

This summary report and appendices are available online at:

<http://www.YouPlanSB.org>

Copies are also available for review at the following City locations:

The Planning Division at 630 Garden Street, City Hall at 735 Anacapa Street, the Main Public Library at 40 East Anapamu Street, and the Eastside Library at 1102 East Montecito Street.

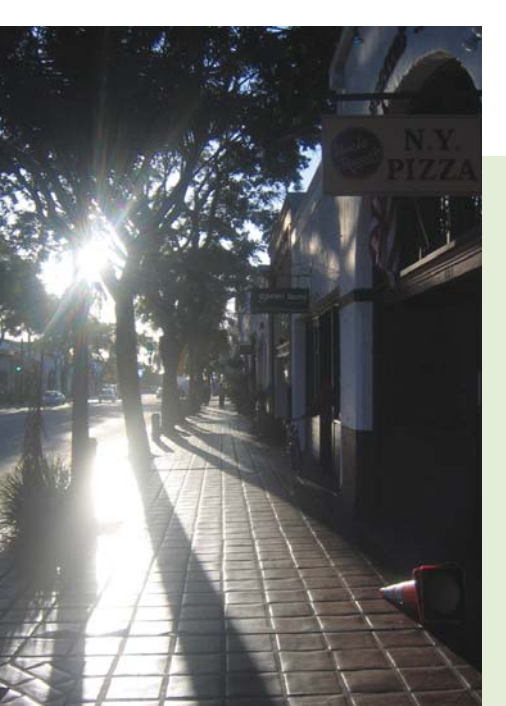
QUALITIES OF SANTA BARBARA

In both the public workshops and on the comment cards, participants were asked to describe what they love about Santa Barbara. Common attributes included the following:

- Small-town feel and community connectedness
- Diverse population
- Natural features (beaches, oceans, mountains, creeks, etc.), scenic beauty and views
- Attractive architecture, especially downtown
- Preservation of historic character and neighborhoods
- Vibrant and dynamic culture

These are qualities that people hope to see preserved into the future.





KEY ISSUE AREAS

People were also asked to describe their concerns about the city. The resulting wide range of issues has been grouped by staff into nine general categories:

- Growth
- Community Design/ Visual Quality
- Housing
- Environment
- Transportation
- Sense of Community
- Economy
- Public Facilities and Services
- Community Health

While all of these issues are interconnected, the categories will facilitate analysis for use in building the policy options that will shape the next phase of public participation. This report provides a summary of what was heard from the public in each of the nine issue areas.



GROWTH

Future growth and development needs to be considered within the context of Living Within

Our Resources, in order to preserve our quality of life in balance with other community values and priorities.

The question of growth—how much, what type, where—was an overarching one. Many people are wrestling with the challenge of how to preserve the quality of life and comfortable scale of the city while providing opportunities for service workers, professionals, young families and others to live here. Attitudes toward growth range from zero tolerance for any growth to advocacy for greater mixed-use zones and increased density in targeted areas. Some people were more concerned with sprawl and encroachment into agricultural areas; others focused on the preservation of their neighborhoods; still others were worried about the scale and amount of development downtown.

Many believe that recent development trends create impacts and unintended consequences such as increased traffic, loss of affordable housing, reduced economic diversity and the loss of the middle class. People are also questioning the impact that City College and UCSB have on the housing and rental market.

Those against any measure of growth feel that the City should cap population and limit job opportunities. Advocates for reasonable growth want to be sure that the City approaches new growth plans in a way that is contextually appropriate, provides for those who need it most, and does its best to preserve the qualities that people love about Santa Barbara.

Growth was also clearly a factor expressed in conjunction with housing, community design, transportation, and environment. Many residents also hope that the City considers ecological factors on both a local and global scale when looking at growth issues.

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- Can Santa Barbara enjoy a healthy economy without some population growth?
 - We need to be aware of the consequences of growth.
 - Find a balance between moderate growth and maintaining quality of life.
 - Live within our resources, which means no more growth.
 - We need growth in housing; lessen limits on growth.
 - Limit sprawl; concentrate new housing downtown.
 - Please protect open space.
 - Continue to grow but maintain the current charm.
 - Wish the City still had a population of 40,000. Life was simple and everyone knew you.
 - Future growth needs to be controlled and sensible.
-



COMMUNITY DESIGN

Preserve our historic character and retain the small-town feel of the City with appropriate size and scale of development, a walkable town, increased urban landscaping and open space, and maintenance of scenic views.

Building heights, residential unit sizes, density, parking, and open space standards in the commercial districts were all issues raised in relation to Community Design. Preservation of the City's architectural heritage and aesthetic character was a frequently cited goal, as was retaining scenic views of both the ocean and the mountains. Participants debated the issue of building height and scale, addressing the challenge of retaining the small-town character of the City while providing increased housing opportunities for middle- and lower-income residents.

Many perceive the scale of new development as unacceptable (Chapala Street projects were often mentioned as an example). Some advocated placing a limit on building heights. However, many recognized the conflict between the desire to limit building heights with the need to provide greater housing opportunities for lower- and middle-income families. The issue of building height and scale was also recognized as a concern for the character of existing



“Participants also discussed the importance of providing open space elements throughout the city, as well as considering overall design quality and landscaping.”

residential neighborhoods in the face of the growing trend towards “mansions.”

Another issue that received much attention was walkability. A substantial number of commenters advocated such strategies as widening sidewalks and providing improved lighting to create a more pedestrian-friendly and safe environment throughout the City. Closing State Street was another idea mentioned often.

Participants also discussed the importance of providing open space elements throughout the City, as well as considering overall design quality and landscaping. Some suggested that new development should be required to include open space to offset the impact of increased density. Others suggested establishing view corridors to preserve the City’s scenic vistas. Simply staying aware of how building heights can adversely affect the overall design and visual quality of the community was a frequently mentioned issue.

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- Preserve our history.
- We should continually seek quality in our designs.
- The size and scale of new development is too high.
- Improve/enhance sidewalk lighting.
- Close part of State Street for walking/cafés.

- It is unrealistic to increase inclusionary housing and decrease heights.
- Limit building height.
- Preserve public ocean and mountain views and access to open spaces.
- Sidewalks are too narrow on the East-side.



HOUSING

A wide range of housing options is important to maintain an economically and socially diverse population; creative and innovative approaches are needed to retain the workforce and the City’s economic and cultural diversity.

Across the board, participants raised the issue of high housing prices as a cause for concern, pointing to it as a factor in class stratification, congestion, and other social, economic and environmental stresses. According to many, high land values are adversely affecting the nature of their neighborhoods—their children cannot afford to live in the city where they grew up; middle- and lower-income earners are unable to find homes close to work; and congestion has increased due to the large number of employees commuting to jobs from outside the City. Affordable housing was recognized as a critical issue for the City. Many of the people that expressed concerns about more growth also expressed concern that the City needs more affordable housing.

Small business owners described the difficulty of affording space, as well as keeping a workforce located in the City. There is also a perception that many of the homes in the City are investment properties or second homes owned by wealthy “absentee owners” with little interest in the health of the community, a fact that hurts Santa Barbara’s small-town feel.

Many are questioning how the City can address affordable housing issues and maintain the diversity of the community in Santa Barbara. Issues ranged from the polarizing effect of high home prices to the benefits or costs of increased density. A number of people argued that it is economically and environmentally unfeasible to create more housing; others believed that it was possible to utilize existing space and plan strategically to create greater housing opportunities. The scale, location and type of housing was a common concern, and many people suggested that the City revise its approach to affordable housing in order to create options for middle-income workers. The availability and quality of rental housing was also a frequent and common concern.

Many participants struggled with the difficulty of creating more affordable housing opportunities while avoiding too much growth. Some advocated a strict no-growth strategy, while others felt that the City needs to carefully examine its policies in order to find a balance between providing adequate



housing for all income levels and maintaining the attractive character of the city.

Many people acknowledged the challenge of creating housing opportunities for a more economically diverse population in the current market. Suggestions ranged from rent controls or caps to employer or City-provided housing to financing through fees on title transfers of market-rate units. People often referred to the City’s diversity and community connectedness when articulating the qualities that they love about Santa Barbara. Similarly, many expressed fear that Santa Barbara is in danger of losing those qualities due to high home prices and land values. People are concerned that neighborhoods are losing their connectivity as residents become more isolated. Opinion differed as to why this was the case — some believed that it was a result of an increase in absentee owners, while others felt that the lack of neighborhood centers and services and an over-reliance on the automobile were major factors. Because of these con-

cerns, many expressed support for pursuing new and increased funding for affordable housing, e.g. mixed-use projects at a neighborhood scale with the inclusion of a local community center or small businesses such as a coffee shop.

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- We can't build our way out of problems.
- We need to do better for the working middle class.
- Provide a wide variety of housing options for people of all income levels.
- Affordable housing for the middle class, working class and critical workforce.
- Integrate housing into the "Funk Zone."
- Limit the construction of new local housing—no one has the right to live here.
- Balance dense housing with open spaces for family parks, etc.
- Implement rent control.
- Need creative solutions for affordable housing.

our creeks, beaches and ocean, water supply, air quality, open space, natural areas and wildlife, energy use, waste management, pesticides and other toxins, noise, agriculture, and how the City addresses climate change. Overwhelmingly, residents reaffirmed the concept of "Living Within Our Resources," and want to see the City continue to take an active role in reducing its ecological footprint by exploring alternative energy sources, reducing waste and protecting natural resources. According to many, the City needs to encourage and increase efforts in sustainability. In addition, the discussion of parks and recreation often highlighted the importance of green space in the context of public health as well as the overall health of the environment. People believe that Santa Barbarans are informed and engaged in environmental issues, and that the City should serve as a national leader in the area of sustainability.

Environmental concerns ranged from worsening air pollution and water quality to how Santa Barbara will deal with the effects of climate change in the years to come. Creating incentives for businesses and homeowners to reduce waste and energy consumption, including grey water recycling, green building, and alternative energy modes were some of the suggestions made.

Water quality was also a common area of concern. According to many, it is critical for the City to ensure a safe, reliable supply of drinking water, maintain the health of the region's creeks, and upgrade the storm drain system to avoid contamination.



THE ENVIRONMENT

Preserve our natural resources and scenic beauty; incorporate environmentally protective

principles into the framework of the General Plan, making Santa Barbara an environmental leader.

Residents raised a host of issues related to the environment, including the health of



Overall, there was a prevailing sense that the City needs to act in order to preserve Santa Barbara's scenic beauty and natural resources. While many comments focused on issues specific to the City (e.g., creeks, views, etc.), many placed Santa Barbara's environmental concerns within larger regional and global frameworks. Suggestions included urging the City to consider transfer of development to preserve the Gaviota Coast and to address issues of climate change, carbon emissions, and dependence on oil. Water and air quality were frequently mentioned, as was the need to preserve and create open spaces and provide local food sources. Finally, a number of responses specifically mentioned the relationship between environmental issues and public health, stressing the need for consideration of public health concerns in any policy framework.

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- The City does not provide incentives for innovative approaches.
 - We need better education about recycling programs.
 - There is a sense of living surrounded by nature.
 - Be more sustainable; increase participation at all levels.
 - Clean up streams and streambeds.
 - Air quality – address the health impacts.
 - A solar and wind-powered city.
 - Retain the beauty of Santa Barbara.
 - If individuals are required to recycle, why are developers allowed to tear down and create tons of debris?
 - Follow up on pledges of green building and planning.
-



TRANSPORTATION

Avoid increased traffic congestion and increase the availability and attractiveness of walking, bicycling,

and transit; create a transportation system that supports other community values, such as economic vitality, the small-town feel, a wide range of housing options, environmental stewardship, and, an active, healthy community.

Transportation issues are integrally connected to growth and development.

Transportation concerns cover a range of categories, such as congestion, public

transit, parking, accessibility, and bicycle and pedestrian safety. Many people are disturbed by the amount of traffic that currently exists, and worry about future increases. Participants in most of the grassroots meetings believed that a effective, multi-modal transportation network is critical. Residents discussed the difficulty in providing efficient, reliable and frequent public transportation

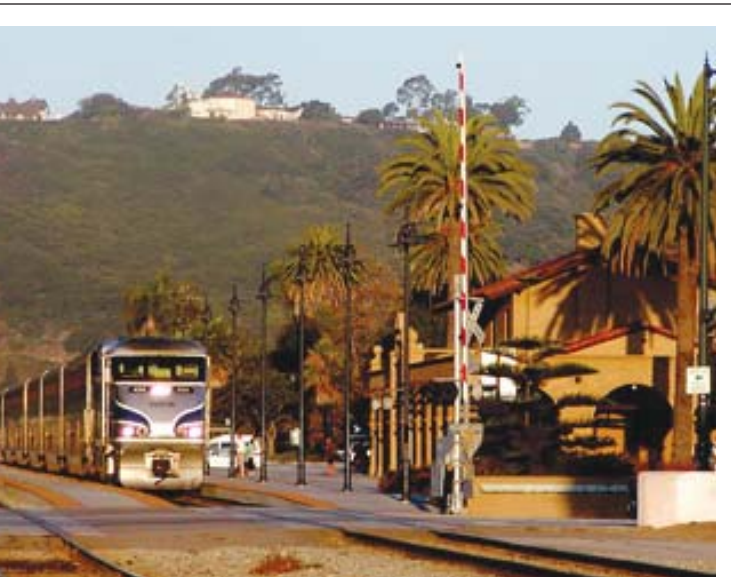
options to all areas of the city. A number of respondents want the City to explore the concept of integrating multi-modal transit to connect different forms of transportation within the local area, in the immediate vicinity, and throughout the region.

Concern about growth also raised the issue

of congestion and parking downtown. Creating safe routes for bicycle and pedestrian traffic was another key concern; a significant number of people advocated for more secure bike paths or lanes and sidewalks throughout the City.

Discussion of housing/neighborhoods often led directly to the topic of transportation. The concerns raised during this topic included congestion, access to public transit, bicycle and pedestrian safety, and parking. Virtually all agreed that a strong transportation network is critical, and that the City needs to explore improved public transit options when considering new development. Opinions differed on how much the City should provide for automobile traffic, with some participants advocating developing policies that discourage use of the car (e.g., closing State Street, constructing transit oriented development with no parking) while others felt that as long as the car remains an essential mode of transit for residents in outlying neighborhoods and communities beyond the City's borders, the City needs to provide the infrastructure to make it easy to get around by car and to park.

Many people advocated for more and better bike paths, investment in commuter rail and multi-modal transit options, and improvement of the local roads. In residential neighborhoods people are concerned that so many people are parking their cars on the streets. In the Downtown area, people are split between increasing parking convenience, and decreasing parking supply to promote use of alternatives.



SAMPLE COMMENTS

- Create better ways to commute.
 - Encourage a light rail system.
 - Alternative transportation—give it more attention and resources.
 - Become more of a walking town.
 - Encourage more commuting by bike.
 - Develop a viable mass transit system.
 - Solve traffic congestion.
 - Focus on repairing streets.
 - We need commuter rail ASAP.
-



SENSE OF COMMUNITY

Our unique community values a small-town feel and intimate scale; reinforces social connectedness; preserves and celebrates economic and cultural diversity; promotes civic engagement; and provides housing and economic opportunities for our children.

The distinct sense of community that people enjoy about Santa Barbara involves qualities such as the diverse and dynamic culture, small-town feel, and connectedness among residents. This sense of community influenced people's opinions on a variety of other issues, from creating affordable housing to increasing the economic diversity in the City to limiting the scale of development projects to preserve the intimate feel

of the built environment. Many participants extolled Santa Barbara's creative, active, artistic and engaged citizenry.

People discussed diversity in two ways. The first related to Santa Barbara's diverse population—by age, income, ethnicity, country of origin, interest and socio-political persuasion—and the positive impact that this diversity has on the quality of life. The second discussion about diversity centered on the immense variety of cultural, recreational, and entertainment options, ranging from outdoor activities such as hiking or sports to high-quality restaurants and nightlife. Cultural offerings include museums and the arts (both fine and performing), educational institutions and adult or continuing education programs, and the myriad events, many of which are free, sponsored by the City and other entities, including Fiesta, Solstice, summer concerts in the park, Nightmoves and First Thursdays. The cultural diversity and wealth of offerings was commonly regarded as something people love about Santa Barbara that contributes to a high quality of life, and that they hope will continue.

These qualities were often brought up in the context of what residents fear may be lost as a result of many factors, including the widening economic gap due to high home values or the increase in population growth. Many people commented on youth and their integration into the social fabric of the community. People clearly value Santa Barbara's distinct character and intimate scale.

“The cultural diversity and wealth of offerings was commonly regarded as something people love about Santa Barbara that contributes to a high quality of life, and that they hope will continue.”

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- Learn from the locals.
- Preserve cultural values.
- Retain its character and people/diversity.
- It's my community—my friends, my family.
- Don't become a playground for the rich.
- Find a way that working families can again live and raise their children here.
- Retain the small-town feeling.
- I love the free festivals and events.
- Santa Barbara has an eclectic mix of things to do and people to meet.
- Life is peaceful.



THE ECONOMY

Economic vitality should support a wide

range of businesses, with particular emphasis on small local establishments; retain and expand the depth of our workforce; better balance economic tourism needs with those of the community; preserve our economic and cultural diversity by implementing innovative housing strategies, and focus on the worker/housing balance.

Economic issues were largely related to the steep rise in housing prices and commercial rents. People fear the high cost of living will have a deleterious effect on the local economy, especially small businesses, as employers struggle to afford expensive leases and recruit and retain a workforce. Many

residents feel that the City's commercial areas are becoming overrun by large chains which are pushing out the small "Mom and Pop" stores that have contributed to the uniqueness of Santa Barbara and its small-town feel. People also expressed the need to develop a diverse economy and not become overly reliant on tourism.

A significant number hope that the City can come up with ways to encourage small businesses and limit the influx of non-local business. Many saw a need to attract and retain workforce through good jobs with appropriate pay (sufficient to live in the area) or provision of affordable housing. The lack of both is affecting local businesses such that there is a fear that Santa Barbara's economic vitality and diversity have been compromised. The overall perception of the loss of a middle class and continued

economic stratification is a major concern that relates to many topics previously addressed, such as housing, transportation and the environment.

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- Small businesses are not surviving because the rents are too high.
- The City needs a jobs/housing balance.
- Allow small businesses to be able to afford to stay here.
- Don't drive all small businesses off of State Street.
- Jobs are leaving town.
- Cost of living is out of control.
- Forgive some tax assessments for teachers, etc.
- More high tech industry, fewer hotels.
- Love the 'Mom & Pop' shops.

PUBLIC FACILITIES, SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE

Public facilities and services need to be further developed to serve the diverse needs of our population now and in the future; and



we need to better understand and address the necessities of our youth and aging residents.

Public services and facilities concerns expressed included creating more youth opportunities, improving water quality, addressing homelessness in the city, providing social services and increasing public safety. How to accomplish this with limited financing and resources was recognized as a challenge. A frequently expressed fear was that those community members who need services the most (e.g., the aged, poor, mentally ill, etc.) will be denied them as non-profit agencies are forced to move out of the City. This challenge was also raised for childcare services.

Regarding public safety, a majority expressed the need for greater police presence and an increased police force with adequate pay. Some suggested establishing community policing and neighborhood watch programs. The discussion of gangs often led to a discussion of how to create more recreational opportunities for youth, such as converting the Armory into a recreation center and developing programs and building community centers for young people to go for safe activities.

People were divided on the issue of the homeless—some felt that the problem needs to be addressed through increased police enforcement, while others feel that greater social services are essential for addressing the issue. Social services in general are suffering due to the high cost of rent, as well as the inability to attract and retain

“The discussion of gangs often led to a discussion of how to create more recreational opportunities for youth...”



social workers in the immediate area. A number of people noted the lack of affordable housing for health care workers. The water issues that were expressed included increasing capacity of the sewage treatment plant and improving the quality of drinking water.

With respect to infrastructure financing, some suggested that new development should contribute towards financing infrastructure needs and to address neighborhood impacts.

Another popular topic was City Government—comments illustrated a range of opinions about the City’s openness, responsiveness, and accessibility; its role in permitting and planning issues; and the transparency of the *Plan Santa Barbara* process itself.

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- What recreational services can we offer youth?
- We need to know our problems, look at options, and identify creative solutions.
- Increase police force with adequate pay.
- Address the gang problem.
- Provide more public town hall meetings to discuss and debate issues.
- City Council doesn’t listen to the concerns of people who live here.

- Planners are knuckling under to developers.
- We have good local schools.
- Treat, instead of incarcerate, the mentally ill and addicts.
- Neighborhoods and City needs to be better prepared for disasters.



HEALTHY COMMUNITY

A healthy, active community with low levels of chronic

disease and obesity is a priority; we need to support accessible medical care, a City infrastructure that promotes an active lifestyle, recreational spaces, places for community gardens, and availability of locally grown foods.

People care about the health of their community—they are aware that transportation, open space, zoning and environmental issues all have a profound influence on public health. While the particular issue of public health was not a major theme on its own, it was often brought up in the context of other issues such as transportation, growth, community design, and the environment.

Many are concerned with how City planning decisions will affect the health of the community, whether in regards to increased

open space or improved local air and water quality. People also believe that urban design needs to encourage and allow increased physical activity including walking, biking and safe routes to school. Others commented that healthy communities centered on health care services and providing adequate care to residents (especially the elderly). Another popular issue was how to create healthy recreational options through increased parks and open spaces.

SAMPLE COMMENTS

- Rising obesity and chronic illness are big issues—we need to encourage and support an active community.
- Support a healthy city.
- Good doctors.
- Support hospitals and child care.
- Keep a healthy focus.
- Ensure convenient access to affordable and healthful food.
- Use vacant land for community gardens.

- Need more focus on youth needs.
- Need one or two more hospitals.

CONCLUSION

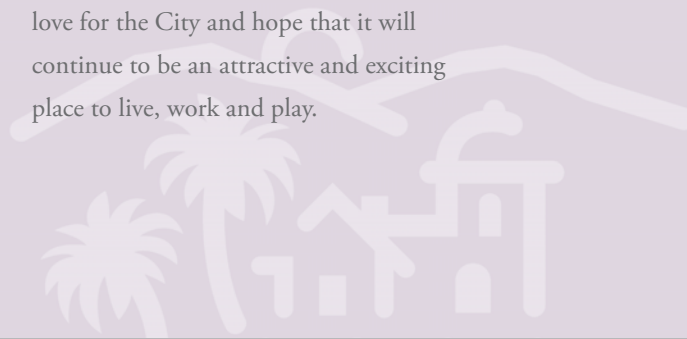
One key result of this outreach process has been increased awareness and appreciation that most of the issues of concern are interconnected and solutions are not simple. Through their engaged discussion of these issues, however, the public reaffirmed the underlying values that are central to their understanding of what it means to live in Santa Barbara. They also demonstrated that they are willing to address the difficult choices they may face should those values come into conflict. With this knowledge, the City can continue on to the second phase of Plan Santa Barbara, developing policy options that are based on a range of opinions expressed in the public outreach phase, and that address the public's primary concerns and hopes for the future.



HOPES FOR SANTA BARBARA'S FUTURE

In the workshops, grassroots meetings and comment cards, participants acknowledged the serious challenges that Santa Barbara faces in the coming years. However, a majority expressed hope that the City can meet these challenges to create a framework that balances growth with preservation, establishes sensible and environmentally sensitive policies, and provides the structure and services to

meet the needs of all who live and work here. Regardless of their differing priorities and fears of what might be lost, virtually everyone expressed a sincere love for the City and hope that it will continue to be an attractive and exciting place to live, work and play.





3 outreach approach

PUBLIC OUTREACH - METHODOLOGY

Due to the open-ended and qualitative character of this initial public outreach, the City did not expect to receive statistically measurable, quantitative results; rather, the goal was to assess the nature of the responses, both in aggregate and within the context of each approach, in order to gain an overall sense of the planning issues of greatest concern to the public.

During the public workshops and grassroots meetings, City staff members did their utmost to record individual comments as precisely as possible, and to fully capture all comments made during each session. Public comments were transcribed, compiled and categorized in source documents that were used to create this summary. The City created a comprehensive listing of all comments submitted through mail in comment forms and via the web. These source files which constitute appendices to this report can be viewed online (www.youplansb.org). A few respondents requested that their comments not be included in any summary report; those requests were honored.

When distilling the abundant amount of data provided, City staff took into consideration the nature of the source material. Without assigning greater value to specific responses, there was an understanding that small grassroots group meetings are quite different from large public workshops, which differ in turn from individual comment cards. The hope was that by providing a range of opportunities for public input, residents would be able to choose the format that was most comfortable for them (be it public workshops, small group meetings, or private comments). It was also assumed that some individuals would take advantage of all outreach methods—attending multiple workshops, participating in grassroots meetings, and submitting comment cards through the mail and via the website.

PLAN SANTA BARBARA BROCHURE AND COMMENT CARDS

A four-page informational brochure was mailed to every household and business (over 36,000) in Santa Barbara in the spring of 2007. The brochure contained an explanation of the *Plan Santa Barbara*

“The hope was that by providing a range of opportunities for public input, residents would be able to choose the format that was most comfortable for them...”

update process, information about upcoming community workshops, and a bilingual comment form that users could fill out and mail back to the City that included the following questions:

- “What do you love about Santa Barbara?”
- “What are your concerns about the future?”
- “What are your hopes for the future?”

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

The City hosted a series of four public workshops during the months of June and July 2007, each located in a different area of the City. At the workshops, participants learned about the *Plan Santa Barbara* update process through an introductory video, a PowerPoint presentation, and then offered feedback through three activities:

1. In the large group, participants answered the question, “What do you love about Santa Barbara?”
2. Participants then met in smaller group breakout sessions to discuss hopes, concerns, and suggestions related to the following topics:
 - *Housing and neighborhoods;*
 - *Transportation;*
 - *The environment;*
 - *The economy;*
 - *Community design;*
 - *Services and facilities.*
3. Members reconvened for a final large group discussion to present “big ideas” for Santa Barbara’s future.

GRASSROOTS MEETINGS

In an effort to actively seek out community input from those who might otherwise not attend a public workshop, Outreach Committee members and City staff attended more than 40 local grassroots meetings with groups representing a wide range of interests to discuss the *Plan Santa Barbara* process and issues. The grassroots outreach included the following types of groups and interests:

- 9 businesses or business related organizations
- 5 general advocacy groups
- 5 youth oriented groups
- 4 environmental organizations
- 4 neighborhood associations
- 3 churches
- 3 health organizations
- 2 transportation-focused groups
- 2 planning groups concerned about growth
- 1 affordable housing group

Given the distinct interests of each participating group, the topics discussed in each meeting differed, guided by the particular agenda of the host group. As a result, the goal of these meetings was not to achieve an overall sense of general public attitude; rather, it was to gain an understanding of the issues and concerns addressed by specific interest groups.

Participants at these meetings ranged from a handful to a few dozen or more, and provided an opportunity for focused dialogue with staff and committee members. In total, almost 700 people participated in these meetings, and brochures and comment cards were distributed at each. The following is a complete list of groups and organizations that contacted the City for meetings.

Allied Neighborhood
 Arts Advisory Committee
 Board of Realtors Government Relations
 Bungalow Haven
 Chamber of Commerce
 Child Care Planning Council
 Christian Science First Church
 Citizens Planning Association
 Coalition for Sustainable Transportation
 Coalition for Community Wellness (Twice)
 Coastal Housing Partnership
 Community Environmental Council
 Cottage Hospital
 Downtown Organization (Twice)
 Downtown Santa Barbara Childcare
 Endowment for Youth
 Faith Baptist Church
 Green Building Alliance
 Green Hills Software
 Independent Living Resources Center
 League of Women Voters
 Legal Aid Foundation
 Nonprofit Support Center
 Pearl Chase Society

Rotoract Club
 Safe Routes to School
 Samarkand
 Santa Barbara Club
 SB Association of Realtors
 SB Beautiful
 SB Bicycle Coalition
 SB Contractors Association
 SB County Action Network
 SB High School Swap Meet
 Second Baptist Church
 Sunrise Rotary Club
 The Sustainability Project
 Vista Del Monte

Summaries for each meeting are available on the *Plan Santa Barbara* website: <http://www.youplansb.org/docs.php>, and in Appendix B to this report.

WEBSITE:

<http://www.youplansb.org>

The City launched the *Plan Santa Barbara* website in the spring of 2007 to provide up-to-date and in some cases “real time” information about the planning process, announce public workshops and other community events, and involve the public in the process. Once registered on the site, all community members receive periodic updates whenever new information is posted to the site, as well as the ability to provide online feedback and participate in occasional user polls. The website has a growing library of documents, including a full copy of the Conditions Trends & Issues Report and videos of all the workshops, as well as the July 18th, 2007 joint work session on Building Heights and Community Design. In addition, all four workshops and the 40 Grassroots meetings have been summarized and uploaded for public review.



CITY COUNCIL'S GOALS

The City Council adopted the following Goals to guide the *Plan Santa Barbara* process:

- Live within our resources by balancing development with available resources and promoting sustainable, pedestrian-scale, transit-oriented development.
- Ensure affordable housing opportunities for all economic levels in the community, while protecting the character of established neighborhoods.
- Provide safe and convenient transportation through improved transit, circulation and parking.
- Ensure a strong economy that provides the revenue base necessary for essential services and community enhancements.
- Advance regional thinking, collaboration and solutions.
- Maintain the unique character and desirability of Santa Barbara as a place to live, work and visit.
- Provide adequate services and facilities.
- Encourage public involvement and participation at all levels of city planning and other government activities.
- Develop explicit environmentally sustainable policies.

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