



S A N T A B A R B A R A F O R A L L

A Vision for a Sustainable Future



Guiding Principles

Diversity

We must establish a community that maintains its diversity – ethnic, racial, occupational, demographic, and economic. We do not wish to be a town of “the newly wed and nearly dead”, nor simply a spa for the wealthy. We need policies and programs that help us maintain our diverse character.

Sustainability

We must strive to attain sustainability – that is, living in a way that allows future generations to live here, too; and “living within our resources” so that we do not contribute to the destruction of the planet's environment.

Jobs and Housing

We must establish a jobs/housing balance to the greatest extent reasonable and possible – that is: to house those who do the economic and civic work of the community within the South Coast region's borders – and not to export our housing needs to adjoining areas.

Livable Communities

We must apply the basic principles of livable communities by balancing Housing, Open Space and Transportation planning in a holistic and integrated manner. We must accommodate the growth that our society requires in a manner that uses our precious land resources wisely and efficiently, making it possible for people to meet their daily needs minimizing the need for an automobile.

Aesthetic Values

We must maintain the aesthetic values that characterize the design, architecture and visual appeal of our community – honoring our history, but always being open and willing to evolve to meet the pressing needs of the future.

Public Participation

We must encourage and insure maximum participation by the public in the political decisions that affect their lives.

A Vision for a Sustainable Santa Barbara



In order to fully participate in the General Plan Update process we have carefully considered some of the critical issues that we believe must be incorporated into the community's blueprint for the future if it is to allow for the establishment of a truly sustainable community.

For a community to be sustainable individuals need to work together for the good of future generations. The three principal aspects of sustainability are:

- protection of the environment
- economic well being
- social equity.

A thriving community balances these three principles and provides for the needs of all of its members – from its least influential to its most influential – and its future generations.

Our General Plan is the blueprint for the establishment of a vision and policies that commit our community to both preserving its uniqueness while allowing for it to evolve and mature as the world evolves. To simply echo past General

Plans, ignoring new global and local circumstances, does not serve our community well.

We live in a magnificent small city, unique in its geography, climate, history and population. Our task is to plan so that future generations can enjoy the quality of life our City provides.

We look to the future, not the past. We imagine a City that is in the forefront of embodying and demonstrating the principles of sustainability, managed growth, and environmental responsibility. In the following pages we present a Vision and a series of Policy Recommendations, which, if included in our updated General Plan, will help us move toward that Vision.



Peak Oil and Santa Barbara's Future

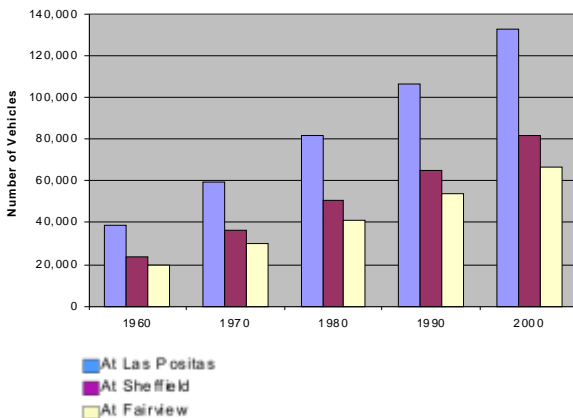


“The world has never faced a problem like [peak oil]. Without massive mitigation at least a decade before [the peak], the problem will be pervasive and long lasting.”

Robert Hirsch, author of the *Hirsch Report*.

1960-2000 Annual Traffic Volume

Source: ECP RIGS 2003



To be a responsible member of the global community, Santa Barbara must assume its share of responsibility for regional, statewide and worldwide environmental and social concerns. There are many good and long-standing reasons for the policies we recommend – such as enhancing the quality of life through more livable communities that allow walking and mixed-use buildings; reducing the impacts of growth on open space; and increasing population density to allow for better mass transit. There are, however, two very strong additional factors that cannot be ignored: the decline of cheap oil (a phenomenon known as “peak oil”) and climate change.

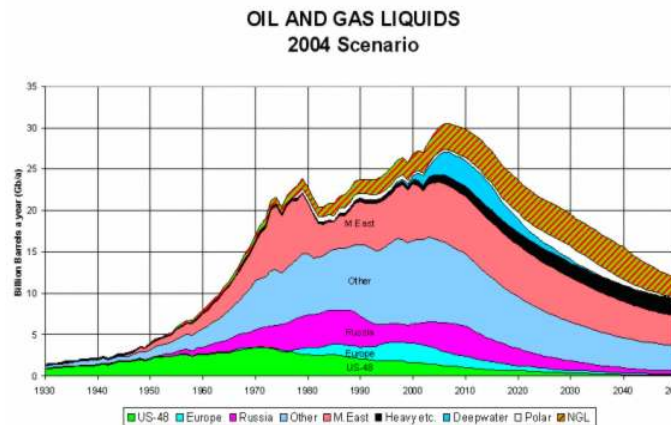
The phrase “peak oil” refers to the high point of global oil production. When this point is reached, oil production declines, because the oil left in the ground becomes less and less cost-effective to

extract. Oil prices climb and shortages will eventually develop. According to the Energy Information Administration, conventional oil production peaked in May, 2005. We don't know if this is an all-time peak, but decreasing production and increasing prices suggests that it might be. The question now is: Can unconventional oil and biofuels come

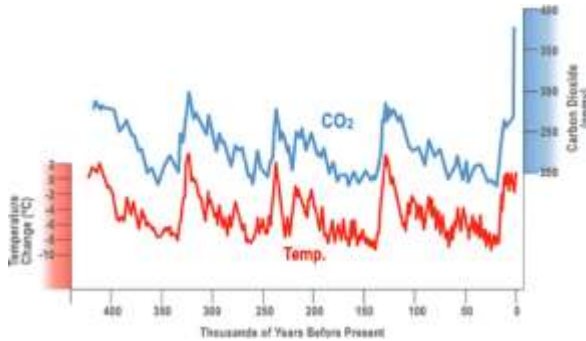
online fast enough to make up for diminishing petroleum production? In any case, the debate is no longer about *if* we will hit a global peak for all oil production, but simply *when*.

The Department of Energy Hirsch Report found that to

mitigate the full impacts of peak oil, the US would have to begin serious planning and start transitioning away from petroleum 20 years *before* the peak. Planning is what we must be about.



Climate Change and Santa Barbara's Future



Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels are far higher now than they have been in the last 650,000 years.

Another consequence of our reliance on fossil fuels has been the growth of greenhouse gases and their effect on climate. While scientists don't always agree on the details, they overwhelmingly agree that we are already witnessing rapid climate change due to human-related greenhouse gas emissions. These included an increase in heat-related illnesses and deaths, increased drought and new areas of drought, and the concomitant ecosystem changes that lead to species extinctions.

HEAT

Heat waves are expected to grow more frequent and more intense – even in cooler coastal climates. Children, the elderly and those who cannot afford to protect themselves will be at the greatest risk for heat stroke and dehydration.

DROUGHT

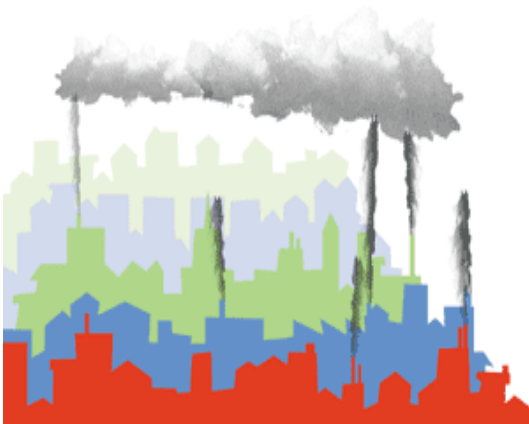
Worldwide, regions suffering from serious drought more than doubled in area from the early 1970s to the early 2000s, with much of the change attributed to global warming. As precipitation falls more frequently as rain than snow, snowpacks will continue to shrink affecting supplies of water for urban and agricultural use.

LOSS OF SPECIES

As climates change, so do ecosystems. As temperatures increase and sea levels rise, we are already witnessing the transformation of entire ecosystems. Scientists are observing that certain species of fish, sea turtles, migratory birds, amphibians, and butterflies are altering their reproductive and migratory patterns or dying off altogether.

OUR FUTURE

Every one of the approximately 25,000 workers who commute into the South Coast each day adds 10 tons of CO₂ to the earth's atmosphere each year, adding to the planet's burden. A “decent respect for the opinions of mankind” requires us to reexamine our urban policies.



Policy Recommendations

We must envision a Santa Barbara that truly incorporates all the preceding principles, and strive to lay out the policies and strategies needed to achieve that vision. We believe that a future for our city should include:

1. Sustainable Growth
2. Reduced Automobile Use
3. Walkable Transit Oriented Community
4. Housing Our Work Force
5. Distinctive Neighborhoods
6. Form Based Zoning Codes



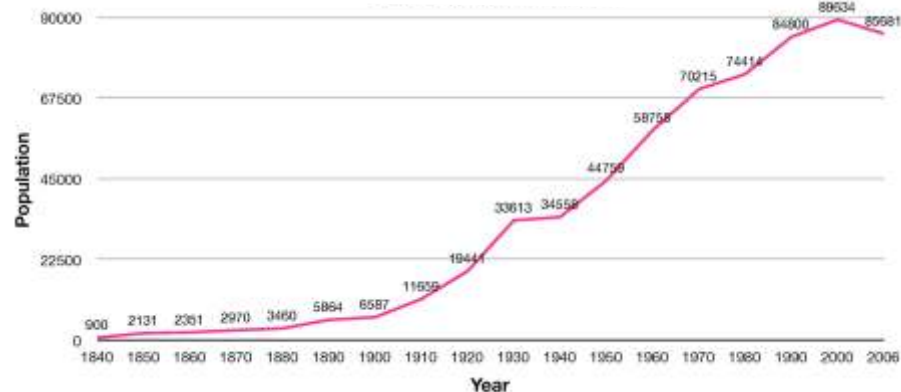
1 Sustainable Growth

Continue to allow for a growth rate of approximately 1% per year.

Our City must evolve as the needs of the community change. In the last decade our population has been declining – those who actually *live* here – but workers who can't afford to live here are commuting in, often from great distances. We are not “living within our resources” if we export our housing needs to other communities.

Our challenge is not simply how much growth will happen, but what kind of growth, for whom? We must define all of the following as Community Benefit land uses:

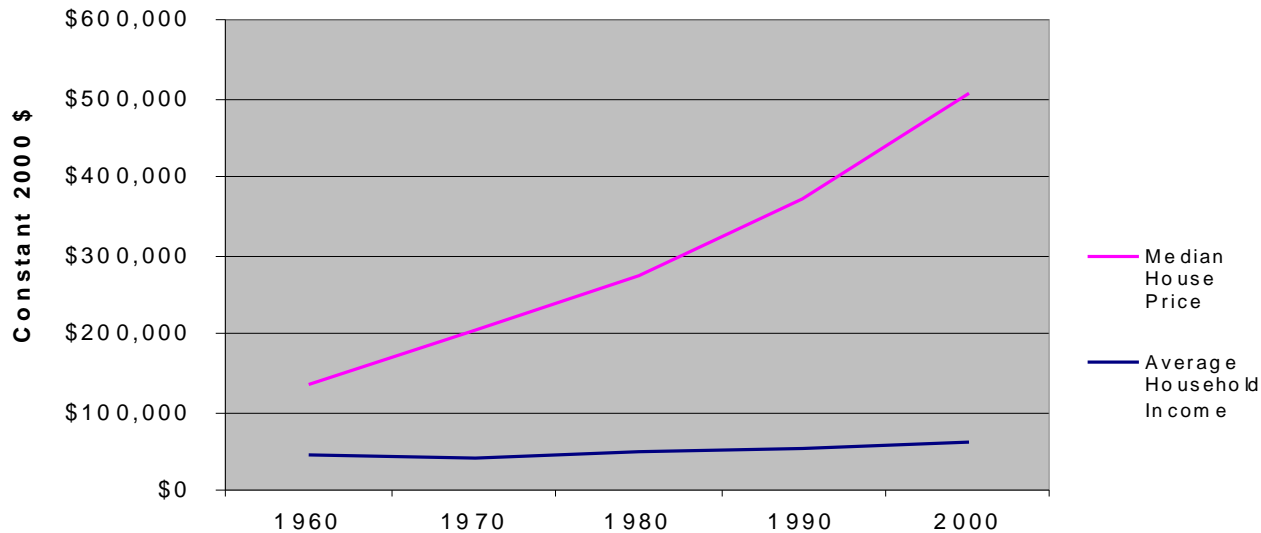
- Housing affordable to low, moderate, middle income or workforce households
- Housing dedicated to critical workforce employees
- Housing for local workers
- Employer provided housing
- Rental housing
- Transitional housing, single resident occupancy, and other housing for special needs populations



Population Growth

Source: Impacts of Growth, 1973; U.S. Census Data

1960 - 2000 House Prices and Household Income

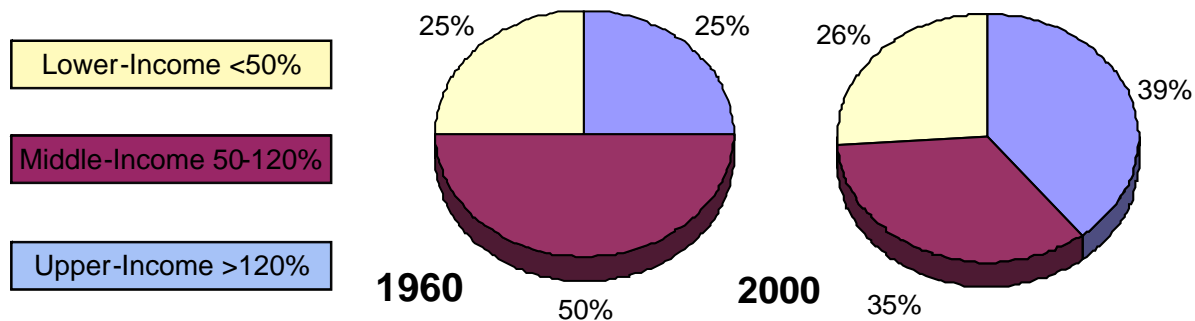


(Source: ECP RIGS, 2003)

While the amount of housing more than doubled from 1960 to 2000, the number of jobs tripled. The median house price more than tripled, and is now about \$1,000,000 in the City. However, average household income rose by only 1/3, and the number of affordable housing units went *down* by almost one-third, to 15 percent of the total. With a median income of about \$58,000 (for a family of four) very, very few households can afford to buy a home in Santa Barbara. Even most homeowners in Santa Barbara could not afford to buy their own homes today.

Social equity is a vital part of our vision of a sustainable community. An increase of wealthy residents – at the expense of many critical workers who must live elsewhere – is not a desirable trend. The community as a whole must find ways to make it possible for folks at ALL economic levels to find a home in Santa Barbara.

1960 & 2000 Income Distribution



(Source: ECP RIGS, 2003)

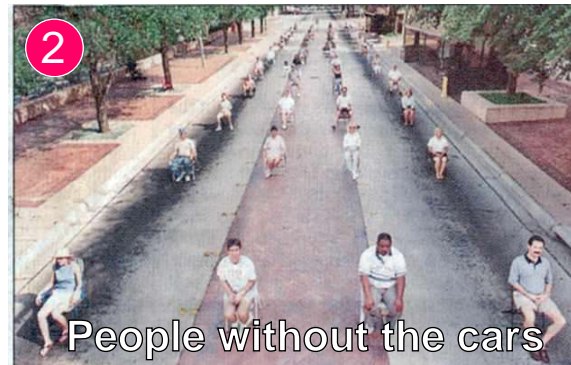
2 Reduced Automobile Dependency

A community where mass transit, biking and walking meet everyday needs, where travel by automobile is primarily for long distances (on vacations or weekends) and where parking needs are met by remote lots, instead of downtown real estate.

We must develop programs that help residents leave their cars at home as much as possible. These might include:

- A city car share program for the Central Business District
- Replacing a majority of the city's fleet of cars by partnering with UCSB's ZipCar car share program, with the goal of expanding the program to the public
- Consider designating car-free zones on portions of State Street, or closing State Street to auto traffic on Sundays and holidays
- Providing various incentives for new developments that provide car-share programs – like requiring the provision of fewer parking spaces
- Revise parking regulations to allow tandem parking where appropriate, allow for the sale (or resale) of a residential unit independent of its parking space, make residential parking spaces optional rather than required in appropriate areas, require one covered space (rather than two) for all residences within the urban core.

As long as we continue to primarily plan for the auto, and devote the majority of our land to its use, we cannot become a sustainable community.



3 Walkable Transit-Oriented Community

No resident living more than one-half mile from a transit stop, a park or recreational area, an elementary school and a basic food store.

A truly sustainable neighborhood in a sustainable city would include:

- A diversity of housing types – rental as well as ownership
- Neighborhood-serving commercial uses – a “corner store”
- Transit, bicycle, pedestrian/wheelchair circulation – bike lanes and well-paved sidewalks
- Access to adequate parks, recreation, trails – pocket parks, tot lots, passive park areas
- Community connectivity to essential services – nearby medical clinics, banks, drugstores, etc.
- Development of community gardens
- Reduced parking footprint – less land given to parking lots and garages, more on-street parking
- Reduced automobile dependence – developing a culture of many local neighborhood uses



The 10 Minute Walk



A pedestrian should have access to all the usual daily and weekly activities of living within 10 minutes walking distance. Such an area has a diameter of about 1,500 feet and covers about 80 acres.

4 Housing Our Workforce

A community that houses nearly all of its workforce, with sufficient housing for moderate-, low- and very-low-income households, and an end to homelessness. Higher densities need not compromise good design.

Jobs have continued to increase in our community while housing production has slowed. As a result, we have exported our housing needs. **WE ARE NOT LIVING WITHIN OUR RESOURCES.**

We must develop density standards that allow for greater density (than allowed by current zoning) for projects that provide a greater percentage of resale-restricted ownership units than is required by current ordinances. These are the projects that truly provide housing that is affordable to our workforce. We should establish and maintain minimum density standards for all new development and redevelopment. In addition, we should develop variable density standards to allow for greater density for rental units and encourage the production of rental housing by providing incentives such as preferential processing, fee waivers or deferrals, and specific zoning overlays.



Casa Voluntario: (Density: 18 unit/acre)
Low-income housing on the East Side



El Carrillo (Density: 122 units/acre)
Housing the homeless



Paseo Chapala (Density: 35 units/acre)
One of the 28% of units in this project that are affordable.



Casa de Las Fuentes (Density: 57 units/acre)
Affordable housing for downtown workers



Cottage Workforce Housing
(Density: 19 units/acre)
Employee housing for Cottage Hospital on the Upper East Side



5 Distinctive Neighborhoods

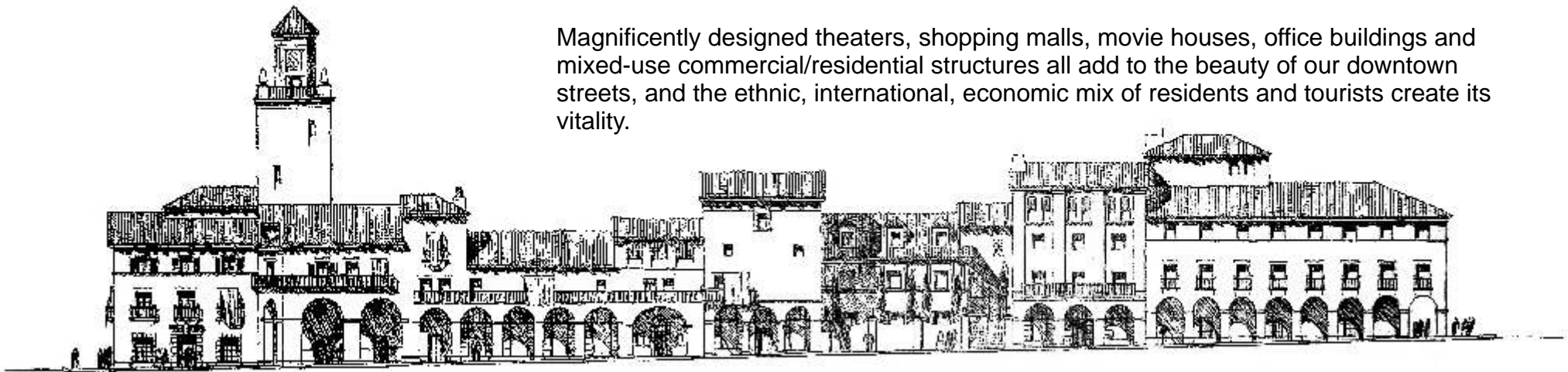
Recognition of unique neighborhood needs and interests and the shaping of distinctive policies for each area. The following pages present ideas and examples for the future in three neighborhoods.

Downtown

A livable, walkable, vibrant downtown community is basic to the character of our City. Although we are fewer than 100,000 souls, we have a cultural richness unmatched by cities two and three times our size. Maintaining that vitality – a balance for downtown workers, tourists, shoppers, and those who choose to live downtown – can be achieved by redeveloping our underutilized streets (like Chapala), re-thinking the presence of the automobile, redesigning our urban landscape to accommodate mass transit, bikers and walkers, and preserving our urban forests and open spaces.

Existing height limits (60 ft. in the downtown area) have adequately served the needs of the community for many years. That limit has allowed our caring community to maintain our city's character and protect both its vitality and charm. Existing policies and ordinances should be strengthened and expanded to require findings for non-residential or mixed-use projects to promote appealing and comfortable pedestrian street environments

Magnificently designed theaters, shopping malls, movie houses, office buildings and mixed-use commercial/residential structures all add to the beauty of our downtown streets, and the ethnic, international, economic mix of residents and tourists create its vitality.



Allied Architects post earthquake vision for downtown Santa Barbara, 1925

5 Distinctive Neighborhoods - continued

Downtown



Chapala One - Mixed Use

Downtown presents an opportunity for redevelopment of underutilized sub-standard buildings.

New developments provide a mix of housing and commercial uses including significant numbers of affordable units.

Elimination of street parking, wider sidewalks and additional landscaping should be considered for the future.



Lobero Building



State Street near Carrillo



Paseo Chapala - Mixed Use



Arlington Theater



La Arcada Court



Pedestrians on State Street

Goals

- Create a compact development within an easy walk of public transit and with sufficient density to support ridership.
- Make the pedestrian the focus of the development strategy without excluding the automobile.
- Create active places and livable communities that service daily needs and where people feel a sense of belonging and ownership.
- Include engaging, high quality civic spaces (e.g. small parks or plazas) as organizing features and gathering places for the neighborhood.
- Encourage a variety of housing types near transit facilities available to a wide range of ages and incomes.
- Incorporate retail into the development where it is a viable use at the location.
- Ensure compatibility and connectivity with surrounding neighborhoods.
- Introduce creative parking strategies that integrate into the community and reduce the sense of

Upper State Street

Establishment of an Upper State Street parking District could allow the future development of shared parking structures as a way of assuring adequate off-street parking for area employees and customers. In addition, La Cumbre Plaza provides an excellent site for the development of mixed-use housing and recreational facilities in coordination and/or partnership with affordable housing developers.

Today

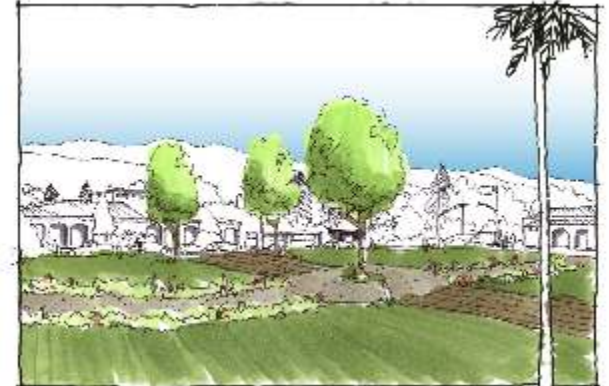


La Cumbre Plaza Parking Lot



State Street near Calle Laureles

Future?



La Cumbre Plaza Park Over Parking



Upper State Street

5 Distinctive Neighborhoods - Continued

Mesa

Each neighborhood has a distinct character and we encourage the creation of neighborhood plans which reflect that. A model for innovative neighborhood planning has been initiated by a Mesa group of architects and residents. We present some of their ideas.

MESA NEIGHBORHOOD COMMUNITY ASSETS

- Housing Variety
- Parks & Open Space
- Shops & Offices
- Schools
- Community Buildings
- Transportation/Mobility

PLANNING FOR THE MESA:

Source:

“From Good to Great”

Jim Bell, John Kelley, Jeff King, Tom Morrison, Dennis Thompson, David Van Hoy

The Mesa neighborhood is a vital and thriving part of our city. We believe it can be made even better, while preserving its unique character. Here are some ideas to benefit all of us by making the Mesa a more self-sufficient, sustainable “village” within Santa Barbara.

PLANNING PRINCIPLES & GOALS

- **Community** - Identify common interests for our mutual benefit
- **Self-Sufficiency** - Promote local culture and business to strengthen our neighborhood
- **Sustainability** - Increase opportunities for healthy, low-impact lifestyles and neighborhoods to secure our future



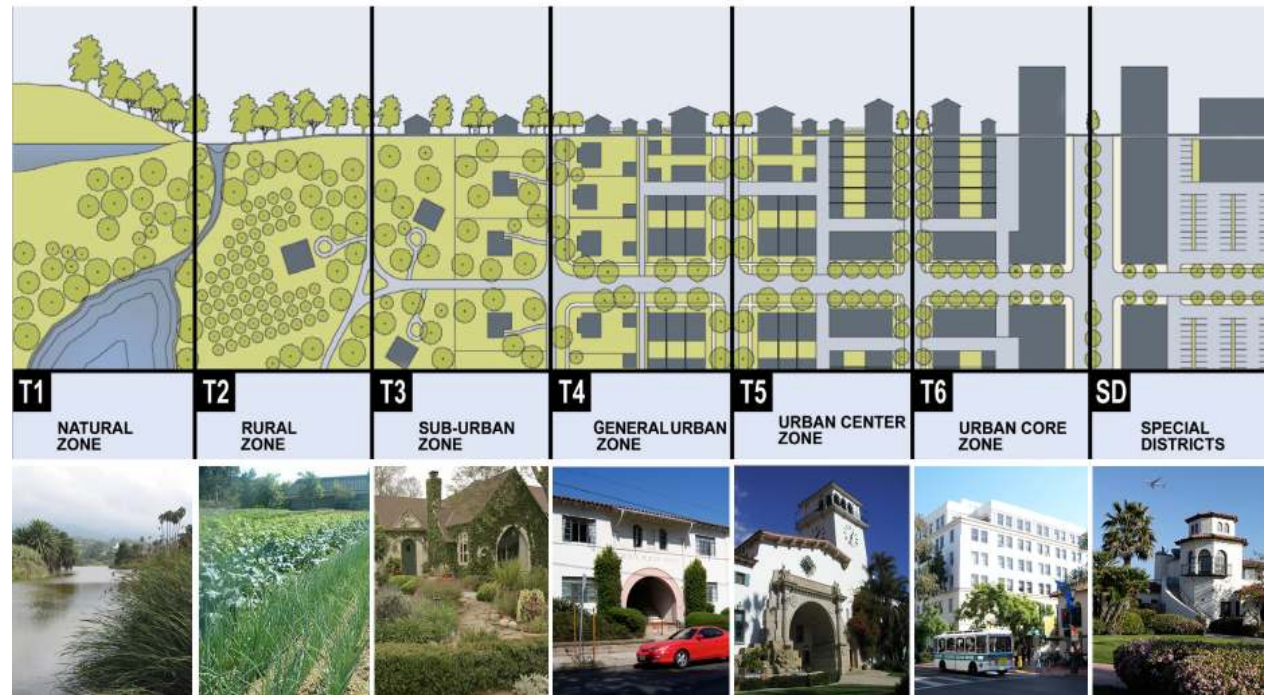
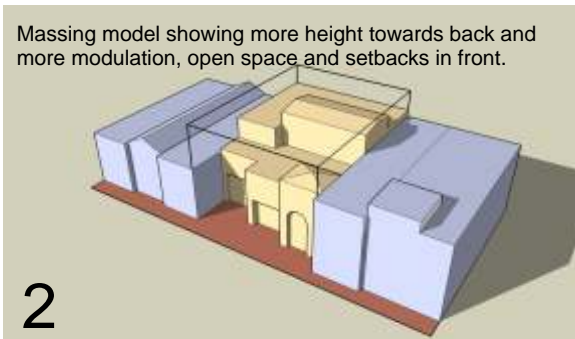
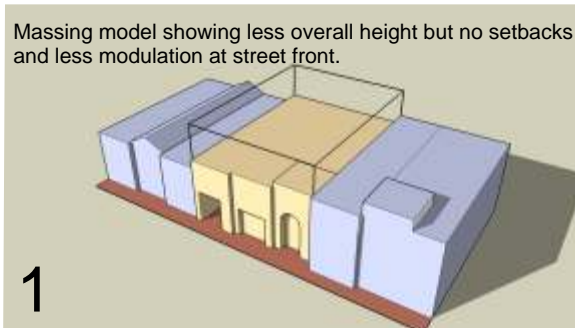


La Arcada Building on Figueroa Street

6 Form-Based Zoning A Better Way of Zoning and Building

Form-based codes have become an increasingly popular approach to achieve reforms of zoning codes and create communities where people want to live, work and play. Since the dawn of zoning, conventional codes were built around the concept of separating uses.

They seldom allow uses from a different category (retail, single-family, multi-family, office, etc.) within the same zoning district. Form-based codes, by contrast, assume a mix of uses, especially in neighborhood or town centers.



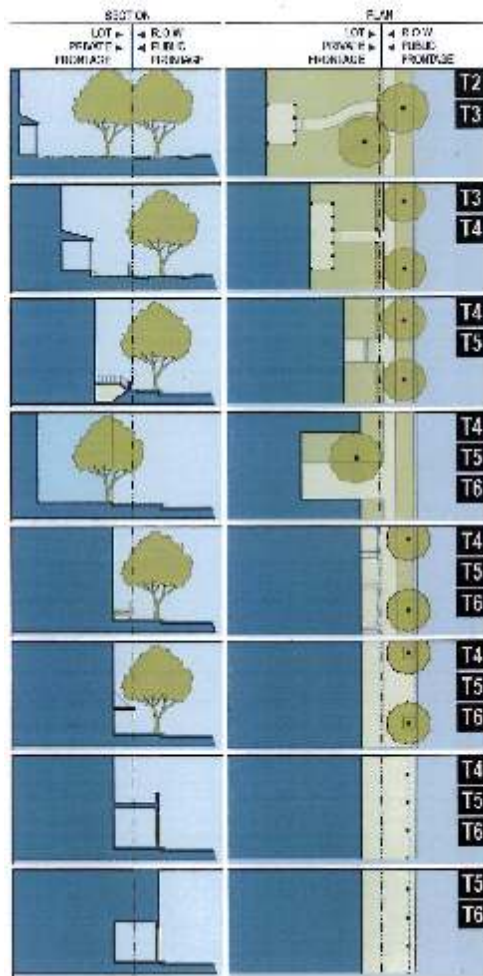
Building mass can be modulated to provide more open space for landscaping and plazas at street frontage in exchange for greater height toward the back of the site. A variety of roof heights creates a sense of scale making the street scape more attractive.

Typical Transect Diagram:

Seeing development and zoning codes as part of a land use continuum – an urban/rural “transect” or cross-section – helps us better understand where different uses and building types belong, and where they might be inappropriate.

6 Form-Based Zoning - continued

Frontage Diagram



Form-based codes place a primary emphasis on building type, dimensions, parking location and façade features, and less emphasis on uses. They stress the appearance of the streetscape, or public realm, over long lists of different use types. Greater attention is given to streetscape and the design of the public realm, and the role of individual buildings in shaping the public realm. Form-based codes recognize how critical these public spaces are to defining and creating a “place.”

The old adage “form follows function” describes the common approach behind land use regulation as it has been practiced in the past. Form-based codes turn that relationship on its head. Since the primary basis for regulation is the building, not the use, “function follows form.” Of course, some controls on the use of buildings will still be required, but these codes concentrate first on the visual aspect of development: building height and bulk, façade treatments, the location of parking, and the relationship of the buildings to the street and to one another. Simply put, form-based codes emphasize the appearance and qualities of the public realm, the places created by buildings. These codes have been

applied in new growth areas, in existing neighborhoods, in limited situations to special districts, and in wholesale code revisions for entire communities.

A design-focused public participation process is essential to assure thorough discussion of land use issues as the code is created. This helps reduce conflict, misunderstanding and the need for hearings as individual projects are reviewed. If the proposed project meets all of the code's requirements, the application can be approved administratively. Obviously, this reduces time, expense and uncertainty for the developer, but it also reduces processing and hearing costs for the jurisdiction involved. This can free up staff time for more proactive planning.

We look forward to a community process to create these new building codes. We believe that those who fear change and are not enamored of larger buildings will see that Santa Barbara's unique character can be maintained – indeed, strengthened – as we, as a community, develop new ways of planning our sustainable future.

Summary

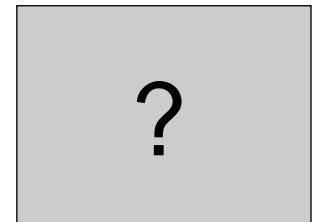
"I think this is the most exciting time to be alive in all of human history. This is the moment. In the following months and years, we are going to have to make some big decisions. Because if we make the right decisions, or if we fail to make the decisions, it's going to determine the fate, not only of all human kind, but of countless species of plants and animals.

"This is the defining moment when we will decide whether or not we're going to be a spectacular flash in the pan failure, or whether we can step up to the plate and show that we are capable of finding humility, compassion, patience and wisdom to truly find a sustainable path."

Severn Suzuki, environmental activist and daughter of Dr. David Suzuki, environmentalist and host of the popular science show "The Nature of Things"

As we move toward an uncertain future bringing many new challenges, one thing is certain: **CHANGE IS INEVITABLE**. Our community will continue to be affected by the changes in our region, in the state, and in the world. Our General Plan must include the kind of flexibility needed to adapt to these forces of change.

We are faced with diminishing fossil fuel, water and food resources and the ongoing effects of global warming. By defining a reasonable amount of growth for our community and ensuring that this growth occurs in a sustainable fashion, we can successfully adapt and evolve. By creating a sustainable, fossil-free, self-sufficient Santa Barbara, we can serve our present needs and those of future generations.



Timeline – from the Past to the Future

Supporting Organizations

American Institute of Architects - Santa Barbara Chapter
American Planning Association, Santa Barbara Chapter
Coastal Housing Coalition
Community Environmental Council
Habitat for Humanity Santa Barbara Chamber of Commerce
Santa Barbara County Action Network
Sierra Club, Los Padres Chapter
The Sustainability Project
US Green Building Council, Central Coast



Santa Barbara for All

Santa Barbara for All is a coalition of engaged citizens with a passionate concern for the future of Santa Barbara. We believe the city must take into consideration a wide range of issues affecting our community, including the possibility that the future may bring challenges that will require change in the way we live.

Mickey Flacks
Alex Pujo
Co-chairs

Steve Amerikaner
Joe Andrulaitis
Bruce Bartlett
Gordon Brewer
Debbie Cox Bultan
Brian Cearnal
Dave Davis
Suzanne Elledge
Jay Higgins
Michael Holliday
Scott Hopkins
Detlev Peikert
Krista Pleiser
Lisa Plowman
Steve Yates
Jim Youngson



