

Workshop

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Sarah Mayer *Public Comment - Future Housing Communities*

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**From:** Linda Honikman <linda.honikman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 18, 2024 3:06 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** written comments from Future Housing Communities - Upzone Workshop  
**Attachments:** County upzone overview - Future Housing Communities, March 19.docx

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Please distribute the attached letter to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commissioners.

**Note that I will be submitting a second letter** specific to the Hollister/San Marcos neighborhood later this afternoon.

Thank you

Linda Honikman  
Future Housing Communities

March 19, 2024

To: Santa Barbara County Supervisors, Planning Commissioners and Developer Workshop Participants

**Re: Review of County Upzones for South County: Affordability and Livability**

I am an affordable housing advocate, co-founder of a non-profit Future Housing Communities and County resident. This is the first of two letters I am submitting today. The second will share concerns specific to my Hollister/San Marcos neighborhood which could have major impacts to livability from high density development without the affordability we urgently need.

I offer the following updates to previous comments I have made to the BOS this year.

**VISION NEEDED for 2031 COUNTY**

In January I asked the Supervisors to imagine a future where the County has earned a national reputation for reversing our housing crisis and being an innovator in the areas of

- Zoning and planning that encourage pro-people and pro-environment neighborhoods
- Housing design and manufacturing that improve affordability and sustainability while generating revenue from property tax and/or housing related businesses, especially in the North County where many jobs could be created.
- Jobs/housing balance that provide more quality time for workers and contributions to our local economy
- New housing security programs that give opportunity for renters to become homeowners
- Community investments and funding campaigns that help all the above.

**This is the month when the doors for making progress in those areas will begin to open or close.**

Since January we have had a few setbacks and encouragements to the "Next Steps" specific to the South Coast -

Setbacks -

1. We now know that some sites owned by schools or faith communities need to prioritize funds from a lease/sale for their own new church temple (for St. Athanasius) or school (for Montessori) and we must respect their right to do that. There are only two owners on the upzone and larger pending project lists that offer high percent of affordable units (St. Vincents and the County).
2. The Tatum property is proposing even more units in an area that is already packed with high density builder's remedy projects that appear to be focused on maximizing profit rather than responding to long term community needs. Bailard may have a similar issue but I am less familiar with the area.
3. Since we are getting thousands of market rate units planned for, beyond what the State mandated, how can we mitigate the threats to livability that are likely to occur? We should be able to accommodate the families that can't afford La Cumbre or downtown and need cars. But the current parking guidelines most new plans are using - 1.3 spaces per car - is not realistic.

## Encouragements -

4. All Supervisors seem to be listening to the needs of everyone. We are very happy to hear about the exploration of **more County owned sites** that could be used for **workforce housing**. This effort will help create the **Vision for future County Neighborhoods** mentioned above and formalize the commitment to improve housing security for local residents and workers.
5. Some privately owned sites like **Giorgi, Glen Annie and Caird** have listened to what the community wants and appear to be responding with for-purchase options, housing for moderate income households, units appropriate for families like townhomes and larger rentals, units appropriate for seniors with elevators, recreational amenities, and building relationships with employer partners and help for first time buyers through the **Chamber** program.
6. We are happy to hear that the **County's Housing Authority** will be providing units for both seniors and the missing middle for their **San Marcos parcel 2** development.
7. We are happy to hear that **Glen Annie** is exploring partnerships with both **County Housing Authority** and **Habitat for Humanity** and that **Caird** will be working with **People's Self Help**.

## New Concerns and Questions for this week -

8. When the dust settles are we likely to get enough affordable housing for our LOCAL low to moderate income workforce or do we need to have additional programs in place to prevent use for second homes, etc.
9. How can we ensure that Goleta Water will not stop allowing new water permits when we get past the 4100 units planned in the County HEU? How can we ensure that affordable units are prioritized (at least to equal the RHNA numbers) as they are directed to do by the State?
10. For **LIVABILITY** - Can we reduce some of the high densities (from 30/40 to 20 units/acre) in existing neighborhoods that will be most impacted (like San Marcos parcel 1 and Montessori)? We know they are entitled to high density but we are not obligated to upzone to the maximum density, especially with parking of only 1.3 spaces per unit.
11. **Threat of sale to out of town investor** - Now that we have examples of profit driven companies - like Core Spaces and the LA couple who have builder's remedy app for what looks like a 7 story jail next to the Mission - we know really bad things can happen when owners/developers are not invested in this community. We may need to consider purchasing a few properties in this category with help from community investors and organizations that can use a Community Land Trust to protect community benefit of future development.

Thank you!

Linda Honikman, Future Housing Communities Co-Founder and 93111 resident

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