

Sheila de la Guerra

# Public Comment



**From:** Linda Honikman <linda.honikman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 4, 2023 5:04 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Subject:** comments for item 3 on BOS Agenda, Dec. 5 - County HEU  
**Attachments:** Comments for item 3, BOS Dec. 5, County HEU.pdf

**Caution:** This email originated from a source outside of the County of Santa Barbara. Do not click links or open attachments unless you verify the sender and know the content is safe.

Please distribute the attached to the County Supervisors.

Thank you

Lina Honikman

To: Board of Supervisors, Santa Barbara County  
From: Linda Honikman

for December 5, 2023 Comments

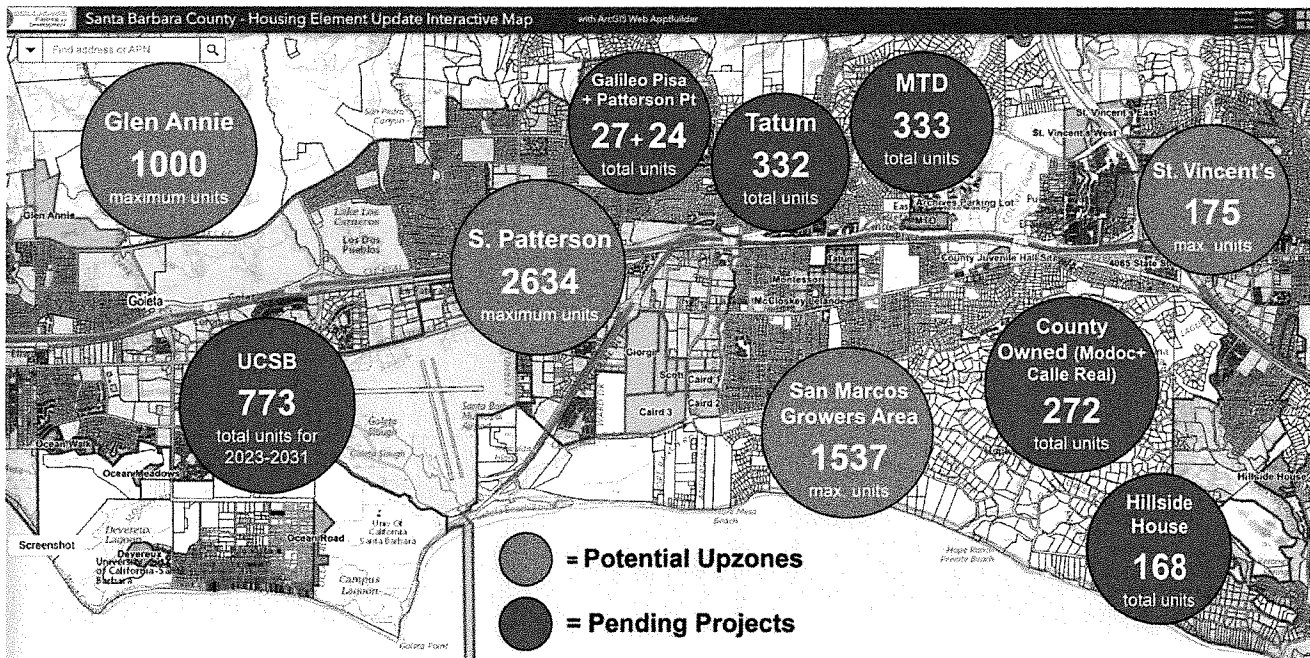
### Santa Barbara County HEU - A Focus on Opportunities

I am a resident of the 93111 zip code. I have been an advocate for affordable housing and sustainable, supportive neighborhoods since 2017 when 3 friends were evicted through no fault of their own and could not find replacement properties.

I am in full support of adopting all of our Housing Elements throughout the County as soon as possible. For the County's version there are tweaks that could make the difference between a "Win/Win" or a "Lose/Lose" for the entire South Coast, beginning with the selection of sites to upzone. Ideally we need to inject some FLEXIBILITY into our housing plan future in order to have a chance to take advantage of many opportunities that would require additional fundraising that has not occurred yet..

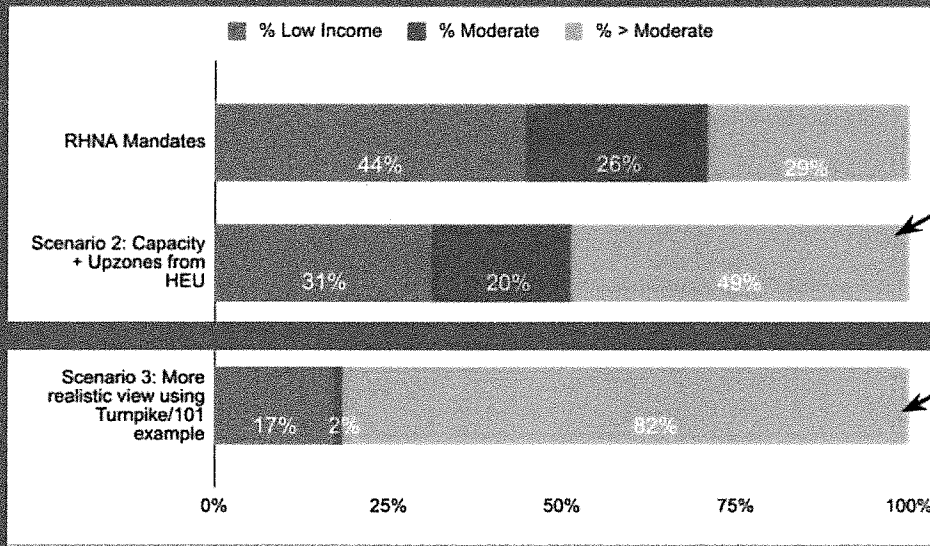
### Assumptions and State Law Hurdles

- The sooner we get our housing elements adopted across the County, the better.
- The original reasons for state legislators to push for rental housing production in 2016-2017 was sound.
- In more recent years the state laws have been a mixed bag - some helpful like those that make it easier for faith communities, school districts and colleges to build on land they own to serve housing needs of their employees but others like SB9 just make the land more expensive and future housing less affordable.



**The Bad News** - The County is supposed to produce roughly 4100 units in the unincorporated South County (and identify space for 4500). Because of state laws and our poor record of producing affordable housing consistently, developers and out of town investors are taking advantage of density bonuses for a **massive number of small market rate rentals**. Unless we agree to some major policy shifts, I believe we will end up with at least 7000 units and will likely fall significantly short of our RHNA numbers for the low and moderate incomes.

## Affordability Potential for Current Capacity + Upzones



Scenario 2: for Unincorporated South Coast using original County HEU assumptions for potential upzones

Vs.

Scenario 3: More Realistic view of Potential Affordability using Turnpike / 101 / Hollister Example. Even if the remaining 2 parcels are upzoned with 50% low, 25% moderate income units then total would increase to 25% low and 7% moderate.

Based on SB County Housing Element Update - Sept. 14, 2023 and actual plans for Turnpike Area

## Evaluating Parcels to Upzone

Since being concerned about the 3 evictions in 2017 I have continued to hear stories and observe essential community members leaving the area. I made a list recently and came up with 80 stories of households with 110 individuals who had housing security problems. They are all ages, a few are still unhoused, a few are disabled and a few had above moderate incomes and lost houses in the fire or mudslides. All but one were renters, some left to become homeowners and some left due to lack of diversity. So when we are evaluating large parcels to upzone (after we have selected the obvious ones like the faith communities and County owned and employer owned with a non-profit partner) my first question is -

1. **Could a new neighborhood at that location better serve the needs of the folks that have been leaving the area and a variety of family types in the future?** Sadly when I look at possibilities for the larger parcel at San Marcos Growers which expects to have almost 800 SMALL rentals for ABOVE MODERATE INCOMES the answer is 'no'. [See above graphic that predicts a range of only 2% to 7% for the moderate income units with no more upzones for the area and 17% to 25% for the lower income if remaining two parcels follow the 50%/25%/25% for low/moderate/above moderate income group guidelines.] Note that I realize we can't consider whether to upzone San Marcos Growers or not since they are allowed due to "builder's remedy".

If the situation is similar to today, the only future residents I can imagine living there would be wealthy students, work from home singles or couples and second home visitors. About 20% of my sample list (folks needing supportive services such as frail seniors, low income seniors, the unhoused, low income single parent with children, people with disabilities) could possibly benefit from the 200 units for low income households planned for the smaller San Marcos Growers parcel. But that doesn't solve the problem of LOW and MODERATE WORKFORCE who are a new version of "the Missing Middle". Another group that may not be served at San Marcos Growers are above moderate income families with more than 1 child. If there were for purchase options that might make more sense for the Above Moderate Income people who want to make Santa Barbara their full time home.

**2. Does the owner/developer have a vision for the new neighborhood and commitment/ability to get community input on a Neighborhood Plan?**

The challenges that the Master Committee for State Street have had to deal with are numerous but it is clear that it is not a great place for families who need constant use of cars. I thought that La Cumbre would be the perfect place to center families but that doesn't seem to be happening either. So I am still waiting for some visioning that would accommodate families and missing middle as above. If the owner/developer teams can share their plan with the community before upzone votes are taken that would give us the best outcome I believe.

**The Good News - Many, Many Opportunities**

We have a lot of **opportunities** to make positive changes coming from an increase in interest by elected officials and the recent report from the Santa Barbara Foundation with \$10 million to jump start a coalition building process and I assume paid staff. This is a brainstorming list but a number of community members have expressed an interest in exploring innovative housing models (which in some cases would need part or all of an upzoned property).

**Housing for Special Groups**

- School employee housing from all 4 South County Districts (so far plans call for lower incomes only, would like to add help for first time buyers or limited equity cooperatives for townhomes, duplexes).
- Workforce housing for variety of incomes with deed restrictions to limit to LOCALs (City, County, Goleta Hospital)
- "Culture House" that could be several single family properties or a building on State Street that benefits non-profits with business/donor support - could include community meeting space, work space, sales space, staff housing, guest apartments, etc
- "Creatives Live/Work Studios" or "Makers House" several single family properties or a multi-family building - could be modeled on successful Ventura program for very low and low income and/or El Zoco that allowed a single mom to purchase a townhome and stay and work in Santa Barbara a number of years ago.
- "Nature House" downtown or on new upzone sites, similar to above with environmental theme or special zoning that combines Housing with environmental assets such as "Eco-village", organic farm, permaculture, community gardens, food forests

**Programs/Events to Help Fund**

- Exploration of Innovative models and grants for neighborhood design/planning ("Happy City", "Blue Zones", etc)
- Innovative Housing Zones that combine design, testing, manufacturing for inexpensive and sustainable housing, potential tourist and education tie-ins
- Research and community education about cohousing, coliving, cooperatives and community land trusts
- Research, recruitment of business partners about multi-family building production financing for low to moderate income units (rentals and condos): community benefit portfolios, Real Estate Investment Cooperatives, Affordable Housing Trust Funds setup to collect funds from future Housing Bonds, etc
- Research, recruitment of business partners and community education about individual house purchase, lease to own, etc.

**How do we minimize the potential problems and maximize the opportunities? Time is of the essence. Once the upzones have been selected our fate will be sealed to a certain extent.**

Thank you SB Foundation. They really listened to many people from the County and have a good starting point for us.