

Sheila de la Guerra

Public Comment



From: Cassandra Ensberg <cassejd@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, May 4, 2026 4:30 PM
To: sbcob
Cc: Jesús Armas; Lucille Boss; Joan Hartmann; Roy Lee; lauracapps@countyofsb.org; bobnelson@countyofsb.org; Stevelavagnino@countyofsb.org
Subject: Letter for distribution to Board of Supervisors for May 5th Hearing
Attachments: BOS Letter Re Housing Proposed at 117 E Carrillo St.pdf

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Greetings,
 To all the Supervisors directly and to staff - please also ensure distribution of the attached letter to all the Board of Supervisors for May 5th Hearing tomorrow,
 Item # 5 presentation and discussion of proposed Housing ad 117 East Carrillo Street
 Thank you,

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Working to serve the community through volunteerism and by promoting collaboration in development that includes Local Art & History, the Natural World, & Santa Barbara Style Poetic Beauty in our Built Environment!

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May 4, 2026

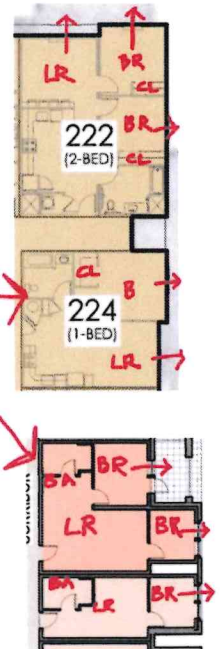
**RE: Proposed Conceptual Design - Affordable Housing at 117 East Carrillo St.
BOS Hearing May 5, 2026, ITEM # 5**

Honorable Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors, County Staff & Planners,

Thank you to you and the applicants for the considerable and important work to study concepts for affordable housing at 117 E Carrillo - the location of the former Probation Department. It is very exciting and I fully support affordable housing at this location!

I have just seen these proposals (listed #1 through #5) with little time to fully understand and offer comments for tomorrow's hearing. With that in mind, **I find the work by all the teams to be impressive and have the following few (not all) of my comments for your consideration:**

1. All proposals are **styled with community expectations** for downtown Santa Barbara.
2. I am aware that any **Design Review will be a choice not a requirement**. I urge the county to recognize the value of design review as the collaborative process for community input to gain support essential for the success of a project in this location and of this size, bulk, and scale. **Design review can also help to identify and work out aesthetic simplifications.**
3. As an architect, I understand clearly that the **primary goal is the maximum number of affordable units (and necessary parking) for the best efficiency and value.**
4. **At this time, I believe the answer as to which approach is best is not clear.** The design and costs are preliminary and the differences between these 5 concepts is very close. **I understand the evaluation point system resulted in only a 4-point differential out of 100 for the top 3. Basically, a tie.**
5. #1 and #2 provided plan layout detail with room walls. I would like to see that information from #3, #4, #5
6. **#2 plans are superior with windows providing natural air and light in Living / Kitchen AND Bedroom areas, standard Closets** which, I believe, are required.
See #2 Plan Screen Shot
7. **#1 plan shows windows in Bedrooms only and no built-in closets.** The rendered 3D illustration seems to indicate furniture as closet storage which could add cost to the resident. Please recheck the code requirement for both light and closets.
See #1 Plan Screen Shot
8. **I believe #3, #4, #5 have aspects worthy of further analysis** at this time.
9. **#2, #3 # 5 are 4 stories which is an important consideration for overall neighborhood compatibility and reduced design and construction complexity (grading, storm water, and other potential structural and site issues).**

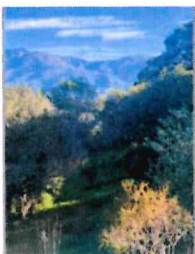


In summary

We know that sometimes **we can ultimately go faster if we spend a bit more time up front**. I believe this is the case (pretty much always) and particularly for this huge effort.

With that, I will end by expressing thanks and support and to say: **I believe it is premature to know which of the proposed concepts best meet the many issues and I urge the Supervisors to direct the process to "keep the door open" and continue to study #1, #2, and #3 – if not all 5 – if the applicants are willing.**

Thank you for considering these comments intended to help the discussion and determine the next best steps to move forward for this large scale important affordable housing project in our downtown!



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