

Katherine Douglas

Public Comment

From: Strong Towns Santa Barbara <info@strongtownssb.org>
Sent: Wednesday, May 14, 2025 10:43 AM
To: sbcob
Subject: Public Comment from Strong Towns Santa Barbara
Attachments: 5-20-25 Housing Element.pdf

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Hello.

Attached please find public comment regarding the County's Prohousing Designation.

Thank you!

--Sully Israel

STRONG TOWNS

SANTA BARBARA

May 13, 2025

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
c/o Clerk of the Board (sbcob@countyofsb.org)
123 East Anapamu Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

To: Chair Capps and members of the Board of Supervisors, County of Santa Barbara

Re: May 20 Item #? County's Prohousing Designation

Strong Towns Santa Barbara, a local chapter of the national education and advocacy organization which focuses on best practice urban planning principles, is pleased to support the County's Prohousing Application. We appreciate the huge effort that was required to complete the Housing Element Update and it makes sense to apply for the designation now since additional benefits can come from implementing steps that are already in the current Housing Element Plan.

Strong Towns appreciates the need for local control but for many reasons including natural disasters, inadequate building for UCSB and Covid, and local restrictive policies and actions, we were not able to keep up with housing needs across the South Coast. We understand why the State Senate and Assembly members felt they had to initiate a pro-growth agenda for rentals, but going forward Strong Towns Santa Barbara recommends a more incremental development approach which the new Housing Element Plan allows.

The proposed actions from the application highlighted below can help neighborhoods that have not been upzoned for high density grow more gradually to accommodate future generations. Category 1 also includes support for a variety of units for different family types - a need we identified in our April 7 letter.

Category 1: Favorable Zoning and Land Use

- 1B- Permitting missing middle housing uses (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes) by right in existing low-density, single-family residential zones

- 1E- Increasing allowable density in low-density, single-family residential areas beyond the requirements of state Accessory Dwelling Unit Law
- 1G- Zoning or incentives that are designed to increase affordable housing development in a range of types, including, but not limited to, large family units, Supportive Housing, housing for transition age foster youth

Categories 2 and 3 include valuable actions to reduce time to get housing actually built and to reduce costs for housing and neighborhood planning against a challenging backdrop.

Category 2: Acceleration of Housing Production Timeframes

- 2B- Acceleration of Housing Production through the establishment of streamlined, program-level CEQA analysis and certification of general plans, community plans, specific plans with accompanying EIR)
- 2G- Establishment of consolidated or streamlined permit processes that minimize the levels of review and approval required for projects

Category 3: Reduction of Construction and Development Costs

- 3B- Adoption of policies that ...reduce barriers for property owners to create ADUs/JADUs. Examples include pre-approved ADU/JADU design packages
- 3D- Accelerating innovative housing production through innovative housing types (e.g., manufactured homes, recreational vehicles, park models, community ownership, and other forms of social housing) that reduce development costs
- 3E- Measures that reduce costs for transportation-related infrastructure or programs that encourage active modes of transportation or other alternatives to automobiles

Category 4: Providing Financial Subsidies

- 4B- Establishment of local housing trust funds or collaboration on a regional housing trust fund, which include the Jurisdiction's own funding contributions
- 4D- Provide grants or low-interest loans for ADU/JADU construction affordable to Lower- and Moderate-Income Households
- 4E- A comprehensive program that ... makes publicly owned land available for affordable housing, or for multifamily housing projects with the highest feasible percentage of units affordable to Lower Income Households

As mentioned in our April 7 letter, a Prohousing Designation maximizes our ability to get grants. We are happy to see the following grants listed in the Board letter that are

aligned with the Strong Towns interests of sustainability, transit and active transportation:

- Affordable Housing & Sustainable Communities (AHSC)
- Infill Infrastructure Grant (IIG)
- Transformative Climate Communities
- Solutions for Congested Corridors
- Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP)

This comprehensive Prohousing agenda will help County residents and staff work on mutual priorities. Strong Towns Santa Barbara looks forward to working with you to make Santa Barbara County more resilient, fiscally sound, and people-oriented — one step at a time.

Thank you for your time!

Sullivan Israel, *Local Conversation Leader*

Tristen Miller, *Member*

Kira Pusch, *Member*

Luca D'Agruma, *Member*

Joanna Kaufman, *Member*

Marie Hébert, *Member*

Carolina Frey, *Member*

Douglas Ridley, *Member*

George Nicks, *Member*

Alex Gravenor, *Member*

Candice Leung, *Member*

Gordon Blasco, *Member*

Cameron Morris, *Member*

Yen Seay, *Member*

Dan Ary, *Member*

Gordon Blasco, *Member*

Peter Smith, *Member*

Finnegan Israel, *Member*

John Dagger, *Member*

Tomaso Todosi, *Member*

Nick Storr, *Member*

Malcolm Brabec, *Member*

Ben Parnas, *Member*

John Semancik, *Member*

Melissa Cunningham, *Member*

Emma Meyer, *Member*

Barry Remis *MOVE Santa Barbara County*

Rebecca Vincent, *Member*

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Emma Roeller, *Member*

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Gabe Starkey, *Member*

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Kat Ackerman, *Member*

Ethan Keller, *Member*

Anika Clements, *Member*

Sophia Keane, *Member*

Guthrie Leonard, *Member*

Lily Heidger, *Member*

Ian Baucke, *Member*

Hannah Cohen, *Member*

Kal Kadlec, *Member*

Anita Stahl, *Member*

Michael Adlai Arnold, *Member*

Art Ludwig, *Oasis Design*

Aidan Barcia-Bacon, *Member*

Ian Gamblin, *Member*

Linda Honikman, *Member*

And the other 400+ members of STSB