

Public Comment- Group 1



From: Andy Caldwell
To: Lavagnino, Steve; Nelson, Bob; Hartmann, Joan; Williams, Das; Hart, Gregg; sbcob
Cc: Miyasato, Mona; Robert Eringer
Subject: Public Comment A-5 Plan to Purchase Motel 6 in Santa Maria
Date: Sunday, January 23, 2022 6:43:07 PM
Importance: High

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Chair Hartmann and Members of the Board,

The members of COLAB do not consider solving the problem of homelessness in our county an easy task by any means.

But, in all sincerity and earnestness, we must ask if spending tens of millions of dollars buying or renting hotel rooms is the answer?

With respect to purchasing the Super 8 in Goleta and your intention to buy the Motel 6 on East Main in Santa Maria, there are a lot of questions we would like to have answered.

1. If you have the authority to change the zoning within the boundaries of an incorporated city, is it still the right thing to do in light of:
 - a. The loss of property tax revenue to the city.
 - b. The loss of bed tax to the city.
 - c. The increased cost associated with enhanced security that the county has encountered previously in similar situations that will presumably be dumped on the city's doorstep?

That is, the county buys the property, takes it off the tax rolls, eliminates the bed tax and leaves it up to the city to pay for extra costs incurred by way of lawless activities?

2. What will these people who will live in these converted hotels be doing during the day? Loitering and vagrancy does not tend to go away simply by way of providing a bed.
3. Will there be any rules or regulations pertaining to the residents of these facilities? If they break the law, do they get to stay? If they are a nuisance to the neighborhood, what will your board do to remedy the situation?
4. Have you ever bothered to notify the neighbors and surrounding businesses of these purchases? There is a school (Fesler Jr. High) just one block behind the Motel 6 in Santa Maria. Is this a suitable location for a homeless facility?
5. Will these residents be screened regularly for drugs and alcohol, and will criminal background checks be routinely conducted?
6. We have members of COLAB that own businesses in this area. Their businesses are routinely vandalized. How come the county doesn't set aside money to reimburse

residents and businesses from the impact of the lawlessness of these vagrants?

7. We are waiting for the Santa Ynez Valley and Montecito to help carry the load! When will they get their very own homeless settlement?

These are just a few of our questions and concerns that the public would like answers too.

Sincerely,

Andy Caldwell

From: [Reed](#)
To: [sbccob](#)
Subject: Item A-5 January 25
Date: Monday, January 24, 2022 7:49:55 AM

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.

Dear Chair Hartmann and Supervisors:

I write to express my vigorous opposition to Item A-5 on the Board's January 25 Agenda,

I believe that the Housing Authority's plan to purchase the Motel 6 property at 1007 East Main Street in Santa Maria would have indisputable negative effects on nearby residents, businesses, and their customers. Santa Maria's East Main Street corridor, once the City's proud entrance corridor and principal access point from Highway 101 has in recent years become marred by increasing numbers of homeless, many of whom exhibit obvious manifestations of mental illness and/or drug dependence, who often prey upon local residents, business owners, and community members who attempt to patronize those businesses. In fact, many of those who formerly visited the East Main business community have foregone their former patronage to take their business to other areas less impacted by homeless. Despite repeated action by City, County, and State agencies such as CalTrans, new homeless "settlers" appear as soon as previous ones are encouraged to relocate. Many businesses are repeatedly victimized, along with their customers, by homeless who prove to be aggressive, unkempt, and otherwise hostile toward they and their customers.

I speak to this from personal experience as a lifelong resident of Santa Maria, and of the East Main Street area, in particular. I used to take great pleasure in walking around the area, as have many others, only to be largely discouraged from that pursuit as negative interactions with homeless intruders have increased in frequency, to the point at which many locals are afraid to take the risk of walking in the area.

Now, embedded in the Board's Administrative Agenda, we find Item A-5, which indicates the Housing Authority's plans to acquire a property describes as "1007 Main Street" in Santa Maria, and to convert said property into housing for homeless. **I find it notable that the description fails to indicate either the property's location as either "East" or "West" Main Street, nor does it describe it as the "Motel 6" property. I cannot fail to question why those items were omitted in the property description. It certainly begs the question of if that omission was intended to reduce the likelihood of public opposition. A couple of facts are obvious - these sort of projects generally engender public opposition, and such a project located at the Motel 6 location on East Main Street would certainly engender much more public opposition than a project at 1007 West Main Street. Those facts, of necessity, invite the question, was the vague description specifically intended to thwart the ability of the public to express their anticipated opposition to this project?**

While the Housing Authority's plan to acquire the "1007 Main Street" property is unacceptable on its face, it would likely exacerbate the area's current problems as increasing numbers of homeless would predictably increase their negative effects on the local area by affording them an expanded base of operation in the area. A further concern is the method used by the Housing Authority and the Board, which appears designed to stifle the ability of local residents to render their opinions on the proposed action.

This Item should be suspended until such time as the public, local residents and business owners of Santa Maria, are afforded appropriate time and opportunity to offer their comments and opinions.

I would particularly appeal to Supervisors Lavagnino and Nelson, as the proposed site lies very near the borderline of their Districts on East Main Street, and could have great effect on residents of both.

Roy Reed
Board President
Santa Barbara County Taxpayers Association