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Honorable Planning Commission
City of Santa Barbara
735 Anacapa Street
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA GROWTH MANAGEMENT POLICIES - PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING DECEMBER 6, 2012

The following letter provides comments on the amendments proposed by City staff to Title 28 of the Municipal Code for Implementation of the Nonresidential Growth Management Program. The comments represent input from the stakeholders that participated in the focus groups lead by City staff to review and comment on the proposed modifications.

General Comment

The stakeholders group is generally supportive of the amendments proposed by City staff, however, there are a few areas where the amendments are too restrictive. We feel that the Growth Management Program should provide enough flexibility for the Planning Commission and the City Council to consider a variety of land use decisions throughout the entire City over the next 20 years.

One of the key concerns is the proposed restriction on nonresidential development within the "Outlying Development Areas" (Upper State Street, Mesa, Coast Village Road, Riviera, Las Positas Valley and Upper De La Vina Street). The current proposal is to allow only 1,000 SF additions to all nonresidential parcels within these areas (excluding vacant parcels, Community Priority Projects and TEDRs). We feel that this restriction will significantly impact the future redevelopment of underutilized and blighted properties in these areas of the City.

Recommended Modifications

The stakeholders group is requesting the following modifications to the Non-Residential Growth Management Program.

Outlying Development Areas

1. Add "Small Additions" to the list of categories that are allowed for floor area allocation within the Outlying Development Areas. This will allow underutilized and/or blighted properties to redevelop with up to 3,000 SF of new development (rather than the proposed limitation of 1,000 SF).
2. Add "Economic Development Projects" to the list of categories that are allowed for floor area allocation within the Outlying Development Areas. By definition, these projects would be "consistent with the City General Plan" and would "strengthen the local or regional economy by either creating new permanent employment opportunities or enhancing the City's revenue base". This will allow the City Council to allocate square-footage to developments that it deems are needed for the City's economic viability over the next 20 years.

Downtown Development Areas

1. Allow the City Council to make overriding considerations for project-specific traffic impacts for Economic Development Projects and TEDR Projects proposed in the Downtown Development Area.

Without these revisions, important redevelopment projects that have recently been approved by the City would not be allowed in the future. These include redevelopment of the Turk Hesselland Nursery site on Coast Village Road and the Giovanni's Plaza building at the corner of Cliff Drive and Meigs Road (former gas station site) on the Mesa. The proposed restrictions would impede redevelopment of vacant sites in the Upper State Street area such as the vacant La Sumida Nursery, Mobil Gas Station, and auto dealership parcels.

We urge the Planning Commission to direct staff to incorporate these changes to the Nonresidential Growth Management Program.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Santa Barbara Growth Management Program Stakeholders Group


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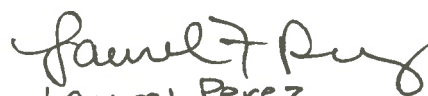

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