

**Plan Santa Barbara
Upper East Association Position Paper
City of Santa Barbara General Plan Update
April 18, 2010**

The intent of this position paper is to identify the land use planning issues that the Upper East Association (UEA) believes will have the most direct effect on the future of our neighborhood. In concert with our mission statement of preserving our neighborhood character, we have identified six issues that we believe the current general plan update must address.

I. Neighborhood Preservation

Any proposed change to the general plan update must address the preservation of the historic character of the Upper East neighborhood, including ...

- preservation of the current density capacity of the neighborhood;
- continued improvement of pedestrian and vehicle circulation through neighborhood streets;
- preservation of both public and other community use open spaces;
- the continued quest for a sustainable neighborhood; and,
- preservation of the historic qualities of the homes, religious institutions, education facilities (both public and private) and business areas that are part of the Upper East neighborhood.

II. Preservation of the State Street Residential Corridor

The preservation of the residential corridor now established on State Street between Mission Street and Constance Avenue is of great importance in retaining the historic character of the Upper East. The historic pattern of growth of our city is exemplified by this distinctive corridor of residential homes and the landscaped median that runs through the center of this portion of State Street. The very presence of this element documents Santa Barbara's historic city boundary. Homeowners within this section value their properties and wish to retain the corridor's residential character. Retaining this landscaped median with adjoining residential estates contributes to Santa Barbara's beloved small town character.

III. State and Mission Street Intersection Specific Plan Approvals

Preserving the section of our neighborhood that runs along State Street between Mission and Constance also means providing a vibrant set of neighborhood

commercial businesses accessible to residents and compatible with adjacent multifamily and hotel uses at the intersection of Mission and State Streets. As a result of the proposed adoption of density changes along State Street at Mission, we propose that the City put in place a process whereby the zoning ordinance will require that a Specific Plan be submitted, with planning criteria and other required items, that will ensure that the Upper East neighborhood has sufficient tools available to evaluate and review future projects. This request specifically relates to the high and medium commercial densities shown on the City Draft General Plan Use Map (February 2010).

IV. City's Core Density Increases Will Affect Our Neighborhood

We are concerned about the effect of proposed increased land use densities at or near the southerly edge of the Upper East neighborhood, (those areas to the southeast of Sola Street). Increasing the number of units allowed in R3 under a revised Variable Density calculation may have negative impacts upon this already densely populated area where on-street parking is already in short supply. Traffic circulation is constrained by narrow streets and hilly topography. Increasing the allowable number of units, even smaller, affordable ones, could impose additional vehicle circulation, on-street parking, noise, and other negative impacts to the current neighborhood character. Regardless of other efforts to reduce the use of the automobile, we believe that continued pressure for parking and traffic will have an effect on our neighborhood. This will be [exacerbated?] by reducing specific parking requirements for those areas of the city that are being designated for increased densities under the MODA.

V. "Institutional" Zoning Requirements

The presence of the many private institutional facilities - religious, schools, and other types of facilities (such as the Fielding Institute) - has a deep and historic influence on the Upper East neighborhood. The current proposed Draft General Plan Update Map simply labels these existing uses as "Institutional". As the City continues to change and evolve, such facilities will also change and evolve. Currently the City's zoning ordinance has no specific language or set of tools available to either protect the neighborhood or allow City authorities to oversee the specific potential future development of such lands. The Upper East Association requests that specific language be included within the General Plan Update that outlines future actions required to establish a specific section of the zoning ordinance that will define, among other things, the following for such parcels identified as "Institutional".

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1. Require discretionary approval for all potential new land uses, including any change to educational programs, developed within a site that could have a potential negative impact on traffic, parking, noise, and aesthetics.
2. Set specific policy for structural setbacks, maximum heights, and other issues, which affect the size, bulk and scale of such structures, or uses which have the

- potential to impact adjacent properties and/or the general character of the neighborhood.
3. Add specific requirements for appropriate on-site parking, pedestrian circulation (such as crosswalks), and other similar attributes that may be proposed.
 4. Add specific requirements for defining public and private open space, and connectivity through dedicated trails that allow public access to other neighborhood open spaces or shared resource areas.

VI. No Change to Secondary Unit/Granny Unit Requirements

We continue to support the current ordinance requirements for second dwelling units within the current single-family designations; E1 and E3 zoned areas. The current requirements support the availability of such units, but provide sufficient controls and reviews for the construction of such units within our neighborhood.

Finally, the UEA requests that as the General Plan update process moves forward, particular attention be paid to the impact of potential shared resources within neighborhoods. Shared use of parking assets, circulation elements, and use of existing facilities will be important to assure that our community's existing assets are used to sustain the neighborhood's quality and character.