



HISTORIC SANTA BARBARA

The Downtown & Waterfront; Its Identity and Future

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Santa Barbara has gone through multiple transformations sparked by major changing events. Each step along the way, the public called for saving and transforming the community:

1870's - The American transformation

"The old landmarks and most charming characteristics of Santa Barbara are disappearing before the march of 'improvement', and though our practical people cannot move the mountains, nor change the scenes, nor spoil the climate, they are doing all they can to despoil the quaint beauty of the place and make it just a commonplace American town..."

- Editorial from the **Morning Press** of January 3, 1874

1925 – Rebuilding after the great earthquake

"Stand fast, Santa Barbara! Do not let selfish men or greedy business interests skin Santa Barbara of her romance! Beauty and sane sentiment are Good Business, as well as good ethics. Carelessness, ugliness, and blind materialism are Bad Business. The worse curse that could befall Santa Barbara would be the craze to GET BIG!"

- Charles Lummis; **Santa Barbara News-Press** (1933)

1980's – State Street retail reimagined at Paseo Nuevo

- A Sense of Place** – recognizing the unique quality of the place where you live
- A Sense of Time** – living daily life in the midst of our history, from the Mission to the Courthouse
- A Sense of Encounter** – meeting and greeting everyone on the street while strolling comfortably
- A Sense of Celebration** – embracing the arts to celebrate our multi-cultural life together

"Santa Barbara is more than a place, it is really a state of mind."

- Simon Eisner, Urban Designer

FIVE Current Trends That We need To Take Seriously:

TREND 1: The global economy is bigger than we are, and Santa Barbara needs a Plan to be ahead of the curve

At the end of the 19th century, communities struggled with the transition from a regional to a national economy. Over the last 25 years, we have struggled with the transition from a national to a global Internet economy. Santa Barbara has thousands of people in the hospitality industry, but its biggest employers are now in Education, Government, and Health Care. Unlike most cities its size, Santa Barbara has not had an “Economic Development Plan” since the 1990’s. We need a comprehensive **21st Century Economic Development Plan** for our community that reflects all of these trends, and then aligns our budgeting of resources around these benchmarks.

TREND 2: The Downtown is too big to be managed as a single place, but it has unique identifiable destinations

Divide the central city into FIVE UNIQUE DISTRICTS that each have a sense of place, a thematic look and feel, and an indigenous quality that is uniquely local.



The SEASHORE WATERFRONT DISTRICT ***"A Sense of Nature"***

Defining the city as "environment central"; sensing the wonder of its natural beauty, its Mediterranean climate, its protection of the ocean and its waterfront.

The Harbor
Stearns Wharf (**ground zero**)
Maritime Museum
Santa Barbara Sea Center
Child's Estate Zoo
Leadbetter, East, and West Beaches
Arts & Crafts Show
World Class Beach sports events

Andre Clark Bird Refuge
The Historic Clark Estate
Chase Palm Park - two miles with uninterrupted views
The historic entry point to Santa Barbara – by ship, train, or freeway



The ENTERTAINMENT DISTRICT ***"A Sense of Adventure"***

Defining the city as "alive after five", and an extended party during the day!

The Funk Zone – Urban Wine Trail
Old Town Nightclubs and Pubs (**ground zero**)
Notable Restaurants; (i.e.-Joe's Café, Palace, The Lark)
A new “Jazz Alley” destination behind Metro Four Theater
Farmers Markets (Saturday and Tuesday)



The PASEO PROMINADE DISTRICT *"A Sense of Encounter"*

Defining the city as urban living / urban shopping / urban services; a place where people daily "meet and greet on the street", transact business, and catch up with friends over breakfast, lunch, or dinner.

State Street Paseo Promenade
Paseo Nuevo Retail Zone (**ground zero**)
Vibrant retail paseo courtyards (i.e. – La Arcada)
De la Guerra Plaza Paseo "Civic Commons"
Unique housing neighborhood communities
Chapala Corridor live-work space
Government Services



The RED-TILE HISTORICAL DISTRICT *"A Sense of Time"*

Defining the city as living in its history, preserving its history, celebrating its history, and learning from its history.

Historic El Paseo / De la Guerra Home
Santa Barbara Historical Museum
El Presidio State Park
Santa Barbara Courthouse (**ground zero**)
Historic Adobes

Presidio Plaza
History Mosaics
Meridian Studios / historic architecture
El Pueblo Viejo – Red Tile Walking Tour

Our public life should have a timeless quality to it – a sense that one is emotionally connected to the past, while at the same time, filled with a sense of expectancy about the future.



The CULTURAL ARTS DISTRICT *"A Sense of Celebration"*

Defining the city as a place that celebrates the soul of its citizens through the arts.

Santa Barbara Center for the Performing Arts – eight Resident Performance Companies + films:
Festivals (e.g.-Fiesta, Solstice, Holiday Parade)
Historic Theaters – Granada Theatre, Arlington Theatre, New Vic Theatre, Lobero Theatre
Santa Barbara Museum of Art (**ground zero**)
Santa Barbara International Film Festival
Fiesta events; celebrating different eras of culture
Street art / Solstice Mural / Signs & Wonders galore
Art Galleries on every block and paseo
Alameda Park celebrations (e.g.-Earth Day)
Trinity Church classical music presentations
S.B. Courthouse Sunken Gardens celebrations
Paseo Nuevo; Center Stage Theater, Contemporary Arts Forum, and Cinemas
Central Library & Faulkner Gallery

TREND 3: Our housing and transportation planning must proceed hand-in-hand



There is both a housing shortage and a transportation crisis in Santa Barbara.

Workers need affordable housing, and yet voters are furious about traffic impacts. The city can accommodate about 1,500 more housing units before it is maxed out. In order to allow more unit density, housing needs to be planned to be as near to new jobs as possible. People need to be able to walk or bike to work, shop, and play. This will require careful and strategic planning to be acceptable, and is probably most suited to be in the downtown and adjacent corridors.

TREND 4: Vibrancy requires a 24/7 presence downtown

Downtown Santa Barbara is perceived by many as a place that accommodates aggressive and bad behavior by those who are suffering from addictions. Mental illness adds to the trauma. Local residents build up a vibrant street life with an ongoing amount of positive interaction morning, noon, and night, leaving little room for bad behavior to fill the vacuum. Strategically placed housing becomes a critical component to a healthy downtown. It adds safety, reduces traffic, and sustains local businesses that support residents.

Then, add to this mix, viable and helpful services that can restore broken lives.



TREND 5: Santa Barbara needs to proactively provide incentives to new businesses to establish a base downtown



Following the creation of an “economic roadmap” for Santa Barbara, the City, UCSB, and key community leaders should target 3-5 major employers that could be incentivized to set up shop here. The community resources of worker housing and proximity to shopping and walking to work should be a powerful force in the revitalizing of the central city with up to 1,000 new employees living, working, and playing downtown.