



Public Comment Received for:  
Item III: 601 Santa Barbara St – MND  
(PLN2020-00627)

Name of Sender	Distributed prior to hearing	Distributed after the hearing
1. Rich Untermann	x	
2. Paulina Conn	x	

Santa Barbara Planning Commission  
Re: Police Station EIR – Negative Declaration

Dear Planning Commission members

I am writing to oppose the Negative Declaration for the Police Station, believing there are many more environmentally friendly options. Here are some of the reasons:

The report skims every issue – no problems anywhere. How can you build almost three and a half acres of building (150,000 square feet) and not have any impacts – particular in this time of energy concerns, climate change, housing needs, and waste reduction.

The site is zoned for HOUSING PRIORTIY. Why give up a prime housing site for a use that can fit into many other buildings or places?

There are no “alternatives evaluated – a typical part of the EIR reports. There are many alternatives – reusing the existing Police Station; decentralizing with parts of the program house elsewhere (at lower costs) using the very popular Community Policing model, with sub stations in different neighbors, etc.

There is no precise measure of GHG created with the removal and replacement of mature tree with new sapling trees. These new trees will take at least 25 years to reach the same maturity, meanwhile all the carbon capture and storm water capture that mature trees preform will be lost.

The visual /aesthetic is inadequate – replacing what is probably Santa Barbara's most attractive parking lot with two over 50-foot-tall buildings in a major visual alteration – particular with contrasted with the small cottages in the adjacent. Neighborhood. There is no mention of visual offsets, just lots of words that obfuscate and suggest the preparers were at a loss to find offsets.

The number of constructions related trips to the site, and the carbon footprint is vastly under counted. Assuming 2200 vehicles amounts to only 3 per day over the 22-month construction period.

Excavating for the basement will require at least 233 trucks loads, resulting in substantial GHG for removal, transit, and trip returns. There is no mention of disposal sites – will it be in Ventura or Lompok, what is the distance traveled.

There will be dozens of cars and trucks necessary for the material delivery and trades trucks and worker vehicles to construct such a complicated building. How many GHG do they create, and what are the offsets?

There is no mention of using low carbon cement and steel – the two major construction materials in such an earthquake structure. There is no mention of an all-wood building – more common every day in a climate change, low carbon footprint.

There seems to be no attempt to reduce the size of the building through creative planning and architecture. Reducing is a prime method to lower GHG and reduce costs.

I am surprised that a Committee of the Parks and Recreation Department approved the destruction of the mature existing trees on City property. I have never heard - in my long career - of a unanimous vote by people who are charged to defend nature. (Time to get a new Parks Committee who will defend Parks purposes)

There is no mention of alternative worker access during construction. Construction workers typically don't carpool, and so each job has dozens of cars and trucks - each driving long distances because of Santa Barbara's housing shortage. What is their GHG creation, what mitigation (i.e., buses carpools, MTD passes, tool lockers, etc.)

The effects of GHG emissions seems under counted. For instance, the environmental and carbon generated by demolishing the EXISTING Police Station and replacing it with another use should be counted in this EIR. What are the offsets? more trees, new solar facilities, etc.

Building a 275-car garage at this time of traffic congestion, and increased GHG alternative options, is inappropriate and environmentally unfriendly. Surely there can be creative use of the MTD, electric bikes carpooling, buses (think Cottage Hospital). What is the Carbon footprint, and what are the offsets?

Demolition of 390 cubic yards seems low. If the site was cleared by just one foot, it would amount to 2339 cubic yards of dirt, rubble, asphalt, or approximately 233 truck trips. That creates a substantial carbon footprint, and complicated traffic pattern, yet no description of offsets.

Storm Water management seem seriously under reported. While a 25-year storm may be the minimum requirements, in this time of climate change, there are more intense and complex storms. We need to calculate for something like a 50- or 100-year event.

The list of serious environment issues, and lack of mitigating measure goes on, but I will stop for now.

I believe this EIR should be sent back to the drafters and architects for a sharper look, and probably more change

I include copies of several letters I have sent to the City Manager, and most Council members over the years.

Sincerely,

Rich Untermann

Professor Emeritus  
Urban Planning and Design  
University of Washington  
Seattle Washington

Eric Friedman, Councilmember  
Santa Barbara, CA 03102

Sept 3, 2019

Re: Summary - 'Newer' Police Station

Dear Councilmember Friedman,

My interest in the Police Station are two fold: - I believe it is crazy, foolish, irresponsible –for Santa Barbara to spend \$100,000,000 (or more) on a Police Station; and, 'reusing' is now a central environmental watchword. This complex existing site requires finesse and skill to organize the program on the existing campus, and that will force far better judgments during the design course. Sounds crazy, but it is true! The architect can't just put a couple of large boxes on it and fill it with 72,000 feet of space and 250 cars –

In summary:

- The existing site is very close in size - about 1.45 acres, the new one 1.6 acres
- The existing building at 39,000 sq. ft. compared to the 'everything' new at 78,000 – is not that far apart.
  - Parking 250 cars takes more space than the entire Headquarters building! And is one of the areas for reducing cost, The parking is paired with the building floors – i.e. 14 foot ceiling, while normal parking is 8 or 9 foot ceiling height – again very expensive. Paired 14' ceiling might be OK for patrol cars, but it is excessive for most. The existing 9,000-foot lot could support 120-160 cars (half the program), while for civilians, visitors, etc. could park in the Granada lot which may show reduced use age over time. (Seattle bought an existing parking lot when it build their new Police Headquarters)
  - A couple of other options; the 4000 sq. ft. 'Community Room' – probably a nice thing, is 5.5% of the building, maybe \$5,225,000 in cost – because of the extraordinary earthquake costs.
  - Maybe Dispatch remains in the Granada – another reason to be near the existing Police Station.
  - The space for motorcycles officers, meter attendees, animal control, swat, etc. could be decentralized – or eliminated. I bet by the time this station is built, many cities across America will be using cell phones and embedded chips to monitor speed and parking – at much higher income for the city.
  - Housing subsidies or scheduling shifts so a bus could work for the police to reduce the parking need - if we put our minds to it, we can find a way.

Finally, costs! I don't know how much cushion the \$95 million includes, but my friends in the industry are expecting – given everything that is now occurring in our global world, substantial construction cost increases in the next few years – like 25

Staging – There are many ways to stage construction on this site – one is to build a new 44,000 sq.ft, structure in the space between existing buildings is and a new entry building in the open space on Fig could (4000 – 16,000 ft.) Once completed, the police could move in, and a parking structure constructed on Anapamu, and the existing Station gutted, reinforced and remodeled.

Eric, thanks for listening – like most citizens, I value the police, and want to treat them right. But right might not be a grand, new Palace –

I am happy to talk to you about this if you want, but know it is not a favorite unless the Farmers Market site is voided.

Regards,

Rich Untermann  
805 886 3922 [runtermann1@cox.net](mailto:runtermann1@cox.net)

Mr. Paul Casey, City Administrator  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

September 4, 2019

Re: 'Newer' Police Station

Dear Paul

For some time I have discussed the idea of remodeling the existing Police Station to different Councilmembers, and I thought it right to share that idea with you – in case the other options fall away. Many people think it is crazy, foolish, and irresponsible - for Santa Barbara to spend \$95,000,000 + on a new Police Station – when with some careful planning, good results might be possible for less, so I suggest the City look again at remodeling the existing Station. Please hear me out.

This idea started with a 1990 hospital remodel in Seattle that constructed a new, 60,000 square foot earthquake reinforced building in front of the old hospital (Pacific Medical Center), and then connected the two buildings. The old building got it's seismic requirements from leaning on the newer one, and resulted in 60,000 sq. ft. of new rentable space for the cost of what would normally be an invisible earthquake reinforcement project. Amazon rented it as their first headquarters

First, construct a new three-story building, plus basements in the large, handicap ramp space on Figurora Street (app. 7500 square feet of space). With a new building at the sidewalk grade, citizens could walk in directly for their Police services needs. Stairs and elevators would lead to a remodeled police building behind. The 'new' front building would meet the strigent earthquake proof requirements; the remodeled middle building would be connected to gain [part of it's earthquake proofness from its new front building. And the extra space (up to 28,000 on three floors plus basement) could be used by the Police Department.

At the same time, construct a new Building in the middle vacant land

Second then replace the Anapamu building with a parking ramp, and remodel the existing Figueroa building . Though this complex site would require more finesse and skill to organize the program, that usually forces far better judgments during the design process. Sounds crazy, but it is true! The architect can't just put a couple of large boxes on it and fill it with 72,000 feet of space and 250 cars

Santa Barbara's Police station has a large, unused space in front (app. 48 feet deep by 135 feet or 7500 square feet) that is mostly handicap ramps leading to the service counters. A new three-story building, plus basements could be built in that area, with the public services at the sidewalk grade, so citizens could walk in directly. Stairs and elevators would lead to a remodeled police building behind. The 'new' front building would be the strong, earthquake proof building; the rear would be connected to gain from its strength. And the extra space (up to 28,000 on three floors plus basement) could be used by the Police Department.

There appears to be adequate room to stage a build/remodel while the police remain in their two buildings, then replace the Anapamu building with a parking ramp, and remodel the existing Figueroa building . Though this complex site would require more finesse and skill to organize the program, that usually forces far better judgments during the design process. Sounds crazy, but it is true! The architect can't just put a couple of large boxes on it and fill it with 72,000 feet of space and 250 cars –



There is an opportunity to review the New Police Station program, and redirect it to better serve the emerging ideas following this terrible incident in Minneapolis. You probably know that the current direction – a centralized, everything in one place is an old model, and that – community policing is very likely to be more the direction of the future police model.

That means all the headquarters really needs is office space for the Brass, and everything else can be elsewhere (or some of it there).

Asking why Firefighters are always loved, while Police aren't might be helpful, and why not try and get Police closer to the fire model. There are many ideas out there, and you probably know many of them, but I would:

1. Get police out of all traffic issues – it is the place that gets them in trouble – fear, profiling, I didn't do anything, etc. Most of the traffic issues will be able to be handled digitally when all cars have an identification tag on them – a time frame that is probably parallel with the Police station completion.
2. I would get police out of their uniform, into blazers, and keep the John Brown's away.
3. I would rent or buy a police store front office in all the neighborhoods – with identifiable officer faces, and make them an important part of the community on a daily basis. I would try to buy a small house for one officer to live in the neighborhood.
4. I would keep the police station where it is, as it is part of the justice system – courts, etc. With a reduced program there is plenty of room. Public parking is available in seldom filled nearby garages.
5. All the other services don't have to be at headquarters – and some of them are particularly difficult, like Evidence, the SWAT group and 911.

I enclose a copy of an earlier letter that I have worked on (since 2017) with previous Council members and the City Manager so you might understand my interests.

Thanks,

Rich Untermann

**From:** [Peter Conn](#)  
**To:** [Community Development PC Secretary](#)  
**Subject:** Police Station, Agenda Item iii. Environmental Hearing 5-2-2022  
**Date:** Monday, May 30, 2022 8:54:46 PM

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EXTERNAL

RE: iii. Environmental Hearing: Please deny the so called "mitigated" Negative Declaration of the EIR for the behemoth police station in the Eastside Latino neighborhood.

Changing the address from 119 E. Cota St. to 601 Santa Barbara St. does not change anything except the address.

Dear Planning Commission,

The Police Station can not possibly have a "mitigated" Negative Declaration for the EIR. Trees are destroyed; basements are dug in an area prone to flooding; acres of dirt are moved to some other location via thousands of dump truck trips; salt water intrusion might occur. Who knows what the water table is like during winter rains. Who knows the effect of all this digging on the water well monitoring station across the street (Cota) at Plaza Vera Cruz. Then there is the excessive height, views taken, location, community impact of all sorts and actual need.

Please deny the Police Station at the Cota St. location. Size, bulk, scale, displayed architectural attitude of "We are all powerful" is wrong for any society and certainly has never been that for Santa Barbara so why start now AFTER the George Floyd Black Lives Matter movement that began to sensitize everyone about how many police profile supposed crime perpetrators by skin color. And now you are unnecessarily putting a gigantic police edifice in the neighborhood of people of color.

Cota St. is the WRONG location. It is in the middle of the Latino community. How insensitive is that????!

There is a huge environmental impact by this construction project. A Negative Declaration for an EIR is not possible. What is going on??? These gigantic square box excessively tall buildings with basement can not possibly have a Negative Declaration on an EIR, mitigated or not. It is impossible. Why? Massive amounts of dirt will be excavated and moved to some location. Where? How? How much? There will be massive impacts of trucks, dust, perhaps even salt water intrusion. What is the effect? What is the environmental impact? The location is surrounded by flood plain. The Vera Cruz Park potable well water monitoring station is right HERE, across the street on Cota St. That alone ought to cause the need for an EIR. What is going on????????? Mature trees are being bulldozed. That must be a NO NO in this day and age of climate change. These trees sequester huge amounts of carbon and they cool the city. This giant police station design that covers the entire block with virtually no landscaping contributes so negatively to climate change and so negatively to people's physical and mental health it is an embarrassment that our city planners and leaders would even think that all this impact does not require an EIR. What is going on???????

The current Figueroa St. location is absolutely perfect for a police station that projects a humane and just spirit. It is hidden away. The Figueroa St. building is actually welcoming looking. It is close to the courts,

within true walking distance. It is above the flood plain so first responders will be unhampered by flooded streets surrounding their digs. Figure out how to build here. Figure out how to build a friendly looking police station. Build next to the current building. Find parking in a City lot for the vehicles if needed. No harm done if a City Lot is off limits for a year while a new police station is being built. After all the City plans to discontinue the Cota St. commuter lot, even two commuter lots if you include the Carrillo one for housing. Which all begs the question. Has this police station moving plan really been thought out well? I THINK NOT! It seems to be knee jerk, an easy solution - flat City owned land, build to the limit, needed or not. Don't think about size or location or impression on people who might need to go there. Sensitivity to the Latino community and neighborhood aesthetics don't matter. Is this institutional racism? It feels that way to me, a white female.

Please stop this fiasco now before more money is spent. Think about what you really need and design a beautiful , inviting police station not an "in-you-face" giant box that oozes contempt for society.

The current Figueroa St. Police Station is a beautiful building. If it needs to be taken apart because of asbestos, earthquake or whatever then let's redo what we have and use this spot.

Think, think think. Don't just react to the need. Think what kind of need and where and how large. Should we have substations so police get to know real people in real communities?

This imposing palace to authority is just plain WRONG. "Peace Officers" indeed. This Cota St. edifice is a statement of authoritarian power. There is nothing comforting or friendly or peace officer or "neighborhood" policing about it.

It is same ole, same ole, wrong attitude about and treatment of people.

Please say NO to this Police Station design in this location. Please ask the City to start over with a kinder, more compassionate, more up-to-date attitude for the buildings, needs, design and location. This proposal is all wrong.

Please cut our losses in treasure, sensitivity towards our majority minority community, and the architectural attitude that displays excessive power in a community that does not need this. This is the wrong building in the wrong place.

I believe the last City Council was too anxious to get something done now. Many people in the community communicated with Mr. Hess about how wrong this decision was but it fell on deaf ears. Of course this wrong decision caused the domino effect by the powers-that-be at the time deciding that the displaced Farmer's Market could go to De La Guerra Plaza. This in turn started the terrible and expensive decision to "redo" the Plaza into another heat island by taking up the lawn and expanding hardscape. The rightfully independent Farmers Market took their vegetables to Carrillo St, so the DLG Plaza makeover has also become a colossal waste of time and money.

Please reject this police station plan and location. Deny the "mitigated" Negative EIR Declaration. Demand a total EIR or better yet just deny the whole project.

Ask that the City reconsider their options and go back to the drawing boards.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Paulina Conn

805 682-5183

I grew up on the Westside, went to City schools and have lived in the area 60+ years.