



General Public Comment Received

Name of Sender	Distributed prior to hearing	Distributed after the hearing
Erick Couch	X	
Matt Rybak	X	

Please note that the public comment on the following page includes a link to a video. City staff has not reviewed the video or clicked on the link. Due to cybersecurity protocols, our standard for all public comment is to convert emails received to flat PDFs without background data or live links. If you wish to view the linked video, you will need to copy and paste the URL into a web browser.

Thank you

From: [Erick Couch](#)
To: [Greta Walters](#)
Subject: State Street Vision for Distribution to State Street Advisory Committee
Date: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 2:53:20 PM

You don't often get email from erickcouch@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello Ms. Walters,

Please distribute the following link to all State Street Advisory Committee Members:

<https://youtu.be/eZQOpUJEIS8?si=KVXo3HWb1nR-Hd4E>

This is a video capture of Fred Sweeney's notional rendering of State Street which synthesizes what I find to be an exciting vision for our community's future.

Thank you,

Erick

Erick Couch
10-25C-5706@gmail.com

From: [Matt Rybak](#)
To: [SSAC Secretary](#)
Cc: [Santa Barbara City Council](#)
Subject: Public comment in support of a car-free State Street
Date: Friday, August 30, 2024 4:25:36 PM

You don't often get email from matt@tankpayments.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

SB City Council,

I'm a business owner in Santa Barbara, where I own a home and have lived for 11 years. I could not use stronger language to express that this city has become impossible to do business in, because bringing in talent (especially non-UCSB, experienced talent) is simply not feasible. We've unfortunately needed to launch a satellite office in Austin TX and hire there. I am part of a community of other business owners who feel the same way. I'm writing to you, pleading to consider who you're aiming to help in this community with the current policy in place. I will try to limit this to just State St, but I would love to put you in touch with stakeholders in the community on other topics too.

- 1. How can you possibly suggest that the key to revitalizing State St is to open it back up to vehicular traffic?** I have read Randy's articles in the Independent arguing for the opening of State St to cars, and while I respect Randy (have met him on a number of occasions at SB Startup dinners), his arguments are naive and at worst, incoherent. If I understand it correctly (and I am genuinely trying to steel-man his argument), Randy is saying that the reason retail is suffering on State St, in part, is because passengers in cars are unable to look out the window, find a store they want to shop in, and subsequently park the car and enter the store. If this were remotely true, the blocks north of Victoria should be thriving (they're not). How about in 2019? Was State St bustling with business (it wasn't)? Randy's March 2024 article states "State Street's last major reconfigurations included wide, walkable sidewalks, restricted vehicle traffic, defined bike lanes and activated pedestrian crossings. The initial result created a walkable, bike-friendly Santa Barbara, with capacity for a robust sidewalk dining atmosphere." This is at odds with reality, where businesses that choose to have outdoor seating, in possibly the most beautiful outdoor environment in the United States, are disincentivized to do so. If you believe that the public right of way should be paid for, sure. But it's disingenuous to suggest that the town is "pro" al fresco dining. It's not.
- 2. You're not going to fix State St and then "eventually" build downtown housing.** If it hasn't dawned on you yet, this is not how the economy (or society) works. People engage in certain locations because, simply put, the benefit of doing so outweighs the cost. If you don't have people working downtown (remote work), or living downtown (27% of the downtown core is parking, the other half is an outdoor mall), then you're not going to have foot traffic downtown outside of weekends. You're not going to have businesses that cater to the local population, because, why would they? Incentivize building downtown. Build up, and build dense. Remove the endless layers of red tape that get in the way of developers making any kind of profit. Forget buildings that you have no control over - start with properties that are owned by the city that are currently languishing. The fact is, the city is facing an existential situation and it appears to lack the leadership to save itself.
- 3. Who are you governing for?** This is the part that confuses me the most. (A) You're very obviously not governing for the benefit of essential middle class workers. Nothing

is being done to remove red tape around development of market-rate housing, which is the ONLY proven way of decreasing rent in a region (If you need scientific rigor around this point, please let me know and I'll send peer-reviewed papers). Maybe some of you are hard-core socialists? Fine. Employ an excess-rent tax. But any type of rent control will decrease housing supply and decrease renting velocity. Just please don't insult my intelligence by telling me that demand in SB is "infinite." (B) You're ostensibly not governing for the benefit of small business owners in Santa Barbara, the economic engines of this community. My peers and I are impressed by the insane and expensive situations we find ourselves in (e.g. Institution Ale sign being too close to the window). (C) That leaves the established local NIMBY population which seems to have a high amount of political sway in this community. That or the really rich developers/corporations that have time and money to deal with the obstacles that the city puts in our way. The fact that this is the easiest political stance to take makes me concerned as a Santa Barbarian.

I know this is not simple. Complications around property rights and a myriad other factors restrict the solutions that are available to us in the short term.

Or we can collectively do nothing about it and let State St., and the city of SB die a painful death. Rich people will be happy here, a nice amusement park with pretty mountain views. No industry. No growth. No hope for any meaningful diversity of thought.

-Matt

Sent via [Superhuman](#)