



# Smart Action for Growth and Equity

October 8, 2025

Chair Wardlow and Commission Members  
City of Santa Barbara  
P.O. Box 1990  
Santa Barbara CA 93102

**RE: ITEM #4 CONCEPT REVIEW, Lot 2, Paseo Nuevo**

Dear Chair, Wardlow and Commissioners,

Smart Action for Growth and Equity, SAGE SB, has been monitoring the progress of the City's effort to revitalize and re-use the former Macy's department store site and the adjoining retail spaces of the Paseo Nuevo Mall.

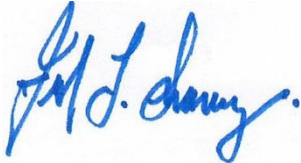
We have heard the public comments recently presented at a meeting of the Historic Landmarks Commission, and we have read letters sent to the Planning Commission concerning the project as currently proposed. We offer the following comments for your consideration:

- We agree with Mr. Brian Cearnal's letter of September 25, 2025, which strongly supports the need for workforce housing, and we agree that such housing can be successfully and beneficially accomplished while maintaining the maximum height of sixty feet as allowed in our city charter. This maximum height has helped the city retain its renowned beauty and charm, and we believe it is not onerously restrictive.
- SAGE-SB has also reviewed the October 6 letter from the City's Housing Authority to the Planning Commission. We are in agreement with the thrust of that letter, and we would encourage the Commission to take seriously the effort to provide not only affordable housing units, but true workforce units.
- We suggest that the proposed 80 units of so-called affordable housing in a project wedged between the Canary Hotel and a portion of the Lot #2 parking structure is unworkable. In our opinion, this is an inappropriate location for such housing, The housing units would have limited availability of light, air, and access to open space, elements essential to quality living.
- We suggest that it may be better to reduce some of the retail square footage on the first level of the Paseo Nuevo, devote the extra space to housing, and then place one or two stories of housing on top of interior retail paseo where much more light and air are available.

Simply put, we support re-using the site to provide housing, especially workforce housing, and for revised but continuing retail activity. We believe, however, that the same number of housing units as

currently proposed can be attractively built without breaching the City's fought-for sixty-foot height limit. Therefore, we encourage the Commission to require the applicants to explore creative ways to use the mall space, for we are confident that they can honor the height limit while achieving their housing goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Fred L. Sweeney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a period at the end.

Fred L. Sweeney AIA emeritus,  
Vice- President SAGE-SB