

Riviera Association Survey Findings

September 2021



Agenda

- Research objectives
- Survey population and response
- Key takeaways
- Sample charts
- Summary of comments



Research Objectives

- Learn our members' opinions on key issues facing the Riviera and city overall
- Raise community awareness of proposed SBCC and Planning Commission strategies and initiatives to address these issues
- Help determine and shape questions for District 4 candidates forum



Survey Population and Response

- Survey population
 - Riviera Association members, incl. spouses and significant others
 - Other residents living within the Riviera district boundaries
- Survey open from 8/23 through 9/3 (12 days total)
- Achieved a total of 142 responses
 - 135 complete responses
 - 7 partial responses
- 54 respondents submitted open-ended comments and suggestions (in response to final question)



Survey Findings



Survey Questions

Please tell us the street you live on in the Riviera *

- 1. Our city is pursuing strategies to address a number of important challenges right now. In which of the following should the city invest the most time and resources? (select your top 3)

- 2. What actions should the city take to reduce the threat and impact of wildfires? (select your top 3)

- 3. New market-rate rental housing projects in Santa Barbara are currently required to make 10% of the units affordable to moderate-income renters. What minimum percentage of affordable units would you prefer to see?

- 4. Because the city designates market-rate rental projects as a "community benefit", they are allowed to exceed the 48-foot height limit downtown and go up to 60 feet (or 5 stories) and only provide 10% affordable housing. Do you think the city should ask for significantly more affordable housing than 10% to be able to surpass the 48-foot height limit?

- 5. What impacts, if any, do you believe would result from allowing developers to increase the number of market-rate units they can build per parcel? (select up to 3)

- 6. What approaches should the city take to address the growing homeless problem? (select up to 3)

- 7. Which of the following should be the highest priority in efforts to revitalize the downtown (State Street) corridor? (select your top 3)

- 8. Do you have any other concerns or suggestions that we haven't addressed?



Key Takeaways – 1 of 2

Riviera and City Priorities. Members' top 5 priorities for the Riviera and city overall, in order of importance, are: 1) downtown revitalization, 2) fire prevention and safety, 3) more affordable workforce housing, 4) providing shelter and services for the homeless, and 5) improving our water/sewer infrastructure.

Fire and Safety. To improve fire safety and prevention, two-thirds of members want to increase city funding for tree trimming and brush clearance in city parks and open spaces and have the city and fire department more actively enforce defensible space requirements.

Homelessness. Members see value in a multi-faceted set of solutions to address the issue of homelessness, including expanding temporary housing options, having developers replace affordable housing that they demolish and pay an impact fee to fund homeless support services, and investing in mental-health and other wrap-around services.



1. Our city is pursuing strategies to address a number of important challenges right now. In which of the following should the city invest the most time and resources? (select your top 3)

Highest Priority Issues (up to 3)

Choices	Percentage	Count
Revitalizing downtown	 59.86%	85
Improving and adequately funding fire safety and prevention	 49.30%	70
Building more affordable housing for our city's workforce	 41.55%	59
Providing shelter and services for the homeless	 40.85%	58
Improving our main water and sewer infrastructure	 38.03%	54
Repairing/repaving roads	 28.17%	40
Better maintaining and enhancing city parks	 19.01%	27
Other		
Expanding downtown market-rate housing	<input type="checkbox"/> 7.75%	11
Repairing/updating Mission Canyon Bridge	<input type="checkbox"/> 5.63%	8



Key Takeaways – 2 of 2

Downtown Revitalization. Making more productive use of vacant buildings, followed by no-traffic zones and outdoor bars/dining were the most popular approaches chosen to help revitalize downtown, along with streamlining regulations to enable shop owners to remodel their spaces more easily and cost-effectively. Though downtown revitalization is regarded as the top priority by our members, a large majority don't view more market-rate housing as an important factor in revitalization.

Impacts of Development. Respondents recognized broadly the adverse impacts that result from higher-density, market-rate housing projects, including a greater strain on infrastructure, increased traffic congestion, and a lack of sufficient parking. Members also saw market-rate housing as contributing to the displacement of moderate- and lower-income workforce from existing affordable housing.

Affordable Housing. One major theme that emerged across the responses to several questions: All other things equal, if the City is going to add density and build more housing, it should try to make a significant percentage of it affordable to the workforce.



7. Which of the following should be the highest priority in efforts to revitalize the downtown (State Street) corridor? (select your top 3)

Initiatives To Revitalize Downtown (up to 3)

Choices	Percentage	Count
Adapt and repurpose vacant spaces (e.g. former Macy's, Nordstrom)	 56.34%	80
Make the current "parklets" (in which bars and restaurants extend into the street) permanent	 45.77%	65
Set aside permanent "no traffic" zones (for pedestrians and cyclists only)	 44.37%	63
Reduce regulatory red tape to enable shop owners to more easily and cost effectively remodel their retail/restaurant spaces	 42.96%	61
Impose vacancy tax on landlords who habitually refuse to rent their spaces at market rates	 35.21%	50
Construct shopping promenades, incl. outdoor dining and entertainment	 23.94%	34
Incentivize local businesses to relocate downtown	 22.54%	32
Other		
Loosen building standards to expand market-rate housing, e.g. with increased density and building heights	 9.86%	14



Open-Ended Comments



Summary Analysis of Comments - 1

The most popular topics, in descending order of frequency, were:

1. Downtown Revitalization. There were tensions raised about whether or not downtown should be geared toward tourists or drawing local residents. Also issues about how to retain and attract smaller businesses and support them with lower rents and fewer city permitting hurdles. Some people are also concerned about blocking views of mountains and creating tall residential projects that aren't affordable to those at lower income levels, which is what is happening in cities elsewhere. The homeless are also a deterrent to attracting business and pedestrians.

2. Homeless. Respondents made a broad array of suggestions, ranging from taking harder-line approaches to homeless, illegal behavior to a root-cause approach of providing better mental health and addiction services. Some felt providing shelter or temporary housing wasn't enough without support services. Others suggested places where they could be housed temporarily or until they were self-sufficient, e.g. repurposed government buildings.



Summary Analysis of Comments - 2

3. Housing. One respondent mentioned that there are benefits to free-market housing (not just negative impacts), namely that it supports downtown revitalization. Others felt there should be more affordable housing, but a balance struck to encourage investment in housing. A couple of respondents mentioned the safety risk of more housing, such as ADU's, in high-risk fire areas.

4. City Hall. Several comments focused on the need for a better managed City Hall and residential permitting process and support of residents.

5. Candidate Forum. Several suggestions made on format and type of questions.

6. Fire Safety. Comments were mentioned about park maintenance and ADU overpopulation that could cause congestion during a fire escape.



Thank you for your participation!

