

Answers On Business Issues From The 6th District Candidates

Infrastructure

What are your thoughts on the infrastructure needs of the City of Santa Barbara? Are you supportive of efforts to raise funds through a sales tax increase to address these needs?

Gregg Hart: The City of Santa Barbara needs additional revenue to meet its growing infrastructure maintenance requirements. The State of California has taken back \$100 million in funding over the past five years from the City of Santa Barbara and the administration in Washington has proposed significant infrastructure spending cuts. Local residents support investing in our local infrastructure and understand the critical need for a reliable, locally controlled funding source to repair local streets, sidewalks, storm drains and bridges. The Police Department Building needs reconstruction to meet earthquake standards, neighborhood fire stations need modernization and the State Street Plaza requires ongoing repair and maintenance. I support placing a 1-cent sales tax increase on the November ballot to ask Santa Barbara voters to join hundreds of other California cities that have raised local revenue to solve their infrastructure needs.

Jack Ucciferri: Not only do I share the views of the majority of those surveyed who support the idea of raising funds through a modest sales tax increase, but I question why this tax wasn't approved several years ago when the street maintenance deficit was foreseeable and avoidable. Roads get exponentially more expensive to maintain after a certain point of neglect. A stitch in time really could have saved a lot of dimes in this case.

If Mr. Hart had not opposed the half-cent sales tax that was voted on in 2015, taxpayers would likely not even be asked to consider his year's full one cent tax proposal, especially considering the \$2-3M gas tax influx we are anticipating from Sacramento. Why did Mr. Hart join Mr. Hotchkiss in voting against a half cent tax then, but supports a 1 cent tax now?

Infrastructure is, of course, the foundation upon which a vibrant local economy relies. Whereas Mr. Hart has a full-time six-figure job working for a separate government agency that renders him unable to dedicate sufficient time to the management of the City, I will dedicate myself to considering, approving, and managing infrastructure projects in the most prudent manner possible. I will value Chamber's voice greatly in doing so.

Our community suffers when infrastructure projects are:

A. Mismanaged , such as -

a. The desalination plant reconstruction, which went more than \$20M (~30%) over budget and went online roughly 7 months late.

i. I believe in putting contracts out for open bid and clearly the failure to do so cost our community dearly in the case of the desalination plant.

ii. Our community deserves to know what else went wrong and what steps will be taken to avoid such costly mistakes in the future. Was it a personnel issue or a process issue or both? Perhaps the most disturbing thing is that no one is even asking this question.

b. The wastewater treatment plant, which will cost taxpayers an addition \$20M over what was budgeted for the purchase of waste recovery modules.

i. To pay for this, ratepayers will see a significant increase. What happened here?! Why don't taxpayers even know about it?

ii. \$20M here and \$20M there and pretty soon we are talking real money!

B. Approved before being well thought out , such as the -

a. The desalination plant, which might have been avoided entirely had we done the initial study with the right numbers. The City's 2011 long term water supply plan, underestimated the avoided cost of water by a factor of ten.

i. This low number was given to the consultant tasked with seeing if we could conserve our way out of the drought. The fundamentally compromised analysis suggested that conservation would be insufficient vs the costs of increasing supply. If the avoided cost of water is \$300/acre foot, the answer is "of course it is better to just pay for desal."

1. It turns out that cost could actually be well over \$3000/AF though, which changes the conversation we should have had.

ii. We don't yet know for sure if conservation could get us through this drought, but we do know that this time - like the last time - it was conservation that actually got us out of a drought, while desal just got us in debt.

b. Tajiguas Landfill resource-recovery project was greenlighted without fully considering the alternatives, nor the deleterious impacts on the ecological marvel of that is the Gaviota Coast, nor having a full understanding of the project's risk profile, nor even apparently checking the project site against the Coastal Commission map of the Coastal Zone!

i. Rather than asking Santa Barbara residents to do basic curbside waste sorting, the City is considering raising rates by nearly half in the coming years to pay for this white elephant.

ii. Even the supporters of this project admit that it is a bad project so far and that the County has failed to perform on the contract. How did this project get so far down the approval pipeline before Council apparently understood how problematic it is?

C. Imposed upon our community by outside interests , such as the -

a. 101 widening which was sold to South County voters by SBCAG as a "Lane and a Train." Now they are on track to deliver "a lane and a bunch of excuses." Meanwhile, Sacramento-based CalTrans wants to make the 101 a viable alternative to the 5 freeway for intrastate commercial transit. No, thank you.

D. Owned by private monopolistic interests not accountable to local authorities , such as -

a. SCE's record maintaining our power grid is reprehensible. We can all agree on that, right?

- i. We should implement Community Choice as soon as is feasible.
 - b. Cox Cable's laughably bad broadband delivery and customer service. Local industries - especially my friends in the tech field, need more viable alternatives.
 - i. Municipal broadband is a good idea that should be studied for our community.
 - c. Union Pacific Railroad's intransigence in negotiating a right of way for a train system that would serve commuters.
 - i. We need strong local leadership to work in tandem with community activists in order to gain leverage in order to compel UP negotiate freeing up track capacity for the rail system we all know is a common sense solution to our transportation needs.
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State Street

What are your thoughts on the status of Downtown Santa Barbara and State Street? What factors, if any, are affecting business success in the downtown area? What would you do to address these issues? What is your position on incentivizing more housing downtown?

Gregg Hart: Santa Barbara has a long and successful record of accomplishment of adapting our downtown to meet changing economic environments. State Street is once again facing this challenge. The Downtown Organization recently commissioned a retail study to identify the challenges facing State Street and point toward solutions. The study concludes: Internet sales have cut into traditional downtown retail market share across the country. Regional retail competition has increased over the past two decades. State Street rents are very high creating a financial barrier to new business development. Negative public perception of the presence of homeless panhandlers on State Street has decreased the attractiveness of downtown. The retail business mix is too heavily weighted toward tourism. Storefronts need washing and painting. Window displays need updating.

In response to concern expressed by local residents and the City Council, the Santa Barbara Police Department recently assigned additional police officers to State Street that has made a significant difference in controlling unlawful and disrespectful behavior. The Police Department's Restorative Policing effort is once again fully staffed and is making progress in connecting homeless individuals with supportive services to get them off the street. The City has relaxed water restrictions and is encouraging property owners to wash their downtown buildings. The Downtown Organization has increased power washing of State Street sidewalks. The City Council has authorized new funding to improve the 101 State St. undercrossing and better connect pedestrians in the waterfront and lower State Street with downtown.

I strongly support construction of new housing to address the workforce housing crisis. Downtown is ideal for new housing development because it puts employees closer to jobs and adds customers in the downtown core.

Jack Ucciferri: As the commercial core of Santa Barbara, maintaining State Street's vibrancy must be a priority for local leaders. I have been struck by the extent to which the conversations regarding "what is happening with State St.?" do not to fully appreciate the fundamental changes currently occurring in society at large. The problem is not dirty storefronts, overlarge signs, or outdated window displays.

Today's consumers prioritize unique experiences over predictability. Let's give them that by allowing street performers, micro producers, and civic events to reclaim Lower State St. from cars. I expand a bit upon this idea in [A Modest Proposal to Revive State St.](#)

Also, the City should consider levying a vacancy fee upon owners of buildings that sit vacant over a given period of time. Many of the buildings have extremely low cost bases relative to current value based upon historic rents. Well resourced owners can be thusly rational to continue writing off massive paper losses against their very real income from other portions of their real property portfolios. Adding a financial disincentive to letting storefronts sit idle would likely compel owners to acknowledge the true demand curve.

A f f o r d a b l e H o u s i n g

Are you supportive of the current Average Unit-size Density (AUD) ordinance in the City of Santa Barbara? If so, explain your reasons. If not, what changes would you make to improve it?

Gregg Hart: I am a strong supporter of the AUD Program. For the first time in 40 years, the program has opened the door to the construction of much needed rental housing while ensuring neighborhood compatibility and character through architectural review.

Jack Ucciferri: I am strongly in favor of encouraging more housing downtown, but it has to be done with improved community buy-in into the process, robust design review, and accompanied by smart transportation planning - significant failures of the original AUD ordinance which Mr. Hart is a champion of.

I n c r e a s e d H o u s i n g S t o c k

What is your position on the state's new mandates regarding Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), also known as granny flats?

Gregg Hart: The City must comply with State Law.

Jack Ucciferri: In general, I believe that our city knows better how to address its problems than Sacramento does. That said, when institutional inertia and the incentive structures of local politics were California's workers and employers alike, Sacramento is compelled to act. I am hopeful that any approved ADU's will be smartly designed and approved in ways that maximize value for our community while minimizing negative externalities.

S h o r t T e r m R e n t a l s

Last year, the City Council unanimously voted to uphold existing zoning rules which severely limit short term or vacation rentals in the City? What is your opinion of that decision, and what steps would you take to change it, if any?

Gregg Hart: I support the unanimous City Council decision to preserve very limited local housing stock for local residents because we face a workforce housing crisis.

Jack Ucciferri: For roughly a year and a half I was owner-operator of OurTown Property Management. We managed the primary homes Santa Barbarans who chose to rent their homes on a short term basis to make extra income while they traveled. Most of my clients were young professionals working in the nonprofit sector or were affiliated with UCSB. Because they were primary residences, no housing stock was lost. Because they were well-managed, the neighbors never had reason to complain. The City got TOT money. Everyone won.

The STR debate that tore through our community and killed OurTown was very poorly orchestrated by the City. Community Development Director Buell assured myself, the Chamber, and others that the issue would be studied intensely for roughly a year before being brought to Council. Then suddenly it was on the Council agenda a month later when very few people understood the intricacies of the issues involved.

I authored an ordinance proposal and shopped it around among the Council and some local leaders who generally thought it was good. I still generally believe in that proposal. The problem with it seemed to be that this issue is complicated and nobody wanted to expend the political capital of getting into the weeds, so a lot of Santa Barbarans - especially middle income earners - got hurt. Ironically, those are the very people that the AUD ordinance and the STR ban are trying to help! It doesn't have to be so.

We would be well advised to adapt as reality continues to change. Airbnb now works directly with numerous cities like SF to implement nuanced homesharing laws that benefit low and middle income earners. As the [LA Times advocates here](#), we should to take a second look at this issue.

City Finances

How would you describe the fiscal status of the City of Santa Barbara? What proposals will you bring in the next budget cycle to improve the City's financial position?

Gregg Hart: With the exception of funding for infrastructure investment, City finances are in good shape. As Chair of the City Finance Committee I am intimately involved on an on-going basis in ensuring the City stays on a prudent fiscal course with fully funded reserves.

Jack Ucciferri: Our City finances are in a scary state considering the ~\$450M capital improvements deficit projected through FY21. Where I come from, that is a lot of money. As Chair of the City Finance Committee, Mr. Hart should be working overtime trying to shore up the City's budget. Instead, he is working full-time for the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments.

I will work to institute new accountability mechanisms and incentive structures that reward department heads whose teams achieve efficiency improvements.

Pension Liability

One of the biggest financial issues facing the City is the pension liability for past and current employees. How would you propose addressing this problem in a way that meets the City's obligation while not straining the provision of City services?

Gregg Hart: The State of California has initiated a series of pension reforms and PERS is modifying its investment strategies to improve the fiscal outlook of the public pension system. The City has asked its employees to assume a larger share of pension funding obligations and is planning ahead to meet increasing pension funding requirements.

Jack Ucciferri: While the City must honor existing pension obligations, it must also fight hard to reign pension costs going forward. As a former investment advisor representative I have had direct experience managing ERISA accounts and as a corporate governance activist, I have experience working with CALPERS.

CALPERS is a good organization but a very bureaucratic one and thankfully, PERPA trimmed the cost of public pension administration. Regardless, the City will nonetheless have to have some frank conversations during future contract negotiations if we are to achieve fiscal strength moving forward.

Highway 101

It appears that the statewide gas tax increase will provide much of the remaining money needed to complete the widening of Highway 101 from Carpinteria to Santa Barbara. What is your position on this project? Are there additional mitigation steps that need to be taken for the project?

Gregg Hart: I strongly support the widening of the 101 freeway because it is the economic lifeline of the entire Central Coast. The City of Santa Barbara should stop putting roadblocks in front of the project and speed up the permits necessary for construction.

Jack Ucciferri: From a traffic engineering perspective, the freeway widening project will not be completed until a 4th lane is added from Las Positas to Storke Rd. While the possibility of doing that was floated during the 101 in Motion study phase, it was (correctly) determined to be politically infeasible. So the project that CalTrans and SBCAG approved is an incomplete project, even if it is "completed." It will also mostly likely be obsolete upon arrival (2031 under best case scenario) due to advances in technology and shifts in lifestyle and transportation mode share.

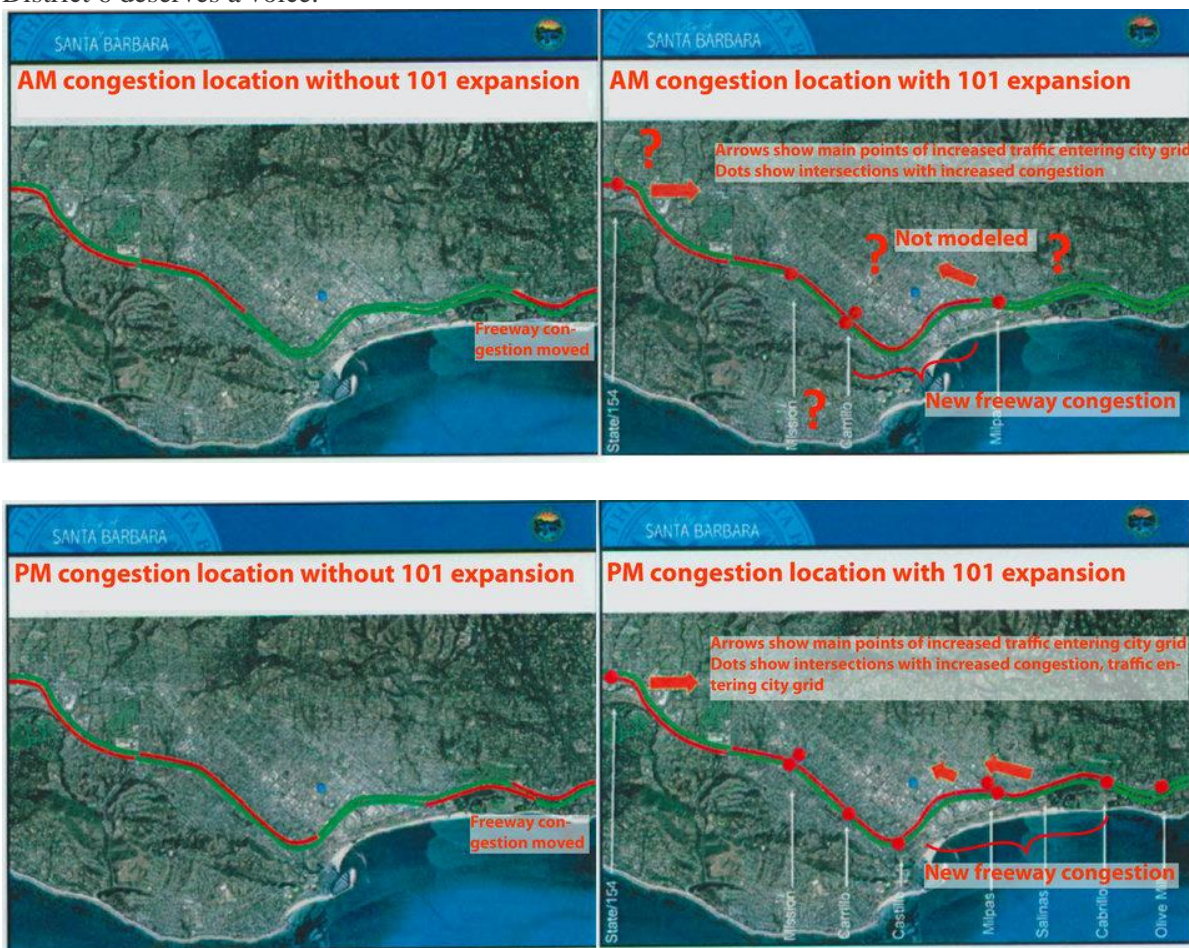
Please see the annotated traffic maps attached. These slides were prepared by City of Santa Barbara's own Transportation Planning staff.

These maps clearly show that the 101 widening project will simply move the current gridlock from the less populated area South of Santa Barbara into the middle of Santa Barbara. Air quality will plummet in my district and on the Westside. Commuters trying to circumvent freeway traffic will spill over onto our

surface streets (again, largely in my district) and become speeding hazards for kids riding their bikes to school and pedestrians walking to work. Traffic will be worse for Santa Barbara residents trying to get to Goleta and CalTrans' own EIR stated that it will take longer to get from Ventura to Goleta if/when the project is "completed." Finally, the project will crush our road maintenance budget because the increase in surface street traffic is not matched by any new source of revenue for street maintenance. What a mess.

I went into this topic in somewhat further depth in [Six Reasons to Rethink The South Coast's Transportation Policy](#), published in the Santa Barbara Independent.

Unfortunately for District 6, the incumbent Councilman running to represent the district also happens to be the Public Information Officer for the lead implementing agency, so he is literally paid to support the project. Despite his promises to the contrary during the 2014 election, he has been advised by the City Attorney that he has a conflict of interest and therefore recuses himself from this hugely important debate. District 6 deserves a voice.



Water

Recent rains have pushed back immediate concerns about the City's water supply, but the City remains in a drought. What are your thoughts on how the City should proceed in addressing our ongoing water concerns?

Gregg Hart: The City of Santa Barbara has developed one of the most diverse water portfolios in California. With water available from Lake Cachuma, Gibraltar Reservoir, State Water, Mission Tunnel, groundwater, desalination, recycled water and conservation, we are very well prepared for the inevitable next drought. The City Council is also working to develop a new potable reuse water source that will recycle more of our community's precious and limited water supply.

Jack Ucciferri: We need smart metering that allows property owners to better understand their water usage and take action. We need to reward landlords and property managers who promptly fix leaks and install efficient toilets and faucets. Conversely, we should impose meaningful penalties for failing to do so. We need to pursue potable reuse and to massively scale up stormwater harvesting. There is a way to comply with proposition 218 with pure marginal cost pricing and we should pursue it. Even if we don't send the proper pricing signals to the market about the true cost of water, we can impose fines for failing to be responsible with water.

All of the above have been the high road to sustainable water management in our new climate. Since this would have been a stretch politically, however, it was justifiable to approve the desal facility as temporary bridge to a sustainable water portfolio.

Here is the inconvenient question though - if our water situation is desperate enough that we have to kill our climate pumping the salt out of seawater, is it not too desperate to allow precious water to be applied to ornamental lawns?

According to Santa Barbara's General Plan, the City Council's recent commitment to 100% renewable energy by 2030, the Climate Action Plan, and the Long Term Water Supply Plan we believe in climate security in this town. Yes, the City Council just committed to go 100% renewable energy by 2030, but what of the GHG emissions of this project in the meantime? It seems like climate insanity to turn on the desal plant - dramatically increasing the climate footprint of our water use - without stage three drought water conservation in place.

Goleta

The City of Goleta has recently asked the City to delay moving forward with the development of leasable tech space on ground adjacent to the Santa Barbara Airport. What is your position on this project?

Gregg Hart: I strongly support construction of this much-needed light industrial and technology commercial space at the airport because the regional economy depends upon a fiscally sound regional airport.

Jack Ucciferri: We should do whatever takes to ensure the Santa Barbara Airport remains fiscally strong. That said, I hope to find a way for a mutually beneficial agreement to be negotiated.

Economic Development

The City of Santa Barbara does not have an active economic development program. Do you believe one is necessary? If so, how would you create it? If not, why not?

Gregg Hart: The City of Santa Barbara invests in economic development in a number of different ways. The City's major economic engine is tourism. The City spends \$2.5 million in annual funding for arts, events, festivals and community promotion to support tourism and the hospitality industry. The majority of this funding, \$1.3 million is directly allocated to Visit Santa Barbara to promote Santa Barbara as an international tourism destination. The City also supports Downtown Santa Barbara with nearly \$800,000 in annual funding to protect the economic vitality of downtown. In addition, the City devotes significant City Council, City Administrator and City Department Head staff resources on a monthly basis to issues affecting downtown through active engagement with the Downtown Organization Board of Directors and staff. In addition, the City of Santa Barbara's Airport is a regional economic development engine that is a significant financial contributor to the entire south coast economy equal in size of employment and economic benefits to the regional financial services industry.

Jack Ucciferri: The lack of a coordinated economic development program is more a symptom of what is wrong with Santa Barbara than a cause. For too long, our city has tied our economic fate to tourism, which is subject extreme. While the City of Santa Barbara has a number of economic development type programs/entities, they are not coordinated under one roof, which leads to inefficiencies and disjointed priorities. Tourism is currently the largest source of funds for our local economy but the hospitality industry does not produce a significant number of the type high quality jobs that can support a family in Santa Barbara nor that lead to a diversified local economy.

We can do better. We should recruit someone like Marsha Bailey , the pragmatic visionary Executive Director of Women's Economic Ventures (WEV) to become economic development czar and empower her lead a multi-sector economic planning process with the objective of creating a plan to spur the development of sustainable, locally owned businesses which offer career track jobs.

Funk Zone

One of the fastest growing areas of Santa Barbara is the Funk Zone. What are your thoughts on this area, and how would you respond to some in the community that feel the area is getting more attention and benefits than other more established business zones?

Gregg Hart: The funk zone evolved organically through the hard work and vision of local entrepreneurs who have revitalized the neighborhood. With the exception of the infrastructure development on State Street itself, the funk zone has largely developed without government planning. Funk Zone property and business owners are increasingly interested in working collaboratively with downtown Santa Barbara businesses to better integrate the funk zone with downtown. I believe the City should continue to support this partnership and encourage collaboration.

Jack Ucciferri: The Funk Zone certainly offers lessons that might be applied elsewhere in the City, but we mustn't imagine that all of our commercial areas can or should be Funkified.

The Funk Zone is an example of property owners being flexible enough to partner with their tenants in a meaningful way to achieve mutual success. That is a valuable takeaway. Another takeaway is that a business district can be successful in the 21st Century if it is walkable and bikeable, even when it has very little parking.

P a r k i n g F o r R e s t a u r a n t s

As part of the New Zoning Ordinance (NZO), the Planning Commission has agreed to change parking requirements on restaurants to 1 space per 250 square feet of space in the restaurant. Do you support this decision? Why or why not?

Gregg Hart: Yes, I support this change, as it is more equitable.

Jack Ucciferri: I support this wholeheartedly. In order for local businesses to succeed they need to have public sector partners willing to adapt laws to the realities of the times. The reality is while on the one hand our local restaurateurs find it difficult to conform with onerous parking restrictions, more and more people ride their bikes or take Lyft-like services when going out to dinner, thereby reducing the need for parking.

E n e r g y

What do you see as the city's role in helping residents and businesses access renewable energy, either on the grid, or installed directly on homes and commercial or industrial buildings? What is your position on the City's Community Choice Energy effort?

Gregg Hart: The City Council recently adopted a 100% renewal energy goal by 2030 for Santa Barbara. This ambitious and necessary goal will require new creativity and collaboration between the public and private sector to achieve. Our community is fortunate to have a number of leading non-profit organizations that have been advocates for increased use of renewable energy for many years. We are also fortunate to have the considerable technical expertise of world-class research at UCSB to help guide this transformation. Local consumers and business will benefit as we produce clean, affordable renewable energy through development of a South Coast micro-grid that will significantly increase local energy reliability.

Jack Ucciferri: I have been a supporter of community choice aggregation systems since I first came across the idea while living in Napa roughly a decade ago. Napa is part of what is now Marin Clean Energy (MCE), but back then CCA's were a sustainability geek's pipe dream. While providing reliable power at an affordable price, MCE has eliminated 200,000 Metric Tons of GHG, saved over 8 million gallons of water, and supported roughly 3,000 local jobs. Sounds like success to me.

I have tracked the CEC's work on this project for the past several years and have confidence that they did high quality research into the viability of this idea before passing it along to the County. We can do this Santa Barbara!

City Development

What are your thoughts on the level of City regulations affecting individuals attempting to develop property in our community? Are there steps you would take to limit the regulatory burden faced by those who wish to invest here?

Gregg Hart: Santa Barbara has a rigorous development review process because local residents want carefully planned, high quality, appropriately scaled development. City government should focus on improving customer service in the development review process rather than adding more regulations.

Jack Ucciferri: Santa Barbara City's interactions with the private sector are stuck in the past. We need to have a much more rigorous digital outreach program that allow for information to be searched in an intuitive manner. The current system forces too many physical trips to various City offices and the rules are too byzantine and ambiguous. When investors have clear rules they can make better decisions without tying up City staff time.

Public Transportation

The City of Santa Barbara is served by MTD buses, but as with many smaller, suburban communities, the service does not meet all of the need. What proposals would you have, if any, to increase public transportation options? Would your options include other forms of mass transportation?

Gregg Hart: I strongly support development of new peak hour passenger rail service and improved regional bus service to better connect Ventura County residents who commute to south Santa Barbara County jobs. While new workforce housing is needed to address the regional jobs housing imbalance on the south coast, finishing the 101 HOV project and supporting multi-modal transportation options in the 101 corridor is also critical to the local economy and quality of life.

Jack Ucciferri: As the lead author of the South Coast Bike Share Feasibility Study , I have thought a lot about the opportunities to increase public transportation mode share. Our study indicated that a bike share system would likely be successful and would help to reduce the number of cars driving short distances on our city streets and would give commuters arriving via public transportation from other communities a healthy and fun public transportation option once they are in Santa Barbara.

My understanding is that the residents of Santa Barbara are significantly more favorable to the idea of implementing something like a commuter rail system than in continuing to invest in the car-centric transit model. I also believe that there is significant potential for a bus rapid transit system along the 101 corridor and am not aware of anyone seriously looking at that option. MTD is a good organization but has the potential to become a great one if we encourage them to continue to partner with the private sector to make technological upgrades to existing services.

District Priorities

How would you approach issues where the interests of your district conflict with the needs of the City of Santa Barbara as a whole?

Gregg Hart: The needs of my District mirror the needs of the City as a whole. My neighbors understand the need for more workforce rental housing to ease the housing affordability crisis, supporting a thriving local economy, investing in new infrastructure and transportation improvements and strong environmental leadership. I do not believe the needs of my District conflict with the needs of the City.

Jack Ucciferri: As far as I know, the interests of district 6 are entirely compatible with those of the city as a whole. If the situation should arise that I perceive that those interests conflict in the short term, clearly what is best for the city is ultimately is also best for the district in the long run.

I believe that the residents of district 6 deserve a guarantee that whomever they elect has no intention to run for a higher office during the course of their term. I believe the Chamber should seek such a guarantee from all candidates.

Top 3 Issues In District 6

Gregg Hart: Affordable Housing, Economic Vitality, Quality of Life

Jack Ucciferri: 1. High cost of renting relative to earnings/Income inequality
2. Climate change/Climate justice
3. Parking/Underdeveloped transit options
4. *Bonus issue - Good governance/Democracy

Downtown Core

The Downtown Core is largely in your district. What steps would you take address the concerns of the retail stores, restaurants and entertainment venues in your district?

Gregg Hart: See answer to "State Street" question above.

Jack Ucciferri: See response to question 2, above.

Oversized Vehicle Ordinance

Many of the older homes in your community rely on parking their vehicles on city streets. What is your position on the Oversized Vehicle Ordinance, and how could it affect your constituents?

Gregg Hart: The City Council will soon be considering the Oversized Vehicle Ordinance. I look forward to hearing public comment on the proposed ordinance and working with my Council colleagues to find a solution that works in our community.

Jack Ucciferri: I do not yet have a position on the oversized vehicle ordinance. We will all learn more when the City Council hears public comments on the matter.