

## **Letters: Height initiative lets voters choose**

Judy Orias, Former city planning commissioner, Santa Barbara

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Having lived in Santa Barbara for more than 50 years, I've gained a deep appreciation for the qualities of our city. I realized that previous residents have given to us the guardianship of this special community.

We used to design buildings that were unique to our city. Now however, we are developing bulky high buildings such as those recently constructed along Chapala Street. They are a wake-up call and set a tone for our city, which does not reflect what many consider appropriate for Santa Barbara.

City Council members were asked to address the height problem, but they declined. Consequently, a height initiative was circulated, gathering 11,581 signatures. In November, the voters will be heard.

We hear arguments that workers won't be able to live here if developers can't build to 60 feet. Reduction of the height of the ceilings in new units from 10 feet to 8 feet (the ceiling height found in most homes) will allow the same number of units to be built.

Our city is unique with more than 13 percent of our housing now under the control of affordable laws. With our limited resources of water, land and street circulation, the facts indicate we can never build enough units for everyone who wants to live here. The height initiative gives the people of our city a voice in what they want their city to be like for future generations.

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