



## **Goleta Valley Planning Advisory Committee (GVPAC) Ground Rules / Terms of Engagement**

These ground rules are intended to serve as “terms of engagement” for the members of the Goleta Valley Planning Advisory Committee (GVPAC). They are intended to compliment the Board adopted General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Guidelines and provide the basis for collaborative communication among stakeholders and decision-makers. They are also intended to serve as boundaries for fair and civil behavior and group decision making.

### **Basic Conduct and Decision Making:**

1. **Problem Solving Approach:** Disagreements between participants will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won.
2. **Decision-Making:** The GVPAC will achieve its decisions by a quorum made up of a majority of the members of the GVPAC present and voting, which for this process will be five (5) members. No business can be conducted if fewer members than a quorum are present.
3. **Clear and Timely Communication:** Every participant is responsible for communicating his or her position on issues under consideration. Each participant is also encouraged to clearly state their intentions and concerns at the earliest possible time in the course of the discussions.
4. **Information Sharing:** Relevant information plays an important role in the development of informed consent. At the same time, too much information or information of limited relevance can cause confusion and slow down the process. Where individual members wish to share written or printed information with the group as a whole, such information should be provided to County Staff at least 72 hours prior to any scheduled meeting to allow for duplication and/or distribution prior to the meeting.
5. **E-mail Communication:** Electronic communications shall be guided by the same general protocols for communication, problem solving and negotiation that are followed when the group is in general face-to-face sessions. All email correspondence shall be directed through the GVPAC Chair and County Staff at least 24 hours in advance of meetings if possible. Avoid emailing or phone calls that could possibly create a chain that could violate the Brown Act.
6. **Participation and Observation by Members of the Public:** All GVPAC meetings are open to the public and all observers are welcome. Members of the public will have an opportunity to address the GVPAC during each meeting for a period of time established by the GVPAC Chair. Separate Saturday workshops are geared to soliciting a broader public dialogue where public input is encouraged. Members of the public are encouraged to submit written materials in advance of the meetings via the GVPAC Chair.
7. **Absence when Decisions are made:** When members cannot attend a meeting of the GVPAC, they should communicate their views to the Chair prior to that meeting; however members must be present to vote on decisions.

### **Participant Roles:**

1. **Santa Barbara County’s Roles:** The Santa Barbara County Office of Long Range Planning serves as the convener of the Goleta Community Plan Update process, and the agency with the responsibility of writing the Plan Update. In this regard, it will rely on the decisions of the GVPAC to provide direction for the document that is responsive to neighborhood and community goals, conditions and aspirations.
2. **Group Roles & Responsibilities:** The following points are offered as examples of behavior consistent with constructive dialogue, mutual respect and a commitment to collaboration:
  - a Offer respect of different viewpoints and attention when others speak.

- b** Share the responsibility of ensuring the success of the process and the quality of recommendations.
  - c** Make our best good faith effort to work towards reaching an agreement.
  - d** Represent the perspectives, concerns, and interests of agencies or constituencies whenever possible to ensure that agreements and recommendations developed by the group are acceptable to the organizations, agencies, or constituents being represented.
  - e** Ask questions of each other for clarification and mutual understanding.
  - f** Verify assumptions when necessary and avoid characterizing the motives of others.
  - g** Acknowledge and try to understand others' perspectives.
  - h** Stay focused on the task at hand and share airtime with others.
  - i** Refrain from distracting others through side conversations; silence all cell phones during meetings.
  - j** Concentrate on the content of discussions and allow the Chair to focus on how to promote productive discussion.
- 3. Subcommittees:** When the Chair determines that a specific topic or agenda item requires a higher level of analysis and focus than allowed for during its meetings, it may appoint a Subcommittee to address specific information needs, refine options or resolve differences of opinion outside of its regular meetings. Subcommittees are not empowered to make decisions in place of the group as a whole, but rather to frame and refine issues and information needs for resolution by the GVPAC. They must number fewer members than a quorum of the full GVPAC. Subcommittees are "opportunistic" and "ephemeral" groups in that they exist only as long as it is necessary for them to accomplish their task.