



Planning and Development Department

Office of Long Range Planning

Transmittal Memo

DATE:	Friday, May 15, 2009
TO:	GVPAC Members
FROM:	David Lackie, Supervising Planner Erika Leachman, Associate Planner
CC:	2nd Supervisorial District Office Derek Johnson, Director of the Office of Long Range Planning
SUBJECT:	GVPAC Meeting #15: Cumulative Projects and Areas of Interest in the Goleta Valley Planning Area

The items listed below have been included as part of the meeting materials for GVPAC meeting on Wednesday, May 20, 2009.

- 1. Meeting Agenda:** Please see the attached agenda for the Wednesday, May 20, 2009. For details, please see discussion of agenda items below. **(Attachment 1, P.1)**
- 2. Draft Meeting Minutes:** Staff has provided draft meeting minutes from the May 5, 2009 GVPAC Meeting for review and approval. **(Attachment 2, P.5)**
- 3. Tentative Long Term GVPAC Meeting Schedule:** An updated long term schedule has been provided for review. **(Attachment 3, P.13)**
- 4. Proposed Room and Topic Layout for GVPAC Public Workshop:** As requested by the GVPAC during meeting #14, a revised layout for topical tables has been included for your review. **(Attachment 4, P.19)**

Wednesday, May 20, 2009 Agenda

The following provides additional detail for selected agenda items, as labeled.

Administrative (Item #3)

Citizens' Access Portal: To help inform the GVPAC of the County's new system for citizens interested in permit activity in the County, Linda Liu from the Planning and Development Department will deliver a brief introduction to the system.

Goleta Community Plan Update Workshop and Survey: In preparation for the public workshop scheduled for July 11, 2009, the GVPAC will be given materials on the June 2, 2009. Materials will include focus questions, fact sheets, advertisements for distribution, and other materials. Staff has revised a proposed floor plan for the workshop including topics assigned to each of the conversation stations. These topics are flexible, but should give the community opportunity to discuss a full gamut of current issues in the Goleta Valley.

Community Plan Discussion: Cumulative Projects and Areas of Interest for Updated Plan (Item #4)

Cumulative Projects: Cumulative impacts are defined in CEQA as two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts. Cumulative impacts are the changes in the environment that result from the incremental impact of the development of a proposed project and other nearby projects. For example, traffic impacts of two nearby projects may be inconsequential when analyzed separately, but could have a substantial impact when analyzed together. These types of projects are considered cumulative projects.

As a Community Plan, cumulative projects and impacts are treated somewhat differently than would be the case for a project-specific development. CEQA Guidelines Section 15130 provides appropriate direction for the discussion of cumulative impacts in a Community Plan:

Impacts should be based on a summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

By its nature, community plans consider cumulative projects within the planning area. However, long range land use planning should also consider a community and regional plans that govern development in various surrounding areas, including the General Plans for the City of Santa Barbara and City of Goleta, and the 2008 UCSB Long Range Development Plan (LRDP). Depending on the environmental issue area, the analysis of cumulative impacts may involve consideration of other projects or actions resulting from the implementation of these other plans. Certain issues, such as traffic and air quality, are more regional in nature, and cumulative impacts may consider data outside the Plan Area's boundaries.

The County of Santa Barbara addresses cumulative projects by categorizing known pending projects into tiers based on the project's potential for significant environmental impacts. Generally speaking, the tiers can be described as follows:

Tier 1: Policy initiatives and programs considered along with the proposed program;

Includes general plans, specific plans, transportation improvement plans, etc.

Examples of Tier 1 projects: the City of Goleta General Plan Amendments, the City of Santa Barbara PlanSB General Plan update with attention to the Upper State Street Study, and the 2008 UCSB Long Range Development Plan.

Tier 2: Discretionary and ministerial projects pending review and approval;

Includes development plans and proposals under existing land use plans.

Examples of Tier 2 projects: "Christmas Tree Farm" development plan, and "The Knoll" development plan.

Tier 3: Specific major pending and potential projects, including proposed annexations and large urban developments

Includes loosely defined or speculative projects without formal applications for review.

Examples of Tier 3 projects: Montessori School project, and the State Street/Hope Ranch Hotel project

With this tier system in mind, we will consider the General Plans for the City of Santa Barbara and City of Goleta, and the 2008 UCSB Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) during the upcoming GVPAC meeting.

Areas of Interest/Neighborhood planning in the Goleta Valley Planning Area: As part of the Goleta Community Plan update, we will have the opportunity to propose specific planning goals and tools for areas and/or neighborhoods in the Eastern Goleta Valley. In the 1993 Goleta Community Plan, the designation of numbered Key Sites was developed and used as a tool to apply parcel-specific development standards for land use and development in the future.

At the time, the Goleta Valley had a number of large undeveloped areas, such as the Girsh property, Ellwood Mesa, More Mesa, and the Los Carneros Way area, each with unique environmental resources and constraints. Designating these areas as key sites allowed the County to assess the area for environmental resources and constraints, such as environmentally sensitive habitat and slope, and physically allocate land uses based on the scientific assessment. This approach included a map and delineation of environmental constraints on the property and the approximate area where development could occur with the minimal impact to the environmental resources on site. Using this information, development standards and policies were developed to determine the use of the site in the future, whether it be for residential, commercial, industrial, or agricultural.

Each land use chapter of the 1993 Goleta Community Plan contains a number of Key Sites. Of those originally adopted, only three remain in the Eastern Goleta Valley:

More Mesa (Site #34) – see page 44 of the reformatted 1993 GCP

San Antonio Creek Road (Site #43) - see page 61 of the reformatted 1993 GCP

St. Vincent/Cathedral Oaks (Site #15) - see page 64 of the reformatted 1993 GCP

The GVPAC has the opportunity to consider these existing key sites, as well as new areas of interest and/or neighborhood or small area plans for the updated Goleta Community Plan. In one approach similar

to what occurred during the 1993 Plan development, the list of areas of interest or neighborhoods can then be narrowed down to key sites depending on the priorities of the community. In another approach, the areas of interest can be considered as part of small-area plans to ensure the neighborhood's existing and proposed land uses are sustainable and functional.

Please note that the key site approach devised in the 1993 Goleta Community Plan has some drawbacks, specifically with regard to the approach's limitations to implementing community goals for the entire Eastern Goleta Valley Planning Area, as follows:

Firstly, key sites are largely planned absent consideration of adjacent properties, services/facilities, and neighborhood functionality, character, or land use. Instead, a property is outlined and analyzed for potential development on the site itself based on the site's layout and environment. By delineating a property as a key site and micro-planning the use of the site, the GVPAC's long range planning effort could miss opportunities to address planning issues that persist either area-wide or in unique small areas or neighborhoods. Additionally, by focusing our attention primarily on specific parcels and property owners, we run the risk of leaving citizens and their individual concerns and ideas out of the process, and in doing so, inadvertently distance this process from the greater community interest.

Secondly, the key site approach is inflexible in that the development standards and policies for specific properties are adopted and analyzed in the environmental review process for a period of 10-20 years. Often over the life of a plan, environmental conditions or general policy directions can change requiring major revisions to community plans and their environmental documents, which can be both time consuming and expensive. Designing goals and policies to be parcel-specific commits the community to planning decisions made currently that may become problematic over the life of the plan.

Lastly, the key site approach was devised to address large swaths of land, sometimes with multiple parcels and ownerships. Based on the sites delineated during the Neighborhood Council Meetings, which assessed approximately 30 specific properties for potential affordable housing development, the remaining vacant land in the Eastern Goleta Valley is largely distributed across small parcels under single ownership. Though the Neighborhood Council considered some environmental constraints on each site, the primary focus was on housing development, which for a community plan is only one element of a much larger picture. For the updated Plan, many issue areas, environmental concerns, and land uses should be considered as part of the community fabric.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends the GVPAC consider restructuring the Goleta Community Plan to focus on small-area or neighborhood plans (e.g. Hollister Ave @ Turnpike or Upper State Street), which would consider unique areas as a whole, inclusive of many parcels, existing development, potential development, open spaces, mobility, recreation, and connectivity to other small areas or neighborhoods each with unique goals, needs, and characters. This approach enables the community to form of a vision for a given neighborhood or small area. From a neighborhood approach, the community plan could then apply goals and tools to implement community objectives inclusive of individual vacant parcels while comprehensively planning, analyzing, and addressing all land uses in the small area. This inclusive approach invites input from the entire neighborhood, as opposed to considering a single, undeveloped property, to create comprehensive, well-planned, sustainable neighborhoods in the Eastern Goleta Valley.

For the upcoming meeting, the GVPAC is encouraged to consider staff's recommendation and discuss delineation of neighborhoods, areas of interest/key sites for comprehensive land use planning in the updated Goleta Community Plan, as well as preferred approaches to different areas or neighborhoods.

The GVPAC will also have the opportunity to discuss the capabilities of land use planning in the Goleta Community Plan to support a sustainable community. The following focus questions are provided to aid in

the discussion. Please consider these questions prior to the meeting and feel free to generate additional questions for staff and the GVPAC to augment the discussion:

1. How best can land use planning in the Eastern Goleta Valley address cumulative long range planning projects from neighboring jurisdictions?
2. Which areas or neighborhoods of the Eastern Goleta Valley function well? Which areas or neighborhoods of the Eastern Goleta Valley do not function well?
3. What opportunities exist to integrate and relate a variety of land uses to ensure compatibility and transitions between different land uses (i.e. agriculture and residential, or agriculture and commercial)?