

Coalition for Sensible Planning Comments on Community Plan Draft

Public Services & Facilities, pp. 93 - 151

Transportation & Circulation

As we deal with the transportation issues we notice that so much of what is written in the draft Community Plan makes the assumption that everyone is in agreement -- that the way to plan our community is to plan for higher and higher density.

The Coalition for Sensible Planning strongly opposes this premise. Our goal is to protect our neighborhoods and existing infrastructure from the negative impacts of high density housing. Our comments on the specifics reflect the perspective that we do not assume higher density. We have a chance now to reject this premise in our Community Plan Update and it must be done within the specifics of the Plan.

Text on p. 124: The goal needs to be to improve fluidity for all needs, not to impede auto use. If we increase density, we will need more provisions for autos, not less, but the Plan assumes the opposite is true.

All modes of transportation cannot be considered equally. The ratio of bicycles to autos is not one to one and it is unlikely that it will be, no matter how we change the roads. It is totally unrealistic to presume that many more people will ride bikes. Mothers/fathers with children, sales people with materials, people who make several stops in their work day all need a car!

Text on P. 125: It is an erroneous assumption that higher densities will reduce auto use and increase transit use. This would only happen if absolutely everything residents need is available in that neighborhood and can be carried home without a vehicle. This is very unrealistic.

The Plan refers to urban sprawl as a negative. However, many of our nicest neighborhoods are a result of "urban sprawl" and are among the best places in which to live. Higher density would degrade our beautiful valley into another Los Angeles. Our suburban and semi-rural area is not urban, it is suburban. It is clear that the suburbs are where Eastern Goleta Valley residents want to live and rear their children.

SB 375 Goals on p. 126: The three goals stated on this page would have been appropriate years ago. But the existing density pattern of single family homes in our area is generally low density. We are built-out to a great extent and cannot implement these goals without drastic changes, which our residents have made it clear they do not want.

Text on p. 133: This section speaks of "shifts in land use and development envisioned in this plan" and how to "accommodate projected transportation demand". Our community has made it clear that we do not want degraded circulation and limited parking that accompany high density housing.

Improved Connectivity - 2. San Simeon Rd Bicycle Improvements/Safe Route to School on p.138:

Many of our CSP members live in the San Simeon area and have shown up in large numbers to protest any cut through of a road from Turnpike to San Simeon. This is a quiet neighborhood with one school at that junction now and another being proposed which will increase student foot traffic. If a road connection is permitted, it will make San Simeon a major thoroughfare to Walnut and completely change the neighborhood. The result will make it more dangerous for bikers and walking students. If these neighbors were aware this is being proposed, they would strongly object.

To put traffic bumps and calming devices in that area would do nothing to help the neighborhood. There is a stop at Walnut to slow the traffic. That is all that is needed. A CSP Board member walks that road about four times per week and sees no need for connectivity in the form of a road as put forth in the draft Plan.

The improvement we recommend is a bike path from Turnpike to San Simeon and a painted bike lane all the way to the bike path on the other end of the street. The street is plenty wide enough to paint a bike lane. That would suffice without punishing the residents with so-called calming devices. Bulb outs would only make it more dangerous for bikers of which there are many already.

We can assure you that the residents in the San Simeon area do not want their neighborhood to be a short cut to Hollister from Turnpike, changing their quiet neighborhood forever.

Policy TC-EGV-1.3 on p. 141: The concept of Complete Streets is good one but to assume we can do this with no detriment to auto use is unrealistic. Here again it is an unrealistic assumption that all users deserve equal access. Years ago this would have been possible. Now, we are way too built-out in existing neighborhoods that feed into Hollister Avenue.

New bike paths which do not conflict with auto traffic need to be built through residential areas.

Improved Connectivity - 3. Calle Real Extension Bicycle/Pedestrian Connection to City of Goleta on p. 138:

The Calle Real bike path would be a tremendous help to bikers who do not want to travel Hollister or Cathedral Oaks. The emphasis on bike paths in areas such as this needs to be increased.

Policy TC-EGV-3.1 on 151: A public Transit Center is only needed if we can convince everyone to stop using their cars. This is not going to happen. If we keep the density down we will not have the need to transport so many additional people by bus.

In this suburban setting in our Valley, we are not planning from scratch. There is no good reason to sacrifice our circulation and air quality in order to build new high-density housing against the will of our community.

In addition, the mention of a Transit Center is curiously aligned with previous high-density proposals for the MTD property. We truly wonder why this idea is being proposed again in the Draft Plan? After all, at the Public Workshop held in February 2010 you, the members of the GVPAC committee, already voted against high-density condo proposals for the MTD property. In doing so you truly represented the wishes of your community.

We believe that by remaining relatively low density, there is no need for a Transit Center on the MTD property or other location in our Plan area.