



Planning and Development Department

Long Range Planning Division

Transmittal Memo

DATE: Monday, March 28, 2011

TO: GVPAC Members

FROM: Erika Leachman, Planner
Lucy Pendl, Planner

CC: 2nd Supervisorial District Office
Jeff Hunt, Director, Long Range Planning Division
June Pujo, Supervising Planner, Long Range Planning Division

SUBJECT: GVPAC Meeting #38: GVPAC Review of Administrative Draft Plan

The items listed below have been included as part of the meeting materials for the upcoming GVPAC meeting scheduled for Wednesday, March 30, 2011 at 6:00PM.

1. **Meeting Agenda:** Please see the attached agenda for Wednesday, March 30, 2011. (**Attachment 1, P.1**)
2. **Draft Meeting Minutes:** Staff has provided draft meeting minutes from the March 22, 2011 GVPAC Meeting for review and approval. (**Attachment 2, P.5**)

Agenda for March 30, 2011

Administration

The Administrative Draft Plan is a public document and open to comment from the GVPAC and the community prior to review by County decision-makers for consideration of initiation of environmental review. Review and comment on the draft Plan began in October 2010 and the GVPAC has reviewed a majority of the Plan's sections. The upcoming scheduled meetings will provide opportunity to complete review and comment on the Administrative Draft Plan, as follows:

- Wednesday, March 30, 2011: Comments on Sections II.E and Section III.F

Following completion of GVPAC Review and Comment, the Initiation Draft Plan will be prepared for review by the County Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors followed by initiation for environmental review. The GVPAC Review and Comment phase of the project is scheduled to be completed by March 30th in order to bring the draft Plan to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors in a timely manner.

An additional GVPAC meeting will be scheduled upon completion of this review phase to distribute and discuss revisions made to the Initiation Draft prior to recommendation to the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors. During this meeting, the GVPAC will have the opportunity to make an official recommendation and resolution to the Planning Commission. Staff will include this resolution for consideration by decision-makers.

Review and Comment on Administrative Draft Plan, Sections II.E and III.F

Proposed Revisions to Agricultural Conversion Policies:

The 1993 Goleta Community Plan adopted unique policies for the Goleta Planning Area only to address when and where agriculturally designated land should be converted to non-agricultural land uses over the life of the Plan and beyond. In summary, the 1993 policies preserve agricultural land use designations in the urban area unless the County makes a finding that conversion is appropriate based on the property features, the public need for other uses, and the size and location of the property compared to other urban agricultural properties.

Staff proposes to retain these existing policies and recommends an additional policy to define the findings that should be made by the County prior to consideration of the conversion proposal. This approach ensures that the community's goals for agricultural resource preservation in the urban area are strongly considered in any future land use decision which would result in a change in agricultural land use designations in the urban area.

While the policies cannot legally prohibit agricultural conversion directly or indirectly, they can work together to provide a framework for land use decisions that is predictable and comprehensive. Staff recommends the following existing and new policies to address potential future agricultural conversion proposals:

(New) OBJECTIVE LUA-EGV-1: Enhance and sustain the agricultural land, operations, and characteristics in Eastern Goleta Valley.

(Existing) Policy LUA-EGV-X.X: Urban Agriculture: Land designated for agriculture within the urban area shall be preserved for agricultural use, unless the County makes findings that:

1. the land is no longer appropriate for agriculture, or
2. there is an overriding public need for conversion to other uses for which there is no other suitable land available in the urban area.

(Revised existing) Policy LUA-EGV-X.X: In consideration of general plan amendment and/or rezone proposal which results in a change of land use designation from agricultural to non-agricultural for agricultural land within the urban boundary, the County shall

1. First consider smaller, more isolated parcels with greater urban/agricultural conflicts prior to larger blocks of agricultural land, and
2. Evaluate and document the quality and extent of agricultural resources onsite, adjacent to the property, and within the urban vicinity consistent with the Comprehensive General Plan, including, but not limited to, prime agricultural land, land in existing agricultural use, lands with prime soils, grazing land, land with agricultural potential, and lands under Williamson Act contracts.

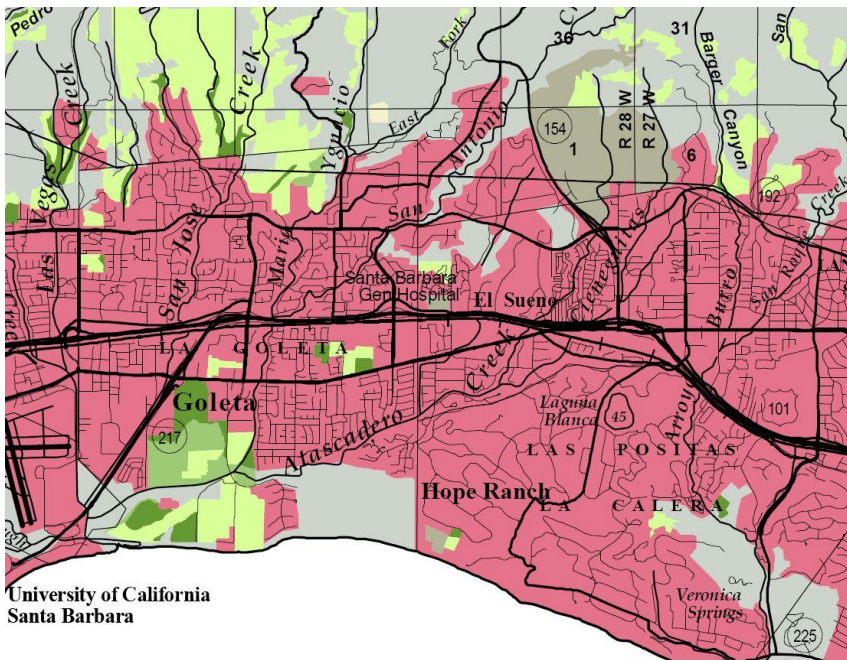
(New) Policy LUA-EGV-X.X: A general plan amendment and/or rezone proposal which results in a change of land use designation from agricultural to non-agricultural shall only be considered when the County makes the following findings regarding the proposal:

1. The property is within the urban area, and
2. The proposed land uses are compatible with each other, and with all neighboring land uses—whether agricultural or non-agricultural, consistent with the Comprehensive General Plan, and
3. The proposal complements or improves the natural environment and community characteristics, particularly with regard to agricultural heritage and natural environmental resources, and/or environmental impacts are minimized, and
4. The proposal contributes at least one public benefit or use, such as public parks, open spaces, trails, habitat protection or restoration, community gardens, or other overriding public need.

Options for MTD property:

The 17-acre MTD property located at the corner of Calle Real and N. San Antonio Rd is currently designated for agricultural uses (A-I-5). The property is not currently productive and is considered 'grazing land' by the California State Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) as of 2008.

**Farmland Mapping and Monitoring (FMMP) Map
State of California, 2008
(focus: Eastern Goleta Valley Urban Area)**



University of California
Santa Barbara

- PRIME FARMLAND - 67,169 acres**
PRIME FARMLAND HAS THE BEST COMBINATION OF PHYSICAL AND CHEMICAL FEATURES ABLE TO SUSTAIN LONG-TERM AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THIS LAND HAS THE SOIL QUALITY, GROWING SEASON, AND MOISTURE SUPPLY NEEDED TO PRODUCE SUSTAINED HIGH YIELDS. LAND MUST HAVE BEEN USED FOR IRRIGATED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AT SOME TIME DURING THE FOUR YEARS PRIOR TO THE MAPPING DATE.
- FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE - 12,299 acres**
FARMLAND OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE IS SIMILAR TO PRIME FARMLAND BUT WITH MINOR SHORTCOMINGS, SUCH AS GREATER SLOPES OR LESS ABILITY TO STORE SOIL MOISTURE. LAND MUST HAVE BEEN USED FOR IRRIGATED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AT SOME TIME DURING THE FOUR YEARS PRIOR TO THE MAPPING DATE.
- UNIQUE FARMLAND - 34,777 acres**
UNIQUE FARMLAND CONSISTS OF LESSER QUALITY SOILS USED FOR THE PRODUCTION OF THE STATE'S LEADING AGRICULTURAL CROPS. THIS LAND IS USUALLY IRRIGATED, BUT MAY INCLUDE NONIRRIGATED ORCHARDS OR VINEYARDS AS FOUND IN SOME CLIMATIC ZONES IN CALIFORNIA. LAND MUST HAVE BEEN CROPPED AT SOME TIME DURING THE FOUR YEARS PRIOR TO THE MAPPING DATE.
- FARMLAND OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE - 11,108 acres**
ALL DRYLAND FARMING AREAS AND PERMANENT PASTURE (IF THE SOILS WERE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR EITHER PRIME OR STATEWIDE). DRYLAND FARMING INCLUDES VARIOUS CEREAL GRAINS (PREDOMINANTLY WHEAT, BARLEY, AND OATS), SUDAN, AND MANY VARIETIES OF BEANS. (ALTHOUGH BEANS CAN BE HIGH VALUE, CROPS THE PRODUCTION AREAS ARE USUALLY ROTATED WITH GRAIN, HENCE THE DECISION TO INCLUDE THEM UNDER LOCAL RATHER THAN UNIQUE. ALSO, BEAN CROP YIELDS ARE HIGHLY INFLUENCED BY CLIMATE, SO THERE CAN BE A WIDE VARIANCE IN CASH VALUE.)
- GRAZING LAND - 581,986 acres**
GRAZING LAND IS LAND ON WHICH THE EXISTING VEGETATION IS SUITED TO THE GRAZING OF LIVESTOCK.
- URBAN AND BUILT-UP LAND - 62,332 acres**
URBAN AND BUILT-UP LAND IS OCCUPIED BY STRUCTURES WITH A BUILDING DENSITY OF AT LEAST 1 UNIT TO 1.5 ACRES, OR APPROXIMATELY 5 STRUCTURES TO A 10-ACRE PARCEL. COMMON EXAMPLES INCLUDE RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL, INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES, CEMETERIES, AIRPORTS, GOLF COURSES, SANITARY LANDFILLS, SEWAGE TREATMENT, AND WATER CONTROL STRUCTURES.
- OTHER LAND - 265,466 acres**
OTHER LAND IS LAND NOT INCLUDED IN ANY OTHER MAPPING CATEGORY. COMMON EXAMPLES INCLUDE LOW DENSITY RURAL DEVELOPMENTS, BRUSH, TIMBER, WETLAND, AND RIPARIAN AREAS NOT SUITABLE FOR LIVESTOCK GRAZING, CONFINED LIVESTOCK, POULTRY, OR AQUACULTURE FACILITIES, STRIP MINES, BORROW PITS, AND WATER BODIES SMALLER THAN 40 ACRES. VACANT AND NONAGRICULTURAL LAND SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND GREATER THAN 40 ACRES IS MAPPED AS OTHER LAND.
- WATER - 4,191 acres**
PERENNIAL WATER BODIES WITH AN EXTENT OF AT LEAST 40 ACRES.

The FMMP delineates agricultural resources based on a range of factors, including location, active agricultural operations, property size, adjacent uses, water availability, and soil composition/classification. While the MTD property is not considered prime or important farmland by the California State Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) as of 2008, the 1981 United States Department of Agriculture mapped some eroded prime soils on the property as depicted:



As adopted in the County's Agricultural Element of the Comprehensive General Plan, lands eligible for Agricultural (A-I or A-II) designations include, but are not limited to, lands with prime soils, prime agricultural land, grazing land, land in existing agricultural use, land with agricultural potential, and lands under Williamson Act contracts. A combination of factors is considered to aid the County in determining where and when it is appropriate to designate a property for agricultural uses, including a review of all suitability factors, property size, and location. . In the case of the MTD property, staff has recommended in the Administrative Draft Plan and Land Use Map that the land use designation be changed to allow for residential uses at a maximum allowable density of 12.3 units per acre to complete the neighborhood with development that is compatible with surrounding uses, as depicted below:

Note: This property and recommended land use changes will be studied in the environmental review phase to disclose any impacts to agricultural resources consistent with the draft Plan's policies and the County's environmental thresholds per the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).



This residential land use designation is recommended to achieve a moderate density neighborhood development in the future that is compatible with surrounding land uses, services, and transportation facilities and affords the community public and/or common open space and public facilities improvements as a result of land use policies in the draft Community Plan update and the land use and development code standards of a planned residential development zoning district.

During review of the proposed draft land use map and residential land uses, the GVPAC recommended the County reduce the maximum allowable density to 3.3 units per acre and cluster the development to afford a public park/open space area as part of a future residential neighborhood development, as depicted:



While this lower density residential designation may reduce overall impacts of future development, it may not afford the community the benefits prioritized by the GVPAC, including public open space preservation and transportation improvements due to financial and nexus constraints to require such benefits as conditions for a less intensive project. Should this option be selected by the decision makers, adjustments to the Transportation and Circulation section of the Draft Plan may be necessary to ensure recommended transportation improvements are planned to correspond with land use planning.

GVPAC Discussion of MTD Options:

The GVPAC’s discussion and advice to staff about the MTD property may consider the three (3) options identified for the property thus far in the review of the Administrative Draft Plan:

1. No land use change: retain agricultural land use designation and apply Urban Agricultural Zoning developed to implement the agricultural land use policies of the Plan;
2. GVPAC recommendation: rezone 17-acres to Res 3.3 and require clustering and open space preservation; or

3. Staff recommendation: rezone 17-acres to Res 12.3 and require clustering and opens space preservation and public facilities improvements.

Staff encourages the GVPAC to consider the benefits and drawbacks to each of these options during our upcoming discussion of agricultural land use.

Transportation and Circulation

On 12/16/10, the GVPAC provided comments to staff on the first portion of Section III.F: Transportation and Circulation (p. 123 – 134). The comments were very helpful to staff to understand objectives for multi-modal transportation options in Eastern Goleta Valley and adjust the tone and focus as needed to balance land use planning with transportation and circulation needs.

To finish the review and comment on this section, the GVPAC will continue from p. 135 address general transportation recommendations, including a complete streets policy and improved connectivity within the existing transportation system, and specific policies, development standards, and actions to implement the community’s transportation goals and objectives.

Please arrive prepared with your comments on p.135 – p.152. Completion of review and comment on these pages signifies completion of the GVPAC’s review of the Administrative Draft Plan.

Staff is available as listed below:

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