

Coalition for Sensible Planning Comments on Community Plan Draft

Land Use and Transportation

Upon completing a reading of the Community Plan Draft sections on Transportation and Land Use, it becomes very evident that a point of view is being promoted which does not reflect the wishes of the community, but what appears to be a more pro-development agenda.

Again and again assumptions are made in the Plan Draft that do not reflect the input of the community. At the workshops and through-out all the GVPAC meetings, the recurring input from the community is that they do not want drastic changes. They want to preserve their quality of life first and foremost! Many of the ideas proposed might be feasible if we were not essentially built out. The challenge now is to make good use of what we have and not add to the congestion and density of our community.

The Plan Draft assumes that we all agree and want high-density multi-story infill housing. However, we can say that this assumption is false, based on our experience of interacting for over six years with the community and attending numerous meetings and workshops. It is clear to CSP members that that what is being promoted is against the wishes of the residents. As a representatives of the community who have watched this process, CSP urges you to eliminate the goals, policies and objectives which promote this high-density agenda.

- We do not want to become densified and urban. We do not want the compact neighborhoods imposed by the Plan Draft.
- Our community has already provided more subsidized housing than any other South Coast community.
- Much of our existing housing is very affordable right now. There is no need to build more to make it more “affordable”.
- We do not want our precious open land converted to high-density infill development.
- We are a bedroom community that could benefit from a few small stores.
- We have many self-employed and older residents who require their cars for daily essentials, who will not be able to live up to the transit-oriented goals of the current Draft Plan.
- We do not need a community hub. If we had wanted to live in a city center, we would have moved elsewhere if that was our desire.

A basic assumption in the Plan Draft is that increasing population and higher density will make our area more sustainable. The opposite is true. We are just about at build-out in terms of emergency evacuations, local food supply, water supply and impacts on the ocean and environment. Bringing more people here, clustered into higher, denser housing will degrade all these factors and make evacuation impossible when we really need it.

After living in the Turnpike area for fifteen years, it is hard to relate to many of the statements in the draft which describe the area as "under-utilized", "disjointed", unattractive", "insecure", and "unsafe". Of course improvements can be made, however, the need for improvements should not be used as an excuse to drastically change the character and density of our community.

It is not credible to state in one section that the Draft Plan intends to preserve the character of our neighborhoods and in other sections lay out a plan which will drastically change our whole community. This plan must be for the benefit of the residents first and foremost, instead of some pro-development agenda.

CSP members urge you to rethink and re-write the Draft Plan so that any future development closely follows the modest goals and densities as outlined in the Goleta Vision Document.