

## Management of Growth

### Background

Santa Barbara's South Coast and the Eastern Goleta Valley is a wonderful place to live, work and enjoy the company of family and friends in the midst of natural beauty, temperate weather, and a diverse economy. At the same time, the Eastern Goleta Valley—indeed all of the South Coast and much of Coastal California between Marin County in the north and San Diego County in the south—is in crisis. Housing affordability is at an all-time low, while the number of people commuting from the north and south to jobs in our community and the surrounding South Coast is at an all-time high and continues to grow. We debate the need for commuter rail and the merits of widening our freeways, while hoping to preserve as much as possible of our unspoiled natural environment. Pressure is building to convert more and more agricultural land to homes. Our present course does not appear to be on a path towards a healthy, sustainable community. We must do something or we risk losing that which makes the Eastern Goleta Valley a treasure we value.

Throughout Coastal California, and especially in the Santa Barbara region, housing prices have risen so much as to put home ownership out of the reach of nearly all first time buyers. The result is that local businesses, nonprofits including our hospitals and clinics, and government agencies are experiencing great difficulty recruiting and retaining workers. Over 25,000 people commute into the South Coast each work day from outlying areas with more affordable housing. The environmental, social, and economic costs of such commuting are paid in increasing sprawl and air pollution, time on the road that would otherwise be spent with family and local community, and tax dollars spent elsewhere. As a community, we suffer when young families move away. South Coast schools are losing enrollment and civic organizations are losing volunteers. Our adult children cannot afford to live here any more. The eastern Goleta Valley was traditionally home to a solid middle class consisting of young families, but now we are becoming increasingly older and wealthier homeowners and younger, poorer working class families and individuals who provide services to the wealthier segments of the community. For the lowest income residents, increasing rents and mortgages are either reducing the size of the house they can afford or increasing the number of families per dwelling unit. Spillover effects of crowding range from increased parking congestion, lack of recreational opportunities, and high levels of stress among families and single individuals sharing cramped living spaces.

We believe we can and must do more to address this situation. We would like to see the amount of additional market rate housing reduced, as it is likely to result in housing for higher income households. To produce housing that meets the needs of lower and middle income households, some increase in densities along with zoning that provides for mixed use projects in appropriate locations will be needed. It is critical that we get high quality design and a mix of housing types that are suitable for the natural setting of the Eastern Goleta Valley and existing neighborhoods. To fulfill a vision of providing more affordable housing, we need to pursue innovative strategies that place greater emphasis on employer-provided housing. In particular, the single largest employer in our planning area, County government, should establish a housing program

on County-owned land for employees. We also support the development of appropriately scaled housing on agricultural land specifically for farm workers.

Mixed-use projects along our transportation corridors that combine housing with compatible commercial uses can provide multiple benefits. They can make housing more affordable; the nonresidential uses, particularly retail, increase our tax base; the residents can walk to shops and transit. Some of our aging strip malls can be redeveloped this way; new development can be designed as mixed use from the outset. Efficient, compact land use patterns, with different uses, in close proximity will allow us to manage growth in a responsible way and to be good stewards of the environment.

The following principles should guide our approach to addressing future growth:

1. Planning for housing needs to go hand in hand with planning for transportation and open space.
2. Newly developed housing must offer some type of community amenity, either on site or by establishing a Community Services District.
3. We need to protect our current stock of affordable housing, including rental units.
4. All restricted/subsidized affordable housing should stay affordable, in virtual perpetuity.
5. We do not seek much development of market-rate units. Where such units are built, we strongly encourage that substantial in-lieu fees be deposited in the county's Housing Fund and then applied to the development of a mix of affordable housing types within the planning area.
6. The Hollister Corridor between 154 and Walnut offers opportunities to increase business opportunities through a broader range of commercial activities than currently available. To be effective as a transportation corridor, we support the development of mixed uses along the corridor and building heights up to 40 feet with appropriate design standards that include lot line setbacks, and second and third story setbacks to preserve views and an appropriate human scale.
7. Some other areas of the Eastern Goleta Valley might be appropriate to designate for redevelopment to accomplish our vision, e.g., Calle Real from Turnpike to 154.

## **The Future**

In the future, we want to house a larger share of our essential work force here, including policemen, firemen, nurses, and teachers, many of whom would be in employer provided housing and publicly-owned lands. We hope to maintain a diverse population of all incomes, ethnic groups, and ages. We will have stopped the out migration of our middle class. Our single family neighborhoods will be thriving alongside some newer, more compact ones. Hollister Avenue will be an attractive mixed-use corridor with retail, restaurants, office space, and rental apartments all built to present an inviting front to the street. Reasonable production of housing has reduced pressures to build outside the urban limit line (ULL) and has provided alternatives to commuting. Increased densities along the primary transportation corridors have increased the efficiency of transit. The natural beauty of our valley is enhanced by an equally beautiful as well as functional man-made environment.

### **Vision Statement**

Our community will pursue measured development that will increase housing and commercial opportunities for a socio-economically diverse population. We will plan for growth that enhances our neighborhoods, minimizes the need to encroach on agricultural and open space land, conserves resources and contributes to mobility for all.

### **Goal #1**

Encourage compact development along transportation corridors and in proximity to jobs, schools, and other urban services.

Steps to achieve Goal:

- Strengthen the urban limit line (ULL) to make it substantially more difficult to change the boundary and concentrate development within the ULL.
- Provide for Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) from sites outside the ULL to sites inside it.
- Encourage new development along transportation corridors. For agriculturally zoned parcels along such corridors, use overlays to allow housing.
- Create a specific plan for agricultural land in our planning area to allow for development of smaller parcels in the Hollister/Calle Real area, while permanently preserving the South Patterson agricultural block, where agriculture is most viable.
- Identify appropriate sites according to the criteria in the above goal and rezone to residential uses at higher densities.
- Use attached housing and clustered development to provide for open space and view corridors.
- Stimulate production of affordable housing by providing density bonuses, fee waivers etc. and using the best available financing techniques.
- Encourage production of workforce housing.
- Encourage a mix of housing within projects.
- Integrate land use and transportation planning to reduce auto dependency, as described in our Transportation/Mobility chapter.

### **Goal #2:**

Develop Hollister Avenue into an attractive mixed-use corridor.

Steps to achieve Goal:

- Create a specific plan for Hollister Ave. and Calle Real that would combine land use with transportation planning.
- Consider raising the height limit to 40 ft to accommodate 3-story mixed use projects while giving special consideration to the preservation of viewsheds, neighborhood compatibility, and human scale proportions.
- Encourage the building of rental apartments in the mixed use zones by streamlining permit procedures

- Consider form-based zoning in any specific plan that might be developed for the area.
- Dedicate some office space to start-ups and incubators.
- Modify parking requirements to provide for conjunctive-use parking as appropriate for mixed-use projects.

### **Goal #3:**

Provide more housing opportunity in existing neighborhoods while preserving their unique character.

Steps to achieve Goal:

- Encourage residential secondary units. These could be rentals or they could be living space for extended family members
- Streamline permit processing for residential secondary units and for small affordable projects (5 units or less) that adhere to residential design guidelines.
- Preserve our existing stock of affordable housing.
- Establish a County program to develop housing on County sites for public employees
- Require all private employers over a certain size (e.g., 50 employees) to contribute to the Housing Trust fund (or build housing) and designate a portion of the Trust funds to building housing specifically for employees of contributing employers
- Use the Housing Trust fund to build more rental units

We will know we were successful in these three goals when we have reached our vision above:

We are housing a larger share of our local work force here, including policemen, firemen, nurses, and teachers, and that a substantial portion are of this critical workforce are housed in employer supported housing. We are providing a home here to a population that is diverse in terms of income, ethnic groups, and age. We are again a place with a flourishing middle class. Our single family neighborhoods are thriving alongside some newer, more compact ones. Hollister Avenue is an attractive mixed-use corridor with retail, restaurants, office space, and rental apartments all built to present an inviting front to the street. The natural beauty of our valley is enhanced by an equally beautiful as well as functional man made environment.

*Recommendation for some steps to be added to other sections:*

#### Open Space

8. *To protect open space and the ecosystems in the semi-rural and rural portions of the Eastern Goleta Valley that are outside the ULL, the ULL should be strengthened in a manner that makes it substantially more difficult to change the boundary line.*

9. *To protect open space and the ecosystems in the urbanized area of the Eastern Goleta Valley within the ULL, a conservation district should be established to fund acquisitions and provide for conservation easements.*

Transportation/Mobility

10. *The critical transportation problems in the Eastern Goleta Valley must be addressed in conjunction with protecting open space and providing a wider range of housing opportunities. Selected streets should be improved to be safe and functional for all users and to accommodate increased opportunities for transit.*
  - a. *Calle Real between 154 and Turnpike*
  - b. *Hollister between 154 and Puente and between Turnpike and Walnut*
  - c. *Turnpike between Calle Real and Hollister.*