

Goleta Vision Committee Ground Rules / Terms of Engagement

These ground rules are intended to serve as “terms of engagement” for the members of the Goleta Vision Committee (GVC). They are intended to compliment materials regarding GVC Roles and provide the basis for collaborative communication among stakeholders charged with building consensus on recommendations and/or agreements. They are also intended to serve as boundaries for fair and civil behavior and group decision making.

Basic Conduct and Decision Making:

1. **Problem Solving Approach:** Disagreements between participants will be regarded as problems to be solved rather than battles to be won.
2. **Decision-Making:** The advisory committee will strive to achieve its decisions by consensus. While straw polls may be taken to ascertain the general attitude of the group to a given issue or proposal, the group shall refrain from formal voting as a preferred decision making structure. In seeking consensus, each member has an obligation to articulate interests, propose alternatives, listen to proposals and build agreements by negotiating in good faith. In exchange, each member has the right to expect
 - a full articulation of agreement and areas of disagreement, if any;
 - an opportunity to revisit issues on grounds of substantial new information becoming available during the group’s deliberations.

When unable to support a consensus, a member has an obligation to demonstrate that the item at issue is a matter of such principle or importance that his or her constituents' interests would be substantially and adversely affected by the proposed decision. In addition, it is the responsibility of the dissenting party to: 1) state the reason(s) underlying their withholding of consent in sufficient detail, and 2) offer an alternative suggestion that seeks to satisfactorily address not only their concerns and interests, but also those of other members of the group as well.

3. **Integrity and Congruency:** Agreement to participate in this process carries with it a responsibility to uphold the integrity of the group decision-making process. This means that parties who vote in the affirmative on issues or packages agree to fully support the consensus decisions of the group.
4. **Clear and Timely Communication:** Every participant is responsible for communicating his or her position on issues under consideration. Each participant is also encouraged to clearly state their intentions and concerns at the earliest possible time in the course of the discussions.
5. **Information Sharing:** Relevant information can play an important role in the development of informed consent. At the same time, too much information or information of limited relevance can cause confusion and slow down the process. Where individual members wish to share written or printed information with the group as a whole, such information should be provided to the Facilitator at least 72 hours prior to any scheduled meeting to allow for duplication and/or distribution prior to the meeting.
6. **E-mail Communication:** Electronic communication shall be guided by the same general protocols for communication, problem solving and negotiation that are followed when the group is in general face-to-face sessions. All e-mail correspondence associated with group

deliberations shall be directed through a moderator or facilitator chosen by the group and provided to the GVC at least 24 hours in advance of meetings if possible.

7. **Participation and Observation by Members of the Public:** All GVC meetings are open to the public and observers are welcome. Evening meetings of the GVC are meant to be working meetings focused on collaboratively developing a recommendation to the Planning Commission regarding the Community Plan Update. Members of the public will have an opportunity to address the Committee at some point during each meeting for a period of up to 2 minutes individually and 15 minutes in the aggregate. Members of the public are also encouraged to raise their concerns directly with GVC members before or after the meetings as well as during breaks to ensure that all issues of significant concern to the public are considered in the GVC's deliberations. Separate Saturday workshops are geared to soliciting a broader public dialogue where public input is encouraged. Members of the public are encouraged to submit written materials in advance of the meetings via the Facilitator.
8. **Absence when Decisions are Made:** When members cannot attend a meeting of the GVC, they should communicate their views to other members of the group prior to that meeting. Absence is interpreted as assent.
9. **If Consensus Cannot Be reached on the Final Recommendation:** If consensus cannot be reached on recommendations to the Planning Commission regarding the Community Plan Update, the GVC will forward a summary of their areas of agreement and areas of disagreement. In no case will there be a statement of what proportion of members were in favor or opposed to any provision on which there is continuing disagreement.
10. **Voluntary Participation:** Service on the GVC is voluntary. In the event of significant disagreements on substance or process, the GVC will decide, in consultation with the Facilitator, how best to move forward. For example, additional discussion may be needed to help understand unresolved concerns before proceeding further, or the group may benefit from working on creating additional options. If, after exhausting all other options, a GVC member feels that he or she cannot go along with a very strong consensus developed by the rest of the group, they have the option to withdraw as an official member of the Goleta Vision Committee

Participant Roles:

1. **Facilitator Roles:** The role of the facilitator is to assist the parties to reach a consensual agreement. This includes the preparation of notes, agendas, and other items which are designed to move the discussions toward resolution. The Facilitator will also hold in confidence any discussions with individual members unless specifically instructed otherwise.
2. **Comprehensive Planning's Roles:** The Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Planning serves as the convener of the Goleta Community Plan Update Vision Process, and the agency with the responsibility of writing the Community Plan Update. In this regard, it will rely on the recommendations of the Goleta Vision Committee to provide guidance in crafting a document that is responsive to neighborhood and community goals, conditions and aspirations.
3. **Group Roles & Responsibilities:** The following points are offered as examples of behavior consistent with constructive dialogue, mutual respect and a commitment to collaboration:
 - Offer respect of different viewpoints and attention when others speak.

- Share the responsibility of ensuring the success of the process and the quality of recommendations.
 - Make our best good faith effort to work towards reaching an agreement.
 - Represent the perspectives, concerns, and interests of agencies or constituencies whenever possible to ensure that agreements and recommendations developed by the group are acceptable to the organizations, agencies, or constituents being represented.
 - Ask questions of each other for clarification and mutual understanding.
 - Verify assumptions when necessary and avoid characterizing the motives of others.
 - Acknowledge and try to understand others' perspectives.
 - Stay focused on the task at hand and share airtime with others
 - Refrain from distracting others through side conversations; silence all cell phones during meetings.
 - Concentrate on the content of discussions and allow the Facilitator to focus on how to promote productive discussion.
 - Keep the group informed regarding constraints on decision-making authority within agencies or constituency groups.
 - Keep the Facilitator neutral.
4. **Ad Hoc Subcommittees:** When the advisory committee determines that a specific topic or agenda item requires a higher level of analysis and focus than allowed for during its meetings, it may appoint an Ad Hoc Subcommittee to address specific information needs, refine options or resolve differences of opinion outside of its regular meetings. Subcommittees are not empowered to make decisions in place of the group as a whole, but rather to frame and refine issues and information needs for resolution by the group. They should be composed of as few members as is necessary to accomplish the task it is charged with. In doing so, it may pull from resources within the group, from "Tier 2 Participants" or from the staffs of agencies participating in the process. Ad Hoc Subcommittees are "opportunistic" and "ephemeral" groups in that they exist only as long as it is necessary for them to accomplish their task.

Signatures on File

Ted Adams

Lauren Hanson

 Michael Brown

Harold 'Hal' Hill

 Gary Earle

Eva Inbar

 Brian Fahnestock

Valerie Olson

 Tish Gainey

James Richard

 Susan Grgich

Tim Schmidt

 Oscar Carmona

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