

**Goleta Vision Committee
February 4, 2006 9:00 am – 3:30 pm**

Location: Goleta Community Center
5679 Hollister Avenue

Final Meeting Notes

Meeting Purpose: To provide an opportunity for Goleta Vision Committee (GVC) Members and the general public to discuss those community characteristics that warrant special attention within the Goleta valley Community Plan Update process; to become more informed about baseline conditions and trends affecting the planning area, and the current regulatory environment regarding affordable housing issues.

Vision Committee

Members:	Lauren Hanson	County Staff Support:
Ted Adams	Eva Inbar	Terri Maus;
Michael Brown	Valerie Olson	John McInnes;
Gary Earle	James Richard	Derek Johnson
Brian Fahnestock	Tim Schmidt	Josh McDonald
Tish Gainey		
Susan Grgich	Hal Hill (not present)	Facilitator: John Jostes

1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

John Jostes welcomed those in attendance at the workshop and noted that the workshop purpose was to have a community conversation about what characteristics of the Goleta Valley warrant special attention, to become informed and share perspectives, and to identify baseline conditions affecting the planning area. He then provided an overview of the agenda and opportunities for public comment. He noted that no decision making was anticipated to take place at the meeting.

2. Participant Introductions

Vision Committee members introduced themselves and County staff in attendance also provided introductions.

3. Preliminaries

a. Brown Act Applicability and Related Issues

John Jostes then reviewed several matters of interest to the Committee. He provided an overview of a memo from Shane Stark, County Counsel in response to a request from Gary Earle asserting that the committee was subject to the Brown Act. In his memo, Mr. Stark indicated that the Committee was not a legislative body subject to the Brown Act because it was not created by formal action of the Board of Supervisors. As a result, the committee is not required by law to meet in public and may hold closed meetings. On this subject, Mr. Stark also noted that the committee's adopted ground rules provided for the public to observe and participate and is therefore consistent with the spirit and purposes of California open meeting laws. In responding to the question of whether persons attending the meeting can tape the meeting, Mr. Stark noted that there is no general right to tape a business meeting hosted by a governmental agency. In addressing the question of whether a proposed, but unadopted meeting ground rule suggested members should refrain from public criticism of the vision process without first bringing

their concerns to the group as unconstitutional, Mr. Stark noted the concern was moot because the proposed ground rule was not adopted. Mr. Stark also noted that the County is not required to televise the committee meetings. Finally, he noted that the County would defend and indemnify the committee under its memorandum of coverage with the CSAC Excess Insurance Authority and if individual members and the County are sued for violating the Brown Act.

b. Document Request under the Public Records Act

John Jostes then reviewed for the committee a Public Records act request filed by Gary Earle requesting specific information related to committee applicant submittals including application materials, resumes, etc. which were filed by all applicants for the committee, any documents that were used relating to the process of how committee members were chosen, any documents to show who applied to the committee and who was recruited, and any and all documents and records relating to the process of formation of the committee. John noted that the County was in the process of complying with the request and asked committee members the degree to which they wanted the County to make their personal information public. After some discussion, it was suggested that decisions regarding privacy should reflect a consensus of the group and that if one member of the committee did not want certain private information released, that should be respected by the group as a whole.

Action Item: *There was general agreement on the committee that private information beyond names should not be released, but that individual members were free to communicate with whomever they chose via whatever method (telephone, mail, e-mail, etc.) they individually find appropriate.*

c. Withdrawal of Brian Caird from Committee

John Jostes announced that he had been notified by Brian Caird that the time commitment of serving on the Goleta Vision Committee was greater than he was able to support at this time, given his other existing business and family commitments. John noted that he would work with Supervisor Rose's office to identify another individual from the list of applicants who could represent the caucus of interests (agriculture, business, etc.) that Brian brought to the discussion. John indicated that if no applicants had those characteristics that other individuals with ties to agriculture would be recruited to serve on the committee.

4. Public Comment – Morning Session

John Jostes then opened up the meeting to receive public comments from those in attendance. He reiterated that the committee, county staff and the facilitator were looking forward to participation by the public in general and that what was said would help to shape the end product/recommendations developed by the committee. A total of 11 individuals addressed the committee and offered the following comments and observations:

- The land to be set aside for higher density at 20 units per acre will not be designated for affordable housing; there is no requirement for either affordable housing or work force housing. A major concern is that these units will attract individuals from outside of the area and will cause an increase in population, traffic, water demand etc.

- There is huge development potential at the San Marcos Growers and School District properties that could increase traffic congestion at the Hollister Avenue/Turnpike Rd. intersection and cause child safety problems
- There is a preference for low density and green space over high density housing
- The Community Plan Update should be completed before specific sites are selected.
- There is a concern that development decisions are being made while the Community Plan update process is underway. There should be a moratorium on all zone changes until the process is completed.
- The St. Athanasius Church proposal shouldn't take place on agricultural land.
- Parcels that are zoned for agriculture should remain in agriculture. By converting agricultural lands to other uses reduces the capability to produce locally grown food, particularly if the area is cut off from the rest of the state during an emergency or disaster.
- Using inclusionary housing strategies does not produce enough affordable housing given the density allowed.
- Planning decisions should be based on what is good for the community, not to satisfy state mandates.
- Rezonings should be limited; use zoning overlays to accomplish needed land use changes.
- Concerned about the MTD property below Forte Ranch. Development on that site at 20 units/acre would result in 400 – 600 units on that parcel, plus commercial; this is too much development. The GVC should visit Forte Ranch to see what development at 7 units to the acre looks like.
- Density is OK as long as it is reasonable, like Forte Ranch.
- We have a concern that the eastern Goleta Valley will become the dumping ground for high density housing. Given the current population of the area, anything more than 1 acre of high density (20 units/acre) is more than our fair share.
- Each of acre of land which is zoned for 20 units per acre will have a new net value of \$20 million. This is a huge windfall for those who own or develop the land.
- Over the last ten years, farmers in the Goleta Valley have decreased in numbers by approximately 25%, according to surveys by agricultural organizations. Farming should be kept viable in the Valley though special/reduced water rates for agriculture.
- Once decisions are made to convert parcels from Agriculture to something more urban, those parcels are lost forever.
- The Community Plan Update process is more than just density and housing. Visual and aesthetic resources are important as well. The Committee should set standards for the visual appearance of the built environment.
- Referral to the planning area as “Noleta” is unfortunate because it has a negative connotation.
- Don't allow more development.
- Concerned about trying to address social justice and environmental issues through building housing in my neighborhood

- Agriculture needs to be relocated if it begins to disappear. Need to provide for new types of agriculture. Currently, the cost of an agricultural water meter is prohibitive from a farming perspective.

After the close of the public comment period, several committee members offered additional remarks. Brian Fahnestock raised the issue of whether the committee is simply tasked with finding locations/sites for housing at 20 units per acre or looking at the bigger planning issues common to the entire planning area. Gary Earle suggested that the process had been developed in such a way as to be out of sequence because the Committee is trying to designate specific sites for high density housing before it gets an understanding of the broader planning issues that will be dovetailed into the plan update. Valerie Olson suggested that the committee would benefit if they were able to understand what is currently being proposed within the planning area – a list of projects, both residential and non residential would help.

5. County Staff Presentations on the Planning Process and Land Use (handout distributed)

John McInnes, Director of Long Range and Strategic Planning for the County, provided a handout to the committee members and provided an overview of the County's Comprehensive Plan process, the role of community plans and the relationship between the County's Housing Element Revisions and the Goleta Community Plan update process. He fielded questions from committee members throughout his presentation.

6. Facilitator Overview of Visioning and Vision Processes in General (handout distributed)

John Jostes then provided the committee with an overview of visioning and the various processes which are used to engage stakeholders and the community at large. He reviewed what vision processes entail and how they are used, as well as the three primary types and orientations of these processes. He also highlighted some vision processes that have been applied within counties with a similar population level and semi-rural nature as Santa Barbara County. Committee members asked questions and generally voiced support for processes that focus on quality of life and articulate an action plan.

Lunch Break

7. Public Comment – Afternoon Session

The afternoon session began with an opportunity for members of the audience to offer additional testimony and public comment. Many of the same speakers who addressed the committee in the morning also addressed comments to the committee in the afternoon. A total of 8 individuals offered the following comments.

- The traffic situation is getting significantly worse as time goes on. Teachers are moving out of town, families are doubling up and streets are becoming more crowded with parked cars. The GVC should address these issues.
- The committee should be concerned about litigation coming from developers and affordable housing advocates; non-compliance relates to state funding and grants; it may be that the County does not need the kind of programs that state funding and grants provide for.
- If housing sites are identified within an EIR, this makes it easier for them to be developed because the sites do not have to undergo additional environmental review on a case by case basis because their review has already taken place.
- The number of affordable housing sites that the state wants to locate in the South Coast is close to 6000 dwelling units.

- The 20 units per acre mandate is of critical concern because it ignores local conditions and desires; more local control is needed instead of state mandates.
- Second residential units are included in the state's housing numbers. More information should be available to the committee members, particularly the letter from County Executive Officer Michael Brown to State HCD Director Cathy Cresswell.
- In the old Goleta Community plan, there was also a Growth Management Ordinance enacted which limited residential growth to 200 units per year. What has happened to these limitations?
- It's important not to use up the remaining carrying capacity of the community with 20 unit/acre housing which is not guaranteed to be affordable or oriented toward the local community.
- Likes the Pennsylvania Visioning Model because it focuses on quality of life
- Likes the Oregon Visioning Model because it focuses on trends.

8. Vision Committee Discussion of Community Assets, Land Use and Infrastructure

John Jostes then facilitated a discussion among committee members which focused on identifying the special assets, infrastructure and resources that contribute to the quality of life and deserve special attention. Committee members offered the following comments and perspectives:

- Convenient, affordable mass transit is a very important aspect of the community; connections and linkages between bikes, buses and trains are also critical components of a well-functioning community.
- The Institute of Traffic Engineers trip generation manual says each house will generate 10 car trips. (The Facilitator noted that this trip rate is for single family homes only and that other types of residential land uses generate different rates, i.e., 3.3 trips per senior housing unit, 6.1 trips per condominium unit, etc.)
- Mountain views and viewsheds encompassing natural areas are important to preserve.
- High school, junior high schools and elementary schools should serve as nodes around which communities and neighborhoods can come together
- The area has an "OK" network of bike trails
- Need a place where there is an ocean view from bike lanes; the only existing ones are in the City of Santa Barbara and Goleta Beach Park
- Need to provide for transit opportunities for those without a car; we need to decrease auto dependency.
- The unincorporated area needs its own library
- Should we simply utilize other cities resources or become some kind of sub center along the Hollister corridor and offer something like a neighborhood medical center or the like?
- We need lots of areas where kids can walk to school on safe paved sidewalks.

- Lots of people are just traveling through the community; eastern Goleta Valley doesn't have anything to call its own. We need a core, a town center, a "main street" or something that serves as a destination in its own right.
- We need more culture, restaurants and theatres – areas that are intimate and draw out the community.
- Is the vision to create what's already present in the City of Goleta or something different?
- We need to be better prepared to deal with emergency situations and disasters. Currently, we have about 100 available hospital beds, 20 fire vehicles, and a limited number of ambulances. The emergency services of the community have shrunk to meet existing need only and are not capable of responding to greater, albeit abnormal needs.
- Disaster preparedness is important. Emergency preparedness means operating as a group, not just as individuals.
- What does the County have in mind for the County "Campus" that includes the Jail, Transfer Station, etc.?
- The County does not contribute to MTD, but MTD provides service to the area. Effective transit is only as good as its headways (the shorter the better). We need to secure the funding to reduce headways so that people find it more convenient to use transit.
- Need to address size, bulk and scale issues associated with large houses and mansions through the update process; we need some design standards to apply to land uses.
- Non-residential architecture is totally lacking in theme. We need a sense of place that is reflective of what Goleta wants to be.
- Community meeting space is needed as well; the only park land is Tuckers Grove.
- Pedestrian and bicycle linkages are important to the community. It would also be nice to have a pedestrian/bike overpass across the freeway somewhere in the planning area.
- Hollister should have a green belt and be more walk-able and pedestrian friendly than it is now.
- New developments should not set themselves apart from the community with gates and walls, they should be inviting people in.

9. County Staff Presentations on Housing Issues facing the County and the Goleta Community Plan Update Process (handout distributed)

John McInnes and Josh McDonnell provided a somewhat detailed overview of the Housing Element Update, the State of California's mandates for constructing various levels of affordable and market housing, the EIR process for the Housing Element Update, and the coordination, sequencing and timing issues associated with integrating the Goleta Community Plan Update process with other parallel processes. A number of questions and comments were stimulated by his presentation.

- It is difficult to engage in a vision process when the group is provided with a formula for how to deal with density issues. Picking sites where a strict 20 units/acre will be permitted avoids the larger issue of the update process – the group needs to focus on a larger perspective, something more than just 20 units/acre.
- We need to find a way to provide for affordable housing than strictly designating sites at 20 units/acre. The group should tell the Board of Supervisors that we don't want to use the approach imposed upon us by the State that requires an unconditional 20 unit/acre approach.
- Can we say that we do not want to zone any sites at 20 units/acre now and then develop our own preferred approach and prepare a separate EIR on that approach?
- It's important to do the affordable housing issue right the first time. We shouldn't be forced into bad planning because we're out of sequence.

10. Concluding Remarks

The workshop concluded with John Jostes thanking the committee members and those members of the public who attended and participated for their thoughtful commentary and feedback. Because of the extensive discussion that took place over the day, the group was not able to address a series of questions addressing housing need, mix and fair share allocation issues. Further discussion of these issues was deferred to the next meeting of the committee.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, February 15th at 6:30 pm at a location to be announced early during the week of February 6th.