

Subject: GVPAC Meeting Summary of February 3, 2009

From: "Kenan Ezal" <kezal@toyon.com>

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To: "Kenan Ezal \ (Home\)" <Kenan.Ezal@cox.net>

Hello Everyone,

The following summarizes the general issues discussed during the last GVPAC meeting. Please note that I was unable to attend this meeting due to job-related travel. These notes are a result of reviewing the audio recording and PowerPoint presentation available at the County website.

Meeting Notes (2009-02-03):

1. Next Meeting:
 - a. *Date:* February 18, 2009
 - b. *Location:* Planning Commission Hearing Room.
 - c. *Agenda:* Parks, Recreation, Trails, Open Space, and Visual Resources
 - i. Existing Facilities
 - ii. Active and Passive Recreation Opportunities
 - iii. Regional Public Access and Use
 - iv. Visual Resources and Aesthetics
2. Main Overview: The primary purpose of this meeting was to learn about Mobility and Transportation in the Goleta Valley, especially in relation to the 1993 Goleta Community Plan (GCP). In particular we reviewed:
 - a. *Existing Conditions in Goleta Valley:* There are three primary east-west (Cathedral Oaks/Foothill, Highway 101/Calle Real, Hollister Ave/State St.) and two north-south (Patterson Ave, Turnpike Rd.) transit corridors in Eastern Goleta Valley.
 - i. Traditional auto-centric system
 - ii. Multiple agencies and jurisdictions: Santa Barbara County (SBC), City of Goleta, City of Santa Barbara, Caltrans, SBC Association of Governments (SBCAG), Metropolitan Transit District (MTD), and Air Pollution Control District (APCD)
 - iii. Circulation Element of Goleta Community Plan is the primary document that sets the level of service (LOS) thresholds for roadways and intersections and plans out the transportation system. It amends the Circulation Element of the Comprehensive Plan.
 - iv. The federal Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) is used to define the level/quality of service and capacity of roadways and intersections.
 - Level of service levels vary from A (free flow) to F (forced or breakdown of flow).

- The GCP sets the minimum required LOS at C (stable flow). However, this was specifically modified for Fairview at a LOS of D through a general amendment to the plan.
 - The LOS of an intersection is also defined in terms of the average weight time. For example, a LOS A rating implies an average wait time of 10 seconds and a LOS F rating implies an average wait time of over 80 seconds.
- v. A Bicycle Master Plan is included in the Circulation Element of the Comprehensive Plan and defines different classes of bicycle-enabled routes: Class I (Bike Path), Class II (Bike Lane), and Class III (Bike Route).
- b. *Transportation Network Planning*: Considerations include costs to government, vehicle operating costs (users), travel time (efficiency), safety, feasibility (project impacts), and implementation strategy (improvement plans, impact fees). Part of this presentation was given by Charlie Ebeling and Will Robertson (SBC Public Works, Transportation Division).
- i. Goleta Transportation Improvement Plan (GTIP) is part of the 1993 GCP.
- Includes plans for specific roadways/intersections and alternative transportation and is funded by roadway impact (mitigation) fees.
 - It is a tool that addresses development impacts to the transportation network.
 - The 1987 California Mitigation Fee Act permits the collection of fees to offset development impacts to government to *maintain service levels*. These fees cannot be used for maintenance projects, only capital improvement projects. In addition, new developments cannot be charged for existing deficiencies in the road network.

The mitigation fee in terms of *dollars per peak-hour vehicle trips* is determined from the *projected* increase in peak-hour vehicle trips in the Community Plan and the *projected* costs to mitigate the impacts of increased peak-hour trips. This fee is region-dependant and is adjusted for inflation.
 - The current fee is \$12,461 per peak-hour vehicle trip and is based on the 2007 GTIP Mitigation Fee Study which analyzed 32 projects costs and included the Hollister Widening Project, Traffic Signals, Bikeway Improvements, and Transit Service Improvements.
 - The number of peak-hour vehicle trips generated by a development depends on the specific type of land use and is based on national statistics. For example, a 2000 sq. ft. single-family home generates a different number of peak-hour trips (one) than a 7000 sq. ft. estate.
 - Typical peak hours are between 7 am and 9 am, and 4 pm and 7 pm and depending on its typical use is different for each intersection.
 - GTIP allows fees to be collected for the region as a whole. Development costs for site-dependent improvements are *in addition* to the GTIP-determined mitigation fee.
 - 20% of the GTIP mitigation fees must be spent on alternative transportation.
 - Although the Circulation Element may contain policies and standards that must be met, a

General Plan Amendment may later override those policies to lower (or increase) the acceptable LOS levels.

- The GTIP will be updated in 2009 and will include an updated traffic impact analysis.
 - UCSB's Long-Range Development Plan (LRDP) will most likely generate 8000 peak-hour vehicle trips and is *exempt* from being assessed a mitigation fee even though it significantly impacts the Goleta Valley transportation grid.
- ii. The Santa Barbara County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) includes, but is not limited to GTIP projects and serves as a budgeting tool for capital improvement needs. The new County jail is an example of one of the projects in the CIP that is not in GTIP.
- It is a five-year plan that is updated every year.

c. *Transportation Trends and Projections:*

- i. 73% of drivers in our area drive alone to work while 14.4% carpool. Only 2.3% ride their bikes and 3.8% use the bus system. 4% telecommute.
- 11% chose to drive alone due to comfort, 17% due to their schedule, 18% due to convenience, 19% due to commuting costs, and 21% because there is no other alternative.
 - Community planners cannot *directly* change some of these preferences.
 - More people tend to take public transportation as gas prices go up.
 - 58% of those who use public transportation use MTD. Community planners can try to improve this usage through appropriate land-use policies.
 - Although MTD usage has gone up, so has the average daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT). This is primarily due to job growth and a jobs/housing imbalance.
 - VMT may be more appropriate for community planning use than LOS designations.
- ii. The SBCAG forecasts that the number of average daily trips (ADT) will go up 32% in Goleta Valley by year 2030, and as high as 44% for some roadways.
- This forecast assumes no changes in current land use plans.

d. *Linkages to Air Quality and Public Services:*

- i. California laws (AB 32 and SB 375) require air quality protection and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. In particular, the goal is to reduce VMTs and ADTs.
- ii. Lower CO₂ emissions correlate with lower commuter miles and access to public transportation.

e. *Sustainable Transportation Systems Planning:*

- i. The traditional approach projects future trips and designs improvements to accommodate the projected number of new trips to maintain acceptable LOS.
 - Widen roads, add turn lanes and signals, and construct new roadways.
 - Maximize traffic speeds, minimize congestion and reduce crashes.
 - Does not attempt to reduce automobile dependency and provides inferior alternatives to driving.
 - Tries to minimize traffic congestion without trying to improve non-driver mobility.
 - Does not account for cost of vehicle ownership and parking.
 - Undercounts short trips and does not measure the LOS for alternative travel modes.
 - ii. The multi-modal approach considers all modes of travel on an equal basis.
 - Attempts to connect residents with employment and services without the use of automobiles.
 - Accommodates new multi-modal trips while still maintaining acceptable LOS
 - Improvements include sidewalks, crosswalks, breezeways, bike paths, mass transit facilities, and bringing services closer to residences, and residences closer to services (such as retail, offices, schools, recreation, and transit centers).
 - Reduces VMTs and ADTs to improve air quality.
 - A walkable neighborhood (sustainable city) is defined as providing core needs within a five-minute walking distance.
 - Neighborhoods are both mixed use and mixed income.
 - Enables safe routes to schools.
 - Encourages walking, which in turn promotes a healthier lifestyle.
 - iii. Some existing conditions in Goleta Valley:
 - There appears to be a lack of north-south connectivity in existing bus routes.
 - Many planned bike paths have not been completed.
 - The Goleta train station does not have easy access.
- f. *Transportation Aesthetics:*
- i. Provide buffer between cars, bikes, and pedestrians.
 - ii. Plan services with pedestrians and mass transportation in mind.

- iii. Provide safe and inviting sidewalks and facilities for pedestrians without obstructions.
 - iv. Prioritizing alternative modes of transportation changes the appearance of our transportation grid.
3. Public Comment: Unfortunately, much of the audio of public comment is not easily understood. Either the microphone was not used, or the recording does not include the microphone used by the public. Please take a look at the official/unofficial minutes for a better overview of public comments.
- a. Concerns were expressed over evacuation planning and circulation and questions were raised as to whether the national standards for peak-hour vehicle trips apply to Goleta Valley.
 - b. Concerns over lack of funding for bike paths. Past improvements focused on the City of Goleta, not Eastern Goleta Valley.
 - c. Concerns over projected growth in traffic, difficulties in getting people to ride their bicycles because of diverse travel requirements of different professions such as salesman.
 - d. Concerns expressed that higher density developments are not fairly spread around the whole area.
 - e. Concerns expressed that requiring sprinkler systems to mitigate for the lack of safe evacuation routes is not sufficient.

For additional information, the official minutes, and the meeting audio, please see the county website:

<http://longrange.sbcountyplanning.org/planareas/goleta/gvpac.php>

Once again let me know if you do not wish to receive these e-mails, and feel free to forward them to others.

Thank you!

-Kenan (Kenan.Ezal@cox.net)

Note: I am fully responsible for any errors you may find in the above—no one else.

Kenan Ezal
 1109 North Patterson Avenue
 Work: (805) 968-6787 x180
 Home: (805) 964-2694
 Email: Kenan.Ezal@cox.net

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