

**Subject:** GVPAC Meeting Summary of February 18, 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.

Meeting Notes (2009-02-18):

1. Next Meeting:
  - a. *Date:* March 3, 2009 (Today! Sorry about the delay.)
  - b. *Location:* Planning Commission Hearing Room
  - c. *Agenda:* Public Services and Facilities
    - i. Water Supply
    - ii. Wastewater
    - iii. Solid Waste
2. Main Overview: The primary purpose of this meeting was to continue to learn about the Public Services and Facilities Super Element of the 1993 Goleta Valley Community Plan (GCP), and in particular Parks, Recreation, Trails/Open Space and Visual Resources.
  - a. *Motivation:* There are good reasons for planning for parks and trails.
    - i. Parks and trails provide for improved public health through passive and active recreation; environmental protection of habitats, wildlife corridors, basins, wetlands; green house gas (GHG) mitigation and cooling islands; and increased property values both in terms of dollars and importance.
    - ii. Parks provide a sense of community identity; reduce crime and vandalism; and a refuge in a natural environment as well as aesthetics benefits.
  - b. *Brief History:* During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century many grand parks and open spaces were built in urban areas to provide places for recreation, fresh air and sunshine. Examples include New York's Central Park, San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and our local Alice Keck Park.
    - i. Park spending and maintenance declined beginning with the Great Depression and the majority of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century due in part to auto-centric development and sprawl. There were no conditions/regulations in planning for open spaces in private developments.
    - ii. Conditions were added in the 1990s for allocation of open space in subdivisions but were still only accessible by car for those not in the subdivision. Examples include Storke Ranch and Girsh Park.
    - iii. Recent trends include a return to parks planning and funding of new opportunities, and in developing a comprehensive network of parks, trails, open space, greenbelts and improved streetscape and connectivity. Goals include better utilization of underutilized lands while preserving visual and aesthetic resources and increasing connectivity and accessibility of the Coast and National Forests. A recent example includes the Santa Barbara Shores development near Ellwood Beach.

c. *Existing Facilities:*

- i. Agencies and jurisdictions responsible for parks and recreation include: County of Santa Barbara Parks Department, City of Goleta, City of Santa Barbara, and private foundations and associations such as Elings Park, Ben Page Youth Center, Girls Inc., and Girsh Foundation, among others. Private trails are also maintained through local neighborhood associations such as in Hope Ranch.
- ii. Santa Barbara County Parks: Erik Axelson, the South County Deputy Director, provided an overview of the department and the County Parks. There are four different types of open space: Large Parks, Developed Open Spaces, Undeveloped Open Spaces, and Dedicated Trails and Bikeways.

- Large Parks include: Goleta Beach (29 acres), Tucker's Grove (120 acres), and San Marcos Foothills Preserve (200 acre preserve + 12 acres of open space). Goleta Beach hosts 1.6 million users each year while Tucker's Grove hosts approximately 900,000 users per year.

The state owns a portion of Goleta Beach. UCSB's Marine Science Institute (MSI) launches daily research vessels from Goleta Pier. Some UCSB students and staff use Goleta Beach as a parking lot and for university access. The County tries to discourage this by closing off the park at sunset and keeping some parking areas off limits until after 8 am. There are several options being considered for preserving Goleta Beach from further erosion. These studies are not yet complete.

Options are currently being considered for the 12 acres of open space in the San Marcos Foothills Preserve including a fenced off-leash dog area. Park professionals do not believe that a children's playground is appropriate at that location. There is the possibility of connecting the Preserve via a trail to Tucker's Grove.

- There are 11 Developed Open Space parcels totaling 57 acres with typical amenities including lawn areas, play equipment, tennis courts, and off-leash dog areas. These include the Rhoads Neighborhood Open Space, University Circle, Patterson Open Space, Tabano Hollow, Town & County, and the Kellogg Tennis Courts.
- There are approximately 65 acres of Undeveloped Open Space parcels which include a section of More Mesa (35 acres), as well as parcels on San Antonio, El Rodeo, La Ramada, Walnut Lane, North Kellogg, Via Regina, and Queen Anne/Vineyard.
- There are four Dedicated Trails and Bike Paths totaling approximately 25 acres of land and include the San Antonio Creek Trail, More Mesa Bike Path, Ribera Bike Path, and the Marie Ygnacio Bike Path.

- iii. The County Parks operates the Goleta area with two crews of Park Rangers. Three Park Rangers and two Park Hosts man the Goleta Area parks and three Park Rangers maintain the open spaces.
  - Park Hosts work 20 hours a week in exchange for living arrangements on County park land. One lives at Goleta Beach and the other at Tucker's Grove. Two additional host residences (trailers) are being considered at Tucker's Grove.
  - County furloughs (64 hours/employee in 2008) and cuts (10%) in the General Fund has increased reliance on Park Hosts and volunteers.
  - The Parks and Recreation Department has some additional income from two restaurants located on park land including the Beachside Bar and Café at Goleta Beach. From time to

time the Parks and Recreation Department also hosts different events for fund raising such as movie nights.

- iv. County Parks is looking to increase volunteer participation through the Santa Barbara County Park Foundation, 'Friends of' groups, and Partnerships such as the Goleta Pier Angler Center.
- d. *County Policy and Planning*: The County Comprehensive Plan provides the backbone for planning of parks, trails, open space acquisition and development, and preservation of visual resources.
  - i. The Land Use Element dictates a goal of 4.7 acres of park land for every 1,000 persons and adopts the Parks, Recreation and Trails (PRT-3) Map and authorizes the collection of fees for planned parks and recreation facilities (Ord. 3120).
    - Developer fees for parks and recreation include Quimby Fees for larger developments and subdivisions, and a Park Development Impact Fee which is computed based on planned future developments in a similar manner to the Mitigation Fee for circulation.
  - ii. The Open Space Element specifies land that can be considered for open space and recognizes conflicts between trail systems and adjacent private lands.
  - iii. The Agricultural Element is concerned with preserving a healthy agricultural economy, recognizes potential conflicts with trails, and provides conditions for trails going through agricultural land.
  - iv. Coastal Land Use Plan (CLUP): Coastal Act of California dictates policies for recreation, public access, preservation of visual resources, open space and habitat areas in the Coastal Zone.
  - v. The Land Use Development Code (LUDC) provides two tools for planned developments:
    - The Planned Residential Development (PRD) standard is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan Development Standards and requires a 40% minimum of gross acreage for common/public usage. It considers scenic, recreational, environmental habitats, historic and cultural resources. Commercial recreational facilities (like a golf course) are allowed for 200 units or more. Examples include the More Mesa Specific Plan and the San Marcos Preserve.
    - The Design Residential (DR) standard requires a minimum of 40% of net acreage for common and public usage if the parcel is in the Coastal Zone. The title to the open space is held by a non-profit association. Examples of DR developments are Forte Ranch and Sungate.
  - vi. The Goleta Community Plan focuses on increasing recreational opportunities and specifies implementation programs and zones for parks, trails and open spaces. It recognizes parks and recreation areas, open spaces, equestrian facilities, trails, golf courses, coastal access and other recreation such as Little League, basketball courts and theaters.
    - Area specific studies include the 2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisorial District Land Inventory and the Goleta Trails Implementation Study. [Both are accessible from the County website.]

The Goleta Trails Implementation Study recognizes off-road trails from the urban area to the National Forest and the Gaviota Coast. It also provides new development standards for trails and land use compatibility. There is an acknowledged lack of "loop trails." In addition, none of the existing parks within Eastern Goleta Valley are within a 10 minute walk from each other signifying a lack of connectivity.
- e. *Future Opportunities and Considerations*: Future planning will need to consider how to best use

underutilized County-owned open space and identify needed improvements to existing facilities. Development plan conditions and Capital Improvement Program Priorities and mechanisms for restoring environmental resources will need to be identified. Public access, funding sources and linkages to a multi-modal transportation grid will need to be considered for both parks and trails. Trail connectivity needs to be improved to reduce dead ends and coastal impacts need to be minimized while still providing coastal access to the public.

- f. *Visual Resources*: The County Land Use Element adopts Visual Resource Policies as well as Hillside and Watershed Protection Policies. Similarly, Section 30251 of the Coastal Land Use Plan protects scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas as a resource of public importance.
  - i. A View Corridor (VC) overlay such as the Highway 101 Scenic Corridor is a tool for protecting visual resources and aesthetics.
  - ii. Design guidelines, development standards, and master planning for residential and commercial developments can be used to preserve visual resources.
  - iii. The South Board of Architectural Review (SBAR) can be used to implement design guidelines.

3. Public Comment: None.

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](mailto:Kenan.Ezal@cox.net))

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

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