

SANTA BARBARA COUNTY BOARD AGENDA LETTER



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:

Prepared on: June 28, 2006
Department Name: Planning & Development
Department No.: 053
Agenda Date: July 18, 2006
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: n/a
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Document File Name: G:\GROUP\ADMIN\WP\DepAsst\Goleta
BOS 7-18-06.DOC

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Dianne Meester, Assistant Director (568-2086)
Planning and Development Department

SUBJECT: Comment Letter on City of Goleta's General/Coastal Land Use Plan Draft
Environmental Impact Report

Recommendation:

That the Board of Supervisors authorize the Chair to sign the attached comment letter from the County Board of Supervisors to the City of Goleta on their General/Coastal Land Use Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan: The recommendations are primarily aligned with Goal No. 1, An Efficient Government Able to Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community; Goal No. 4, A Community that is Economically Vital and Sustainable; Goal No. 5, A High Quality of Life for All Residents; and Goal No. 6, A County Government that is Accessible, Open, and Citizen-Friendly.

Executive Summary and Discussion: The City of Goleta has released its General/Coastal Land Use Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report and the comment period is scheduled to end on July 18, 2006. Planning and Development sought comments from various County departments including: Housing and Community Development, Comprehensive Planning, Public Works Transportation and Flood Control, Parks, Environmental Health Services, Sheriff and Fire Departments. The attached letter incorporates comments received from Comprehensive Planning, Public Works Flood Control, and Environmental Health Services. The departments of Parks, Sheriff, Public Works Transportation, and Housing and Community Development did not have any comments on the City of Goleta's Draft Environmental Impact Report. The Fire Department indicated that they will be submitting their comments to the City of Goleta separately.

Mandates and Service Levels: This work is not mandated. It will increase service levels to applicants, other departments and County residents.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts: Funding for this work is provided in the Planning Support Services program on page D-290 of the adopted 2005-06 Fiscal Year budget.

Special Instructions: Please provide a signed copy of the attached letter to Planning and Development, Attn: Dianne Meester, Assistant Director.

Concurrence: None

Attachment:

1-Draft Letter

July 18, 2006

Planning & Environmental Services

Attn: Anne Wells

130 Cremona Drive, Suite B

Goleta, CA 93117

RE: Goleta General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan DEIR

Dear Ms. Wells:

The County Board of Supervisors has had the opportunity to review the City of Goleta's General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan Draft EIR and offers the following comments for your consideration in finalizing this important planning document. Detailed comments are attached to this letter.

Please feel free to contact Dianne Meester, Assistant Director of Planning and Development at (805) 568-2086 for clarification of any of the attached comments.

Sincerely,

Joni Gray, Chair

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

ATTACHMENT A

SPECIFIC COMMENTS ON CITY OF GOLETA'S GENERAL PLAN/COASTAL LAND USE PLAN DRAFT EIR

Chapter 3: Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation

Section 3.1—Aesthetics and Visual Resources

- The EIR does not consider possible adverse impacts to public viewing locations outside the city's boundaries, due to potential development within the City. While it is acknowledged that an assessment of such impacts necessarily would be very general, such potentially significant impacts should be recognized and discussed in the same manner as for impacts to public viewing locations within the City itself. This would be especially relevant to impacts from night lighting and glare, which increase regional nighttime skyglow.

Section 3.2—Agriculture and Farmland

- On Figure 3.2-1, the text box for "Future Service Area Agriculture Site #4" does not have a pointer to any site on the map. Also, the discussion of impacts and mitigations should consider cases where development on city lands could conflict with agricultural uses on adjacent or nearby unincorporated lands. The City of Goleta should explore possible feasible mitigation measures that could be for the City to adopt a Right-to-Farm Ordinance, with protections for agricultural operators that would be at least as strong as those contained in the County's Right-to-Farm Ordinance.

Section 3.4—Biological Resources

- It is noted that the project contains a prohibition against planting non-native invasive species within environmentally sensitive habitat areas and buffers (pg 3.4-21). Additional mitigation could be achieved by prohibiting the use of such invasive species in any area where a landscape plan would be required for City review and approval, since by their nature, invasive species often colonize larger areas that can include offsite sensitive habitats, whether within or outside the City's boundaries.

Section 3.8—Population and Housing

- It is not clear how Policy LU 11, Non-Residential Growth Management, would serve as a feasible mitigation measure for potentially significant Impact 3.8-2 Population Growth [associated with residential buildout] (pg. 3.8-15, 16); the categorical statement on p. 3.8-16 that this policy would mitigate this impact to a less than significant level is tenuous. This discussion also should note that the impact sections that address related physical effects, which are listed on pg. 3.8-15, also contain various mitigation measures for these effects. This also applies for the discussion of specific effects related to Impact 3.8-3, Ultimate Buildout [of residential units] (pg. 3.8-16, 17).

Within the discussion of Impact 3.8-4, Ultimate Buildout [of residential land and associated employment growth] (pg. 3.8-18), in the middle of the first paragraph there is a reference to Table 3.8-9, which doesn't exist; perhaps this reference should be to Table

3.8-7 (pg. 3.8-16). Also there are statements at the end of the second paragraph regarding potentially increased traffic between Goleta and Santa Barbara on Hwy 101, which is “considered a potentially significant adverse impact.” It is unclear if this conclusion is within the specific context of Impact 3.8-4, or within the context of effects discussed in Section 3.13, Transportation. In the former case, the discussion of mitigation on 3.8-18 should demonstrate how the traffic impact would be mitigated to non-significance by the listed policies; in the latter case, specific reference to the relevant portion(s) of Section 3.13 should be included.

Section 3.9—Water Resources

- *Section 3.9.1.3: Flooding*
 - In the second paragraph, first sentence: (FEMA 2006) should be changed to read (FEMA 2005)
- *Section 3.9.2.2: Local*
 - This section should include reference to the Flood Control District's authority to review/approve proposed improvements located along certain creeks and channels that it maintains within the City of Goleta limits.
- *Impact 3.9-2: Adequacy of Water Supplies to Serve New Development*
 - In addressing the impacts of growth on the City's water resources, the General Plan stipulates that Mitigation Policy 15 will be implemented. Mitigation Policy 15 requires City facilities and residences to utilize recycled water. This policy should be conditioned on the availability of recycled water from the Goleta Water District, the local purveyor of recycled water, to ensure that adequate infrastructure and capacity is available. The use of recycled water for irrigation of common areas of large developments, street medians and other public areas is a recognized beneficial use of recycled water. However, current state law does not allow the use of recycled water for irrigation for private residences, nor is such use recommended due to health and safety concerns.
- *Impact 3.9-3: Changes in Groundwater Supply Resulting from New Development*
 - Please see comment above on *Impact 3.9-2*
- *Impact 3.9-4: Alterations in Existing Drainage Patterns and Downstream Flooding and Erosion*
 - The first sentence of this paragraph needs to be carefully re-worded. It is not acceptable to alter existing drainage patterns as stated, unless the proposed alterations in and of themselves cause no adverse impact of their own.

Section 3.10—Land Use and Recreation

- It appears that this section is intended to include an overall analysis of applicable plans and policies, and potential inconsistencies between the Draft General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan and such other adopted plans and policies. If so, then a discussion of the Clean Air Plan and Congestion Management Plan should be included. This is particularly relevant to Impact 3.10-3, Conflict with Other Applicable Land Use Policies and/or Regulations [related to overall buildout and related infrastructure] (pg. 3.10-17, 18). In this regard, Section 3.3, Air Quality, does not reference to the Clean Air Plan on pg 3.3-10; however, Section 3.13, Transportation, appears not to address the Congestion Management Plan.

It may be desirable to split this section into two sections that separately address overall Land Use issues and more specific Recreation issues, in order to increase clarity and usefulness to the public and decision-makers.

Section 3.11—Noise

- The discussions of project-specific and cumulative impacts should acknowledge that development within the City may have adverse noise impacts on sensitive receptors in adjacent and nearby unincorporated areas, particularly in regard to construction activity (short-term) and vehicular traffic (long-term).

Section 3.12—Public Services and Utilities

- This section should reference that the Santa Barbara County Flood Control District maintains certain creeks and channels located within the City of Goleta.
- *Impact 3.12-3: Increased Demand for Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal*
 - The measures contained in Mitigation Policies PF 4.2 (J) & (K) are problematic and should be reconsidered. PF 4.2 (J) states, “The City shall discourage and oppose extension of sewer service into any area not designated for urban development including areas west of Goleta and the Embarcadero Community Services District.” This policy will require any new development in these areas to utilize private septic systems for sewage disposal when the extension of the community sewer should be considered. A potential consequence of this policy could be to encourage the construction of private septic systems in areas where soil or groundwater conditions are not conducive to the on-site disposal of wastewater. The proliferation of septic systems in these marginal areas could potentially impact surface and groundwater resources.
 - PF 4.2 (K) states, “Within the Urban Boundary, all new development shall be required to connect to the public sewerage system.” As written this policy would preclude development in areas where there is no existing sewer infrastructure and where a private septic system might be appropriate. Additionally, it does not recognize current treatment technologies that reduce the impact of the on-site dispersal of wastewater on the environment.

Section 3.13—Transportation and Circulation

- This section should state that proposed bikeways located along creeks and/or channels maintained by the Flood Control District will be subject to FC review/approval and will be subject to execution of a secondary use agreement.

Chapter 4: Future City Service Area/Sphere of Influence

- The impact analysis in this chapter is done at a very general program level, and the EIR should acknowledge that any future actions to include these areas within the City's sphere of influence or to annex part or all of these areas to the City would be accompanied by more detailed environmental analysis.

Chapter 5: Alternatives to the Proposed Project

- This chapter analyzes two different land use map alternatives, but does not develop and analyze any policy-based alternatives that could avoid or reduce potentially significant adverse impacts of the Draft General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan. At least one such policy alternative should be developed and analyzed, wherein the project would contain specific commitments to address regional issues cooperatively with the County and other affected agencies; particular regard should be given to policy measures designed to identify and avoid or reduce potentially significant adverse impacts of City decisions and activities outside the City's boundaries. This issue was addressed in more detail in the comments submitted by the County Board of Supervisors on the Draft General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan (letter dated June 6, 2006).

Section 5.4.8.3—Reduced Development Scenario 2 (Alternative 2)

- Reference is made twice to Alternative 1 but should be made to Alternative 2

Section 5.4.10—Land Use and Recreation

- It should be acknowledged that both physical development alternatives could reduce the funding available for providing new recreational facilities, due to the reduced potential collection of impact mitigation fees. To the extent that such fees are directly correlated with increased recreational demand, this may cause no adverse impacts in a City-wide context; however, it nevertheless may hinder the development of some recreational amenities that would benefit existing residents as well as offsetting the impacts of new development.

Section 5.5—Environmentally Superior Alternative

- Alternative 2 is identified as the environmentally superior alternative that meets project objectives. However, it was previously stated (Section 5.4.8.3, pg 5-13) that "Under this alternative, the City would not meet its fair share allocation to provide adequate housing and address regional growth" (first paragraph in Section 5.4.8.3). Since meeting identified housing goals is a major objective of the project, perhaps something other than Alternative 2 should be identified as the environmentally superior alternative.