



#4

September 21, 2009

*Santa Ynez
Valley Alliance*

Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors
105 East Anapamu St.
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan

Chairman Centeno and Honorable Supervisors,

The mission of the Valley Alliance is to work collaboratively with individuals, groups and governments to protect the rural character of the Santa Ynez Valley and support good stewardship of natural and agricultural resources through education, comprehensive planning and public participation. Since its founding in 2005 the Santa Ynez Valley Alliance has carefully monitored the development and processing of the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan. The Alliance has provided comments at numerous meetings and hearings and provided specific comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report.

The Alliance supports the Community Plan and endorses virtually all of the Planning Commission's recommendations. The Alliance supports the recommended Plan Boundary in order to provide comprehensive planning for the complete community, including the townships, buffers, gateways, and principal infrastructure. The Alliance supports adoption of the Downzone Alternative because it is the Environmentally Superior Alternative, and best achieves the goals of preserving the Valley's rural character and protecting agriculture.

Because the Alliance supports a Community Plan that is truly in the "broad public interest" it respectfully requests that you consider the following recommendations:

1. The Mixed Use Overlay should encourage the provision of affordable housing with a 25% requirement, as initiated. The "core approach" endorsed by the community to provide affordable housing relies upon a mixed-use component.
2. The Alliance supports the Planning Commission recommendation to add an action item to the Plan to address a rapidly growing problem affecting the quality of life, and safety, of Valley residents – disproportionate concentrations of alcohol-serving facilities. The Alliance however, recommends clearer language than that currently proposed for Action LUG – SYV-4.1 and proposes the following language:

The County shall study, develop, and implement measures to address the adverse impacts of disproportionate concentrations of alcohol-serving businesses within the community.

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3. In order to clarify the intent of Action LUT – SYV – 4.4 and avoid piecemeal, disconnected, dysfunctional improvements, the Alliance suggests adding the underlined phrase:

The County shall work to prepare plans for the development of sidewalks, drainage structures, and on-street parking expansion in Santa Ynez and Los Olivos in order to ensure safe, uniform, contiguous and pedestrian-friendly improvements.

4. In order to make good use of existing resources and increase the County's ability to fulfill Action LUT – SYV – 4.3 and Action LUT – SYV – 4.4, the Alliance recommends the following policy language:

The County shall consider the parking and access potential of existing roadways and right-of-ways, even if currently unimproved, prior to any abandonment.

5. The Environmental Impact Report cannot rely upon unfeasible Traffic & Circulation mitigation measures to reduce Significant impacts to Less than Significant. Many of the proposed measures are unfunded, inconsistent with the plan goals, and have potentially Significant unanalyzed environmental impacts. Mitigation T-2.7 (Bypass Option) for instance, is totally unfeasible and could not possibly be implemented within the lifetime of the Plan. The EIR should provide a realistic assessment of impacts to address the purpose and requirements of CEQA.

6. Mitigation T-2.5 (Reversible Lane Option) is problematic to implement and confusing to visitors. Mitigation measures T- 2.2 (SR 154 Corridor with Signalized Intersections), T-2.4 (Improved Signalized Intersections along SR 246) and T-2.6 (Four-Lane Highway Option) are all inconsistent with the rural character of the Valley. Mitigation measures T – 2.1 and T – 2.3 (Roundabout Intersections) would be more consistent with preserving the Valley's rural character and consistent with the County's preferred configuration for the Hwy 154 / Edison St. intersection. The Community Plan should only include feasible, funded mitigation measures consistent with the goals of the plan.

The Alliance would also like to call to your attention other issues related to the Plan and County planning. We suggest the Board of Supervisors incorporate policy language and / or action items that will address the following issues:

A. The County's online Permit History shows Mattei's as a Historic Structure of Merit and the Community Plan initiated by Supervisor Marshall listed Mattei's Tavern as a Place of Historic Merit in Table 23. The current version of the Community Plan initiated by Supervisor Firestone however, does not list Mattei's Tavern as a Place of Historic Merit. The Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission appears to have recognized Mattei's historic status on Oct. 14, 1996 and May 12th, 1997. Why does the current community Plan not reflect this?

B. The existing Plan Boundary omits 517 acres of Inner Rural land south of the Alisal Resort. This is the only Inner Rural area within the Valley omitted from the Plan and its exclusion appears entirely arbitrary. According to the GPAC Working

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Draft "The existing Inner Rural area in this location is comprised of 517 acres that do not coincide with any parcel lines. The boundary between the Inner Rural and Rural areas splits eleven parcels numerous times ... The size of the affected parcels range from 200 to 600 acres and are used for grazing." This spot-zoned Inner Rural island needs to be addressed because of the potential sprawl that could result from anomalous 20-acre zoning protruding deep into the Rural area.

C. The existing Santa Ynez Airport Master Plan has never received environmental review, yet projects are being submitted as being "consistent with the Airport Master Plan." The County needs to address this issue of lack of compliance with CEQA. The Master Plan needs environmental review or proposed projects should be required to perform an EIR to avoid piecemeal.

D. Special events with their associated impacts are rapidly proliferating within the Valley without consistent regulation or monitoring. The County needs to establish consistent definitions, requirements and monitoring in order to address multiple impacts including but not limited to, traffic, safety, noise, and compatibility with agricultural zoning and uses.

Thank you for your consideration, and your continuing efforts to provide Valley residents with the best possible Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan.

Sincerely,



Mark Oliver
President
Santa Ynez Valley Alliance