

**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

MEMORANDUM

TO: Planning Commission

FROM: Alice Daly, Planner III
Development Review South

DATE: May 26, 2006

RE: Consideration of Request to Initiate a General (Comprehensive) Plan Amendment
Cavaletto/Tree Farm Housing [01GPA-00000-00009]

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Commission should deny initiation of an amendment to the Goleta Community Plan land use map, included in the Comprehensive Plan, for APNs 069-100-006, -051 and -057 from Agricultural to Residential, Multi 18 dwelling units per acre.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The currently proposed project design achieves an average density of 8 dwelling units per acre and is specifically designed for compatibility with the immediately adjacent neighborhoods. The southerly boundary of the site would be developed with single family dwellings at densities similar to the University Road neighborhood. The northern portion of the easterly extent of the lot would be developed with multihousing units consistent with the multihousing units in the Sunrise Village neighborhood. The interior of the lot would be developed with small lot housing. The Development Plan and Vesting Tentative Map for the three parcels totaling 25.9 acres would consist of 45 new attached units and 105 new detached units, demolition of two existing homes and retention of the existing Cavaletto residence. Additionally, up to 20 second-dwelling units (each would be 800 square feet or less) are proposed, which would result in 170 total living units (169 net new). The proposed site development would also include common open space of approximately 2-3 acres for a creek-side park. There would also be a bike path, a geological setback open-space area, pocket parks and retention basins/bioswales interconnecting throughout the site. Circulation through the project would include private roadways. One new public road would be constructed between Las Perlas and Patterson Avenue. Internal sidewalks and pathways would provide pedestrian connections throughout the site.

A number of public benefits are designed into the proposed project. These benefits include:

- Affordable and workforce housing. The project would provide housing stock that would be consistent with housing mandates that require local governments to provide new affordable and

market rate housing opportunities. In addition, the applicants have been in discussions with UCSB and other key area employers in regards to a variety of possible workforce housing provisions.

- A creek-side public park and bike trails. A 2-3 acre public park next to San Jose Creek is incorporated into the project design. The applicants also propose to cooperate with the County in the completion of a Class I bike path link, to include a bridge that would connect the project neighborhood to the area west of San Jose Creek where a neighborhood school is located, and also bike paths that lead south toward the beach.
- New road and sidewalk circulation links. The project would provide a new link to Patterson Avenue that would reduce traffic on other neighborhood roads.
- Provision of substantial road improvement fees. Road fees to be assessed from the project are projected to be in excess of \$900,000, and could fund improvements to the Patterson Avenue / 101 interface.
- Provision of substantial school fees. Approximately \$475,000- \$750,000 would be assessed for local school improvement projects

Input received to date from Fire, Flood Control and Transportation has already been integrated into the conceptual project design and in sum, the project design is well conceived and executed.

HISTORY

Project History

The Cavaletto property was residentially zoned (10-R-1) before 1979. In 1979, the Cavalettos requested a rezone to agricultural zoning (AG-1-5) in order to have a Christmas tree farm and to direct market the trees. The Christmas tree operation is no longer economically supportable, and there are currently no other viable agricultural uses for the site, which is surrounded on all sides by developed residential neighborhoods. The Cavalettos now seek to rezone the property back to a residential zone district in order to create a new residential development with a significant affordable and workforce housing component. A brief timeline of the proposal is as follows:

- May 2000: The applicants met with Supervisor Rose to seek consideration of the project site as an infill site for housing conversion. Supervisor Rose advised the applicants to work with their neighbors on a housing plan.
- October 2000: At a community meeting conducted by PANA, neighbors voted to accept the concept of site conversion to housing, subject to additional details of the plan that are consistent with the neighborhood.
- December 2001: The original applications for a general plan amendment and rezone were filed with the County. Proposed project density was at an average of three dwelling units per acre.

- January 2002: Project proposal was first reviewed by the County Subdivision Review Committee (SDRC).
- 2002-2003: The County advised the applicants that their proposed density would need to increase and that their proposal would be carried forward in tandem with the County Housing Element Update initiative.
- November 2002: The County Board of Architectural Review (BAR) facilitated a design charrette for the project site, with the aim of achieving a density of 10 units per acre, and approximately 50 members of the community participated.
- August 2003: A brief site visit was conducted by the Planning Commission while the PC is reviewing potential housing sites to be initiated in the Housing Element update.
- June 2004: Supervisor Susan Rose's Neighborhood Council met to review sites for low-income housing conversion. It was decided to exclude the proposed project from consideration for the Housing Element update.
- August 2005: The current revised Cavaletto proposal, with an average of 8 units per acre was filed with the County for initiation of a General Plan Amendment and Rezone. The project has been modified and shaped since its initial submittal by multiple design reviews, SDRC and individual departmental review (Public Works, Fire, Flood Control), County and neighborhood input. A total of 16 design iterations have been generated from the initial to the current submittal.

In sum, the Cavalettos and their representatives have made continual and consistent efforts over nearly six years, coordinating with County departments and with the neighborhood in the interest of designing a residential development with a high component of affordable and workforce housing that would satisfy County housing requirements and blend into the existing surrounding residential neighborhoods.

POLICY ISSUES

The following policy is key to determining whether an amendment and consistency rezone should be processed in the instant case:

Policy LUA-GV-1: *Land designated for agriculture within the urban boundary shall be preserved for agricultural use, unless the County makes findings that the land is no longer appropriate for agriculture or there is an overriding public need for conversion to other uses for which there is no other land available in the Goleta urban area.*

In respect to the first prong of this policy, the project site was reviewed by the Planning Commission on a site specific basis during the preparation of the 1993 Goleta Community Plan. The site was specifically identified and discussed in the Goleta Community Plan as one of four scattered urban-area sites that are still in agricultural production (also mentioned are Couvillion, MTD and the Fairview Gardens sites).

The four sites are identified as being appropriate for continued agricultural production over the short to mid-term (up to 2003 or longer) due to a combination of prime soils, active long standing crop production and the existence of only moderate levels of conflict with adjacent urban uses.

An agricultural feasibility study commissioned by the applicant¹ discusses the limiting and preemptive factors that constrain the potential for continued successful agricultural operations on the property. Pests, pine pitch canker, limits on spraying because of residential proximity, high taxes and competition from larger-scale producers are among the factors identified as limiting the economic viability of continued agricultural uses of the site. Regardless, there are examples of active urban agriculture surrounded by residential development in the Goleta Valley area and the site maintains its agriculturally suited soils. In sum, the applicant's agricultural feasibility study should not be considered dispositive and the proposed project site may not be ripe for conversion out of agriculture; as such, the proposed initiation may be inconsistent with the first test of this policy.

In respect to the second prong of the policy, the Goleta Community Plan (adopted 1993) identifies a jobs/housing imbalance in the Goleta planning area that continues into the present. The proposed Cavaletto project would offer a range of new housing opportunities, including a substantial component of affordable and workforce housing (although not 50% of the project total), some of which is proposed to be geared toward the specific needs of large-scale employers such as UCSB. Your commission could find that the current jobs/housing imbalance constitutes an urgent public need for housing which would be ameliorated through the development of the Cavaletto project.

VISIONING

The Goleta Valley Visioning Process is currently in progress. It is a forum intended to provide maximum community input for the prospective update to the Goleta Community Plan. A 12-member Goleta Valley Visioning Committee was established to develop a profile of the community and a statement of community values and trends. The committee was also charged with authoring an overall "vision" document as a point of reference for guiding future amendments to the Goleta Community Plan. The work of the Visioning Committee is currently in the public input phase, during which monthly meeting/workshops are being held in order to allow for citizen discussion and input. The first seven meetings have been organized around specific topics, and later meetings will be forums for presenting drafts of the vision document. The final Visioning Committee meeting will take place in October 2006, and the Visioning process is expected to be completed in November of 2006, with the actual update of the Goleta Community Plan (initiated on May 23, 2006) getting started in January of 2007.

It was originally anticipated that during the visioning process, specific sites would be identified for potential changes to land use designation. However, the position has been taken by the Visioning Committee that they should not select or discuss specific sites absent a Community Plan update, so site-specific recommendations for land use amendments and/or rezones will not be made until the Goleta Community Plan update is drafted in 2007. This ongoing process may deter your commission's interest in initiating a general plan amendment.

¹ Authored by George E. Goodhall, August 12, 2005. This document is on file with P&D and available for review.

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ATTACHMENTS

- A. Area Land Use Designations
- B. Area Zoning Designations
- C. Conceptual Site Plans (Current Proposal)
- D. Earlier Conceptual Site Plans

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