

September 29, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in opposition to the High-Density project at 7264 Calle Real, referred to as the Kenwood Village project. The City of Goleta has been pressured by the State to act fast, and as a result, they have made poor, quick decisions that will negatively impact our community. Community members are fighting hard to have the State focus on under-utilized and non-vacant parcels and we stand firmly in opposition to re-zoning our much needed vacant and agricultural land. Without actually living in these neighborhoods, you cannot see the severity of the impacts that these HD projects will create.

Our community is in need of more housing... that we can all agree on. We simply implore you to focus on underutilized space with access to resources that will help these new developments thrive. Calle Real is a busy street, alongside the freeway. It is a main route for people to access the neighborhoods and schools but it is narrow, dangerous and it is our primary means to escape if there was a natural disaster. There is no parking, limited transportation, a death trap for a bike path... there is nothing here for a build of this size. The front section of this property is the last of the minimal agricultural land around us and it is a much-needed open space to allow for the flow of traffic, bicyclists, foot traffic, etc.

There are alternate sites that should be considered before re-zoning agricultural land or building on Calle Real at Glenn Annie. Glenn Annie is one of the worst freeway on/off ramps in town as it is, and there is a proposed build within a mile at Colusa Lane for another High-Density project. This area simply cannot handle an influx this large in addition to that high-density project. The pros of Colusa are that it is set back between Glenn Annie and Cathedral Oaks, with access to two routes that would have less of an impact on traffic/commuters. It is smaller in scale, would be set on a corner that would not interrupt the look and feel of the neighborhood and would not impact agricultural land.

Goleta Councilmember Kyle Richards wrote in the Independent:

*"It's important to share our priorities for how we make these decisions, and here are some of the considerations:*

- *Within walking distance to retail or other services? Is there a store or a market within walking distance? Can our children walk or bike to school safely? Are there nearby parks to walk or bike to? (Or any other form of transportation or however you get around: wheelchair, scooter, etc.)*
- *Is it accessible to public transportation? Is it convenient to get on an MTD bus?*
- *We need to consider the impacts of parking and what it will mean for the immediate vicinity.*
- *And in order to reduce the impacts of parking and traffic, we need to take into consideration how people will get around, and make sure that they can do as much of their getting around as possible without a car. We may not be able to expect people to leave all their cars at home, but we should make it as easy as possible for them to do so.*
- *Will it provide a good mix of affordable units, especially for the low and very low categories? (And by the way, just for clarity, when we put a number of how many in each income category, what we're really talking about is a formula based on density.)*
- *How compatible is it with the neighboring areas?*
- *There are other important considerations that will also be explored during the planning process.*

*Today, we aren't reviewing the particulars of any specific project; this about the underlying zoning only. When projects are reviewed then we will have an opportunity to review the height, architecture, the extent to which it preserves or enhances our creeks and environmentally sensitive areas and protects our viewsheds."*

That being said, Kenwood Village offers NOTHING listed above. There are no markets (only a liquor store), there are no bus stops nearby and it is completely unsafe to walk to school from there. Calle Real is high traffic with limited sidewalk, narrow bike baths and high-speed route with no bike/foot access to the upper neighborhoods without going onto Calle Real. There is no street parking and the surrounding neighborhoods are privately owned streets or having parking issues as it is. Traffic is horrific during the school year and they are proposing all High-Density Housing (not a "good mix"), which is not compatible at all with the surrounding custom, multi-million-dollar homes. This will take away our agricultural land, displace animals, affect protected species of frogs, plants and other animals that live and hunt here as well as taking over an environmentally sensitive area alongside a creek. This build cannot happen. If anything, maintain the agricultural land to the front and build 40-60 single-family residences that will match the surrounding neighborhood and won't have a huge impact on the traffic (per the original proposal of Kenwood Village).

If you must rezone land, consider other better-suited options. The Shelby Property at 7400 Cathedral Oaks Road hasn't even been mentioned in the proposals. They are situated back on Cathedral Oaks, alongside the Golf Course in a less-dense, lower traffic area that would not disrupt the neighborhood, allows for a nice, wide street with bike baths and easier access for children to travel safely to the surrounding schools. It is exempt from Measure G, is a barren, dirt lot of 14 acres and would be a perfect alternative to Kenwood Village. The owner is eager to build there, it would spread the impacts of new housing around the city and, as I understand it, is the project closest to being shovel-ready in comparison to all other sites proposed.



*Shelby Property Google World View*

Alternatively, there are projects at 7780 Hollister Ave that are commercially zoned and the surrounding neighbors are begging for it to be re-zoned to residential. It is close to grocery stores, medical centers, transportation, Elwood School District which has capacity for more students and would be ideal for a high-density project. The City/State should be reaching out to these owners and incentivizing them to re-zone by offering support with permits, architecture, etc. Parcels at 7190 Hollister Ave are also in a perfect location for a high-density project like this to survive. These two locations are close to the Winchester freeway ramp which is low-traffic, they are at the outskirts of Goleta but in close proximity to everything needed for the residents to thrive. It's also an area with infrastructure capable of supporting high-density communities... 7264 Calle Real isn't.

Council Member Kasdin said himself in an article he wrote in the Independent:

*"Converting agricultural lands should be a last resort, not the first option..."*

*...The failure to receive a property owner's explicit commitment to develop today may not reflect what happens to a property after it were rezoned. Managers of malls may not have experience creating with big developments, and they need time and partners to work through a project and see what pencils out. Or perhaps, a landowner will sell the land once it is rezoned to someone with experience in producing residential developments. The burden will be not just on the landowners, but on the county staff to facilitate and incentivize the project.*

*...If the county's systematic analysis of existing buildout capacity and any related regulatory changes to support increased housing production do not meet the county's housing target, they could consider rezoning certain commercial and industrially zoned parcels to residential zoning, where parcels are located along major arterials. Agriculturally zoned lands should be protected from conversion unless the existing buildout capacity and non-agricultural rezones by themselves cannot accommodate the housing goal.*

*...In practice, we can add more housing and retain the open spaces, without a destruction of the neighborhoods and community health. Sensitively designed infill that respects context can help reduce congestion by making other travel modes (e.g., biking, walking) more attractive. Planning can preserve the public spaces, walkable settings, and other urban amenities that people appreciate."*

Please do not make a rush decision to approve this project, just to meet a quota. Concrete is permanent and so is the impact on our neighborhood. Alternate sites that are underutilized and have the right location, infrastructure, access to shops and public transportation, promote walking/bicycling, prevent disruption of the environment or agricultural land, and support the families living there, need to be your main focus.

PLEASE REJECT the proposal for 7264 Calle Real. I can assure you that opposing this project will bring an abundance of voters' support from this community. No one, other than the landowner and his friends, are in favor.

Respectfully,



Lauren VanVeelen, Goleta Resident

Sources:

<https://www.independent.com/2023/07/27/keeping-the-country-character-of-goleta-and-avoiding-builders-remedy/>

<https://www.independent.com/2023/03/17/good-planning-matters/>