

Santa Barbara City Planning Commission  
City Hall  
De la Guerra Plaza  
Santa Barbara, Calif. 93101

July 2, 2011

Dear Members of the Commission:

I wish to comment on several items regarding safety in our community and the general plan element.

1. Our city's movement is restricted in an east west direction because of a few roads. We have Foothill, State St, 101 and Cliff Dr. as the major east west roads and as such they are considered to be evacuation routes. On a broader scale the entire town is tied to the availability of 101 and there have been situations in the past where due to land slides and flooding this route has been closed. There should be an effective, efficient evacuation plan in place.

There is concern about evacuation of areas in time of need. The Riviera has essentially only 2 ways down and this area has been threatened by fire several times in the past years. The area of the Las Positas Valley and Hidden Valley is another example of an area which has fire potential (Painted Cave Fire) and is essentially tied to Las Positas/Modoc Rd. If anything happens on 101 the results are Modoc Rd. is highly congested and exiting the Hidden Valley area is extremely difficult. It should be noted that the Hidden Valley area contains 2 major large retirement homes with hospital facilities. The access restraints as well as the demographics should be taken into consideration when development is considered. The need for reduced speed on access roads as well as signals should be addressed. Further development in the area should be undertaken only when the safety of the existing residents is assured.

2. In the past years there have been evidence of soil instability. We have lost houses on the ocean cliff of the the Mesa in the location of Oliver Rd. above Foot Hill Rd. A former county geologist stated that the Campanil Hills was a very unstable hillside. Previously development at the foot of these hills resulted in the toe of the hill be cut by 15 feet. Areas that are unstable should be clearly designated and the upmost care should be taken in any construction in these areas.
3. The concern of flooding is very complicated. Over 30 years ago flood maps were submitted by the federal government and accepted by the city. The maps were never done by a survey and have been proven in many cases to be very inaccurate. Originally flood insurance was about \$50.00 per year and was not a concern of the prospective buyer. Today flood insurance is required by lenders and the cost is over \$1,000 per single family home. After an examination of the LOMAS done in the Hidden Valley area the city paid for a new survey which resulted in many homes no longer required to purchase flood insurance. The flood plain for Mission Creek is also inaccurate and has never been corrected since it was accepted by the city. As a result of the Hidden Valley paying into flood insurance for over 20 years it is estimated that over 3 million dollars was paid out and this was money that could have remained in our city supporting local businesses. The estimate cost for the flood insurance for Mission Creek flood plain must run in tens of millions of dollars. It is suggested that the flood maps of the city be examined for their accuracy. The present plan to retain runoff on site should be strongly enforced.

4. The cause of the flooding should be examined. In the case of Arroyo Burro Creek the box culverts under 101, the railroad and Modoc Rd. are not adequate for the 100 year storm. This is the standard that is used to required properties to have insurance by lenders. The bridges that are being replaced currently in the Mission Creek program have a flood capacity of 20 year storm which does little to solve the flooding potential in the area. Examination of any bridge construction should be assessed for its capacity to reduce future flooding. A policy should be considered requiring improvement in flood areas have an increased capacity.
  
5. The final concern is the problem of speeding in our neighborhoods. If you talk with people in any city neighborhood the one common concern is that speeding on their residential streets and the effect it has on their quality of life. The areas adjacent to the county have had speed limits raised (Modoc Rd) without any concern for the residential areas next to the road or even consultation with the city transportation department. Policies should be adopted which have measures to correct this city wide problem of speeding. There should be an established policy of co-ordination with the county in areas of increased speed. The speed of a road should not just be determined by the prima facie speed but consideration of the number of intersections and the demographics of the population that is served.

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