



Cars Are Basic

Estab. 1998

24 October 2022

Mayor and Council
City of Goleta
Goleta, CA

Re: 27 Oct. 2022 - Hollister Ave. Old Town Interim Striping A.1 22-487

Is Goleta at a Cross Road of confidence and honesty?

The City has repeatedly talked about their Bike Project. This statement of a "project" has been made by paid staff, former City Manager Green, Goleta's Public Works Director, and your head traffic planner. This statement of your "Bike Project" was also called such and commented on in open Council Session. CEQA is clear that a "project" requires an EIR. Cars Are Basic, Inc. Board, is very concerned that at the "Hollister public outreach" held at the Community Center, all but one of the Council attended in violation of the Brown Act. At a minimum it has the appearance as an intentional effort to influence what should have been an objective and public discussion without pressure.

As CAB has stated, under CEQA, a "project" has to have an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). So far, the City has ignored this law while continuing to push forward with multiple plans and to approve projects (Hollister Pacific Oaks to Ellwood, Patterson approved bike/modal plan, the plan for Fairview, Cathedral Oaks, and more). They are all interconnected and part of a unified "Project." If the City had not pushed forward with the mentioned projects / plans, the excuse of staff for the Hollister striping plan "**CEQA Exemption (Project No. 9114)**" would have some validity.

The wording by Staff confirms the ongoing description of these plans as a Project. A "project" that is inclusive of the above-mentioned projects, and plans by the City of Goleta, that is intent upon changing streets and traffic flow.

Mayor and Members of the Council you cannot have it both ways!

CAB has reported to the Council that we have monitored bike use on Hollister since the first year you were formed. The reduction of bike numbers clearly demonstrates the changes in population, age, and work patterns. The same changes and trends CAB has documented in the City of Santa Barbara. The Bicycle Coalition director (2016) commented on the serious decline of bike counts by stating, bike riders are an eclectic group, and do not conform to riding in bike paths. If this is the case, why plan for and create bike paths? It should be noted here that comment was made by a Bren School graduate from UCSB.

Reading the Staff Report on Hollister, vehicle load over years, coincide directly to the Great Recession. The economic bubble burst in 2005 and lasted significantly to 2012 that then saw an agonizingly slow recovery. This was not because the use, and need for a viable "primary artery" had ended.

Statement in staff documents that, the collision accident rate is 4x's the State average, and injuries is 3x's the State average in the "project area" is also interesting. Are these rates based on State average for the current traffic load, or for the reduced traffic load during the recession? What is the number for a State average for a primary artery? Staff talks in percentages. How many of the accidents occurred under the influence of drugs or alcohol? These factors are heavily independent of street configuration.

As stated before Council, a CPRA request to the former City Manager, of a 10-year pedestrian accident count on Hollister responded one (1) accident due to intoxication, and crossing against the red light. When the same request was asked regarding bicycle accidents the response was zero (0). Staff report; 9% of all collisions on the project area involve pedestrians or bikes. 9% of 1 pedestrian accident is .09 annually, and averages over 10 years approximately .009. It is interesting that Staff cross pollinates the discussion with comments about off street parking. Are the accident quotes by Staff from curb to curb inclusive of Hollister only? Are the accident quotes by Staff including side streets intersecting with Hollister and how far from Hollister (one block? two blocks?)

There becomes the issue of enforcement.

The radar speed display on Hollister mid-way from Kellogg on Hollister before the gas station has been inoperable for over 3 weeks, and was on/off for at least 2 weeks prior to that (as to the date of this letter). Parking enforcement has been less than consistent. When observers see many cars parked on Hollister at 6 AM that are still there at 10 AM, CAB has to wonder has Staff quietly passed the word; no or little enforcement? That would be a great way to "prove" the need for more parking on the street. If the Council wants effective speed enforcement on Hollister all it has to do is have a random number generator, for days of the month, and the same for work day hours. You will see a significant change in attitude and outcomes when no one knows there will be a cop on the street. It takes all guess work from when, and how, and makes it almost influence proof. There is an important benefit to this enforcement. The bad guys don't like being around when there is a good chance of being caught. It is a multiplier effect (or if you prefer a twofer).

Staff has stated at Goleta Council Sessions, with CAB in attendance, that Hollister is a heavily used primary artery serving local businesses, the airport, and is critical when Highway 101 is closed or impaired. CAB finds little to no justification for taking 50% of capacity from such an important traffic corridor. The Council has stated the placement of roundabouts on either side of Hwy 217 on Hollister is to increase capacity of the 217 off ramp, 217 on ramp, and thru traffic flow. How logical or rational is it to improve traffic flow and then inches from these plans "Taking" 50% of the street away, congesting flow?

CAB ends our comment with these facts:

Old Town Goleta is the Last cohesive Blue Collar District in all of South Santa Barbara County. Similar plans have crushed Old Town Santa Barbara, and all but eliminated most of Carpinteria's district.

Gentrification of Old Town will be the long term outcome of this planning.

Old Town is a vital, lower income housing district, for the working poor and low middle income workers.

Old Town generates significant tax revenue for the City.

The City has stated it wants to preserve the character of what Goleta was. This cannot happen if this ultimate destruction of this significant traffic corridor serving Old Town goes ahead.

If the Council wants to promote commute bike use ban on-street parking from 6-8 AM on the ocean side of Hollister where the past majority of bike commuters are. One sign per block! No disruption of Hollister. Saving Millions of the Taxpayers dollars.

Leave Hollister the way it is.

Respectfully, on behalf of the Board,

(Electronic Signature)

Scott Wenz,

President CAB