



VA *Santa Ynez Valley Alliance*

“There is a pervasive “interrelatedness” that exists in the Valley. A significant change in one community deeply affects the other surrounding communities almost immediately. We need to foster interdependence and synergy among the six communities.”

- The Valley Blueprint, pg 39

FALL 2009

IN THIS ISSUE

Valley Community Plan Finally Adopted 2
Farr makes a difference.

Mattei's Tavern Resort Development 2
A Shock to the Community.

Special Events on Agricultural Lands 3
The short-term win requires a long-term solution.

Valley Alliance Hosts 3rd Annual Membership Meeting 3

CONTACT US

For more information about the Santa Ynez Valley Alliance and its goals and objectives, or to join the organization, please contact us or visit our web site.

Email:
info@www.santaynezvalleyalliance.org

Web Site
www.santaynezvalleyalliance.org

Post Office Box 941
Santa Ynez, CA 93460

Landscape photography © 2009 Mark Oliver

Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan Adopted

On October 6, 2009 the Board of Supervisors adopted the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan (SYVCP). The Valley's first community plan is a specific segment of the County's General Plan, focusing on the future of the unincorporated areas. It applies to the townships of Santa Ynez, Los Olivos and Ballard, and includes the Inner Rural Area surrounding the townships and the cities of Solvang and Buellton. It also includes a small part of the Rural Area abutting the Inner Rural bringing the total acreage to approximately 47,000 acres.

Since work on the SYVCP began in 2001, the final version reflects the involvement of three Third District Supervisors and two citizen advisory groups (the General Plan Advisory Committee and the Valley Planning Advisory Committee). In the interim, the scope of the plan changed significantly and the document received extensive Environmental Review and public comment. Given the Valley Alliance's commitment to comprehensive planning and public participation, we have carefully monitored the development and processing of the Community Plan, provided testimony at numerous meetings and commented on the Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

The primary goal of the Plan is to preserve the Valley's rural character while allowing carefully considered future growth supported by adequate infrastructure. Under the leadership of Third District Supervisor Doreen Farr, the Board adopted the reduced development/downzone version of the plan identified by the EIR as the Environmentally Superior Alternative and endorsed by the Valley Alliance. The Plan provides a policy framework to ensure new growth is consistent with community goals, such as preserving agriculture, reducing sprawl and preserving the unique qualities of our different communities.

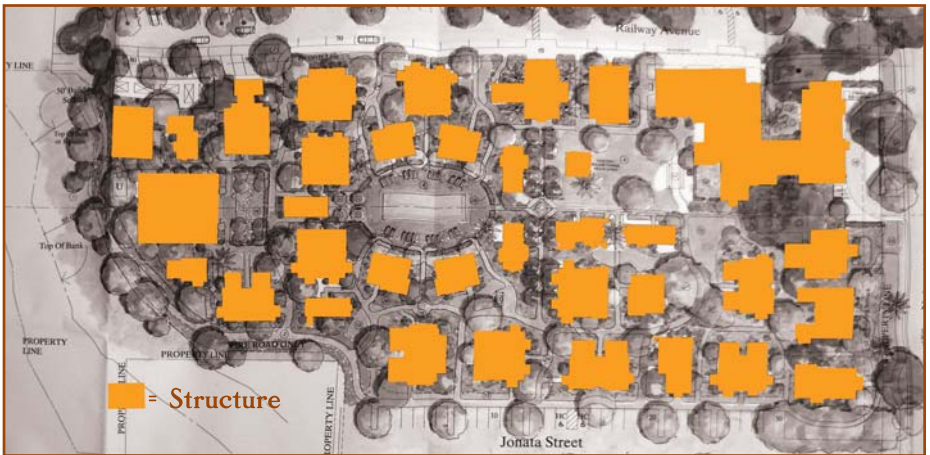
The SYVCP incorporates a Mixed Use Overlay for the commercial cores of Santa Ynez and Los Olivos to provide more diverse and affordable housing. It incorporates Design Review to address visual impacts on major corridors and preserve the buffers between communities. It includes measures to protect biological resources, support pedestrian-friendly development in our townships, and address the visual impacts of lighting on the night sky. The Plan incorporates mitigation measures to reduce the impacts of traffic and provide necessary infrastructure improvements, such as a new fire station in the Los Olivos Area.

It now falls upon the County and the citizenry of the Valley to implement the collaborative vision of the future incorporated within the Community Plan. The Valley Alliance is committed to helping Valley residents achieve this vision and will continue to inform the public regarding new development.

The “Inn at Mattei’s Tavern” Resort Development: A Challenge to the Entire Valley Community

Mattei’s Tavern is one of the Valley’s best known and most-beloved locations, but few Valley residents are aware that this iconic structure and its park-like setting could change dramatically if a new large project is approved.

Santa Rita Land and Vine, LLC. proposes to develop the “Inn at Mattei’s Tavern,” a 64 unit “cottage hotel,” with a gym, spa, pool, reception building, and meeting and banquet room alongside Highway 154 at the western gateway to Los Olivos



Although the Valley Alliance recognizes positive aspects of the concept, the scale and intensity of the proposal are cause for concern. Other issues of concern include visual impacts, historic preservation, parking, traffic, safe ingress and egress on Highway 154, water consumption, and wastewater. The Central Board of Architectural Review (CBAR) and the Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission (HLAC) have been looking at various plans that include almost 40 structures for the approximately 5-acre site adjacent to Highway 154 and Alamo Pintado Creek. The application presumes that the County will abandon significant acreage of undeveloped roadway and right-of-way (ROW) to the project, thereby increasing development potential.

Most Valley residents assume that Mattei’s historic character protects it from harm, but without Historic Landmark status, that cannot be taken for granted. Although the project proposes to maintain Mattei’s Tavern as a public restaurant, the building will be enlarged dramatically. The Keenan-Hartley House, which housed the Wildling Museum, is a Historical Landmark and will be relocated on site along with one of the five existing cottages. Two more cottages will remain in place, two others will be dismantled.



The Historic Landmarks Advisory Commission (HLAC) has repeatedly sought the protection of Historic Landmark status for Mattei’s. An HLAC letter to the owners of Mattei’s in 1982 noted that Historic Landmark status and protection was “long overdue” but previous owners have stalled or blocked Landmark status.

The project proposes to locate a 90-space parking lot in the County ROW next to Highway 154, a Scenic Highway, and requests to substitute 119 total spaces for the required 155 spaces. During the Community Plan process unused County ROWs were proposed for addressing the parking needs of Los Olivos. Allowing this project to use public property and public easements for private parking and additional development will make the problem worse.

All development in Los Olivos is served by septic systems and because the area has been plagued with water quality issues it has been declared a Special Problems Area. The project proposes a “package sewer treatment plant” to handle effluent, and disposal fields situated beneath the parking areas to distribute wastewater.

Because of the many potentially significant impacts of this project, Valley residents should insist that the County require an Environmental Impact Report and consistency with the Community Plan. More than twenty-five years ago Historic Landmark protection for Mattei’s was “long overdue.” This historic stagestop and railway terminus has become even more valuable in the intervening years, hence this attempt to exploit its commercial potential. A community that values its unique character and irreplaceable resources would demand that Mattei’s Tavern and its site be declared a Historical Landmark.

Special Events: An Ongoing Threat to Ag Lands

We constantly talk about the preservation of agriculture – and for good reason. Our Valley is one of the “last best places.” We have extraordinary open space and view-sheds. We have over 231,000 acres of land in agriculture.

Of course people want to come here to visit and we welcome those visitors in many ways. We have tourist centers like Solvang and Los Olivos. We have vegetable stands, pick-your-own fruit stands and wineries, with clear relationships to agriculture. Unfortunately, what we also have is a growing

trend toward events that are unrelated to agriculture on agriculturally zoned lands. Most recently, the property known as Crossroads applied for permits to hold ongoing events, or “parties for profit.” The Crossroads property is approximately 50 acres with 11 acres of wine grapes. These special events had no relationship to agriculture and could not meet the test of “incidental” to the ag use of the property. Nor could it meet the test of preserving the land for long term agricultural use.

The Alliance supports Santa Barbara County land use policies and zoning that have been crafted to ensure that agricultural lands are used for the production of food and fiber. To this end, a coalition of groups countywide led by the Valley Alliance lobbied against the “events center” at the Crossroads property. We successfully convinced the Board of Supervisors to deny this project. But that is not enough. We are now working to ensure the County does a comprehensive study of the nature and impacts of tourist related activities on agriculturally zoned properties throughout the County, with the end result being a Countywide events ordinance that addresses the issues raised by this misguided proposal.



Valley Alliance Hosts 3rd Annual Membership Event

Meeting Features Supervisor Doreen Farr, Jody White, and New VA Coordinator Mark Preston

Our Keynote Speaker: Supervisor Doreen Farr

As the leader of the county’s largest supervisorial district, Supervisor Doreen Farr, the meeting’s keynote speaker, discussed many of her responsibilities, as well as several issues of concern to Valley residents, including the proposal to develop Mattei’s Tavern into a resort.

Supervisor Doreen Farr



Valley Resident Jody White Honored

At its annual meeting on September 13, the Santa Ynez Valley Alliance honored long-time activist and former Valley Alliance Board Member Jody White with the it’s Environmental Stewardship Award. “Having been part of preserving what is great about the Santa Ynez Valley for nearly three decades, Jody more than deserves this Award,” stated Board Member Gail Marshall.



Honoree Jody White and new Valley Alliance Coordinator Mark Preston

Valley Alliance Coordinator Introduced

The Alliance’s new Coordinator, Mark Preston, a long time resident of the Santa Ynez Valley, was also introduced. Mr. Preston, who also has a great deal of community service experience, will be working to increase community education and outreach. The Coordinator position is partially funded by a generous grant from the Fund for Santa Barbara.



*Santa Ynez
Valley Alliance*

POST OFFICE BOX 941
SANTA YNEZ, CA. 93460

Our Mission

The mission of the Santa Ynez 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. The Valley Alliance seeks to fulfill its Mission by working with residents, community groups, county and city governments, special districts, tribal government, and state agencies. We support The Valley Blueprint as a collaborative vision of the Valley's future that protects the quality of life for all residents.



Get Your VA Shopping Bag!

Once again, this year I want to thank those in the Valley that have stepped forward to support our mission. And once again, more than 100 of you have joined the effort to keep the Valley rural as we know it.

And even more, this year you can show your support for our community and the

Valley Alliance by using our very own environmentally-friendly shopping bags. Made of recycled material and slightly larger than most bags, they're ideal for shopping at the local farmer's markets in Solvang and Los Olivos. Support your Valley farmers and businesses. Buy local and use your bag!



Board member Donna Will gives out bags at the Solvang Farmer's Market.

— Mark Oliver, President