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Goleta Gets a Look at Westar Proposal Near Camino Real Marketplace

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By **Sonia Fernandez**, Noozhawk Staff Writer

Project plans include commercial businesses and 300 apartments

The [Goleta Planning Commission](#) on Monday took a conceptual look at plans for a potential mixed-use project in western Goleta.

The [Westar Associates](#) project involves a 23.5-acre property north of Hollister Avenue across the street from [Camino Real Marketplace](#). Current plans for the mostly vacant lot include approximately 88,500 square feet of commercial development on the 8.5 acres closest to Hollister, and about 300 apartments on the northern 15 acres.

“One thing about this project is the walkability,” developer Peter Koetting said during his presentation to the commission. Initial plans for the commercial area include a grocery store, pharmacy, restaurants and other retail outlets. For the residential development, the proposal calls for 102 one-bedroom apartments and 198 two-bedroom units housed in two- and three-story buildings.

Even at this very early stage in the project process, neighbors were on hand to weigh in. Leslie Lund, a resident of the development on the property’s eastern boundary, commented that the project might generate too much noise and activity on nearby Glen Annie Road.

“Am I going to have headlights shining into my living room?” she asked. Other concerns that she and her neighbors aired dealt with noise and parking.

Among the other things the applicants and city planners and designers must tackle will be the cumulative traffic impacts generated by this project and others close to the Hollister/Storke Road intersection, already one of the busiest in the city. Other projects in the area include the [recently approved Rincon Palms hotel](#) and [Cabrillo Business Park](#).

Another issue will be the view corridor from Hollister to the Santa Ynez Mountains, and the appropriate height of the buildings.

“This is a gorgeous piece of property,” said Commissioner Jonny Wallis, who added that she had concerns about the potential overbuilding of the site.

Gary Coombs, director of the [South Coast Railroad Museum](#), meanwhile, brought up the history of a railroad cut on the site, a remnant of the late 1800s railroad technology that brought the [Southern Pacific Railroad](#) through the Goleta Valley.

“It would be my hope that this historic cut be preserved,” Coombs said of the section of land where railroad engineers cut into the ground to lay track.

The project has not yet been through the design review process; a change in the way Goleta handles proposals for new projects has the Planning Commission in on the earliest stages to comment on proposals in an advisory manner only. The project has yet to be seen by the Goleta Design Review Board before returning to the Planning Commission for approvals.

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