

# Cotati General Plan Update

## MEMORANDUM

**October 17, 2011**

---

TO: Planning Commissioners

FROM: Vicki Parker, Community Development Director  
Beth Thompson and Ben Ritchie, De Novo Planning Group

SUBJECT: Transportation and Noise

DATE: October 17, 2011

---

### INTRODUCTION

This Planning Commission meeting will focus on the topics of Transportation and Noise. This meeting packet includes specific reading materials related to transportation and noise and raises key issues to consider in preparation for the fourth General Plan Planning Commission meeting. The Circulation and Noise Elements are required elements of the General Plan.

As part of the Visioning Process, residents and stakeholders were asked to identify their vision and priorities for the City's future, as well as challenges and opportunities associated with the General Plan Update. Many issues associated with transportation, including traffic volumes, traffic-related hazards, and needed bicycle/pedestrian system improvements were raised during the Visioning Process, with a lesser number of noise-related issues identified. The primary priorities and concerns related to transportation and noise identified during the Visioning Process were:

- Extending/increasing bicycle lanes
- Improving/expanding sidewalks
- Reducing vehicle speeds
- Reducing vehicle congestion
- Old Redwood Highway and Highway 116, Old Redwood Highway and East Cotati Avenue, and the East Cotati Avenue corridor were the top locations identified as having critical circulation issues
- Number of bars and associated noise

A detailed list of transportation issues raised during the Visioning Process is included as Attachment 1. Locations identified as priorities for circulation improvements, including new/expanded bicycle lanes, safe pedestrian routes, and traffic safety improvements, are shown on the attached Circulation Priorities figure (see Attachment 2).

The City's 1998 General Plan includes goals and policies specifically related to transportation and noise. It is anticipated that the Commission will review these policies for relevancy and scope, and if necessary, expand upon them as part of this General Plan Update.

## **REQUIRED READING**

Prior to the meeting on October 17<sup>th</sup>, please read the following items:

1. Visioning Workshop #4: Transportation Priorities and Problems (see Attachments 1 and 2)
2. Background Information – Transportation and Circulation: Chapter 4 of the Background Report
3. Background Information – Chapter 8 of the Background Report (previously provided)
4. 1998 General Plan Goals and Policies related to Transportation and Circulation (see Attachment 3)
5. 1998 General Plan Goals and Policies related to Noise (see Attachment 4)

## **WORK EXERCISE**

After reading the materials identified above, please consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss:

1. In developing a goal and policy framework to address transportation and circulation, what top three issues or actions should the City prioritize?
2. In reviewing the 1998 General Plan policies related to transportation and circulation:
  - a. Which 1998 General Plan goals and policies best address the concerns you identified?
  - b. Which priorities are not addressed in the 1998 General Plan?
3. In developing a goal and policy framework to address noise, what top three issues or actions should the City prioritize?
4. In reviewing the 1998 General Plan policies related to noise:
  - a. Which 1998 General Plan goals and policies best address the concerns you identified?
  - b. Which priorities are not addressed in the 1998 General Plan?

## ATTACHMENT 1

### VISIONING WORKSHOP #4: TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES AND PROBLEMS

#### **Visioning Workshop #4: Transportation Priorities**

Additional transit service

ADA improvements

Public transit more efficient and smaller buses running more often, revamp routes

Improve transit service - currently there is service to SSU but not from SSU

Expanding bike lanes

Linking up with regional bike trails

Extending/improving bike lanes

Bike safety

Bicycle lanes

Decrease vehicle congestion

Extending and connecting LOS A+B bike options - should be able to get anywhere within 5 miles safely and comfortably

Extending bicycle lanes

Linking up with regional bike trails

Traffic flow improvements - using roundabouts instead of 4-way stop signs

Decrease vehicle congestion

Extend bike lanes

Decrease vehicle congestion

Extend bike lanes

Extending bicycle lanes

Increasing bicycle lanes

Extending bicycle lanes

Better freeway access - Railroad and Sierra Ave

Decrease vehicle congestion

Get rid of 4-way stop signs

Consistent bicycle street treatment

Extending bike lanes

Bike lane to SMART

Increase local transit services and amenities and bus stops

Improving perception of bicycle and pedestrian safety

Decrease vehicle speed

Address speed on West Sierra

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **VISIONING WORKSHOP #4: TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES AND PROBLEMS**

Decreasing vehicle speeds

Decreasing vehicle speeds on West Sierra Ave

Decreased speeds on Old Redwood

Safety at Hwy 116/Madrone - major accidents and people killed there

Breaking down the road block at Arthur Street and E. Cotati the residents installed years ago

More parking

Improving sidewalks

Improving sidewalks

Improving sidewalks

Improving walkability

Improving sidewalks

Pedestrians: signal change at Old Redwood Hwy/E. Cotati/W. Sierra is VERY slow for pedestrians

More sidewalks

Improving sidewalks

Lack of sidewalks in older neighborhoods - i.e., Page Street



## ATTACHMENT 1

### VISIONING WORKSHOP #4: TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES AND PROBLEMS

#### **Visioning Workshop #4: Transportation Problems**

West Sierra & Valparaiso - turning left to 101 - can get stuck in line of traffic

Additional freeway on-ramp and off-ramp at W, Sierra and US Hwy 101

ADA improvements - many crosswalks have ADA access on one side of street but not the other; lamp posts in sidewalks, etc.

Safe Route to Thomas Page School so children can safely walk/bicycle instead of parents driving every day

Walkability on all streets - what happened to walkable Cotati

Way-finding signs for bicycle routes (could direct tourists to local businesses as well)

East Cotati - traffic is too much, too fast

East Cotati Ave

East Cotati/Old Redwood signal timing

Left turn from Old Redwood Hwy to E. Cotati Ave

Pedestrian flow crossing 116 along Old Redwood Hwy

Intersection of E. Cotati and La Salle

Old Redwood - HUB - 101 congestion, suicide lane, high speeds, need an intersection

Bike/ped circulation at Old Redwood/Hwy 101 interchange

New center divide/island at Old Redwood Hwy and N. 101 entrance - street lines

Circulation problems - W. Sierra + W. School St.

Gravenstein Hwy + W. School Street

Old Redwood Hwy, especially in early evening

Bicycle lanes, safety going north on Old Redwood Hwy from Valparaiso to La Plaza

Making left turn south on Old Redwood Hwy (between George St & Walgreens)

South on Old Redwood towards E. Sierra - turning lane gets blocked up

Hwy 116- Dangerous intersections need improvement

The pedestrian barrier on E. Cotati Ave that keeps getting hit

Access/left turn east bound 116 into Crossroads- new island project- creating traffic- non emergency access

Old Redwood and 116

Old Redwood and 116 (intersection at Walgreens)

Hwy 116 east/west

Old Redwood and 116

116 at Madrone- autos and peds

## **ATTACHMENT 1**

### **VISIONING WORKSHOP #4: TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES AND PROBLEMS**

Hwy 116 under Hwy 101

For bikes, railroad crossing on East Cotati Ave is extremely dangerous

Railroad crossing at E. Cotati Ave: future transit site, no ped crossing, rough for bicycles (need to dismount)

Old Redwood Hwy between Hub and 116 needs to be "beautified"

Old Red

Old Redwood Hwy and Railroad Ave.

Through traffic on Old Red- back up- and cutting through on residential streets

Biking along Old Redwood Highway north of Hub and onto 116

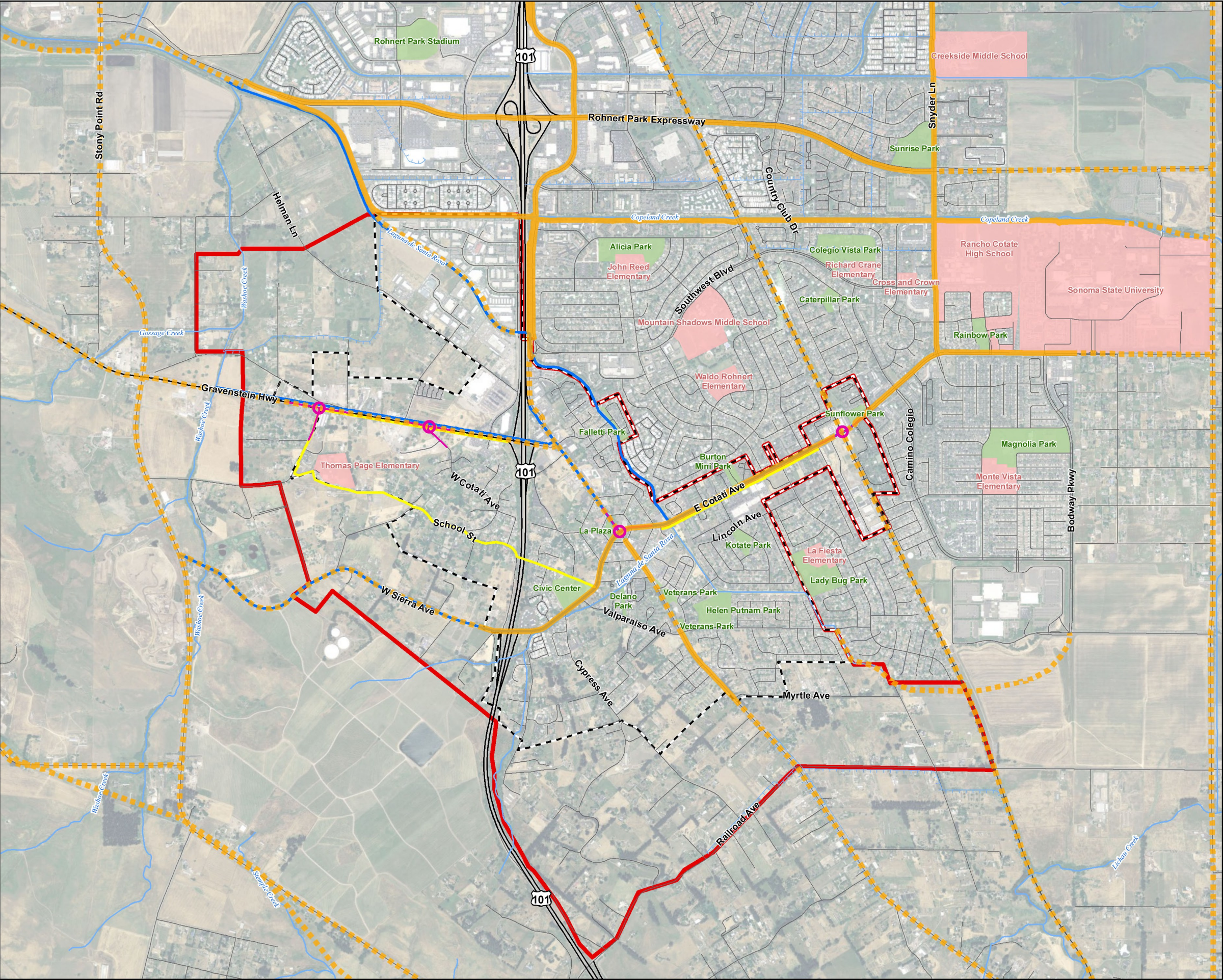
Old Redwood Highway

Old Redwood near Page St: no bike lane thru, heavy congestion at 5pm, bridge pavement causes excessive noise

Hub to Old Redwood

Old Redwood Hwy and E. Cotati Ave at the Hub





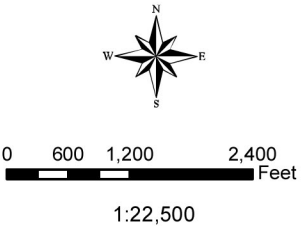
Cotati General Plan Update

**Visioning Workshop #4**

**Circulation Priorities**

**Attachment 2**

- Priority Segments
- New or Improved Bicycle Lanes
  - Safe Pedestrian Route
  - Safety Improvements
- Regional Bicycle Network
- Existing Route
  - Proposed Route
- Parks and Schools
- Park
  - School
- Planning Areas
- City Boundary
  - Sphere of Influence



Data sources: Cotati GIS, Sonoma County Transportation Authority, ArcGIS Online Bing Aerials.  
Map date: October 11, 2011.



## **ATTACHMENT 3**

### **1998 GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES: TRANSPORTATION**

#### **GOAL 2        DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES THAT PROVIDES SAFE AND EFFICIENT ACCESS TO ALL PARTS OF THE CITY, INCLUDING THOMAS PAGE SCHOOL, SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND THE REGION, AND REINFORCES THE DESIRED LAND USE PATTERN.**

2.1.1 Encourage the use of park and ride facilities in safe and convenient locations.

2.1.2 Encourage the provision and maintenance of covered and lighted seating areas at existing and future transit stops along Old Redwood Highway and East Cotati Avenue to ensure safety and convenience for riders. (See map 4.)

2.1.3 When state monies become available, explore the possibility of an on-demand or regular transit service for west, south, and southwesterly portions of Cotati that have no public transit, thus providing access to activity centers and public transit facilities.

2.1.4 Encourage a schedule where Sonoma County Transit buses stop every half-hour at designated bus stops along Old Redwood Highway and East Cotati Avenue, to and from activity centers in Cotati, Sonoma State University, and the region.

2.1.5 As demand increases, the City shall work with Sonoma County Transit and other State agencies to locate and construct new park and ride facilities.

2.1.6 Encourage the consolidation of Golden Gate Transit Service and Sonoma County Transit bus shelters at La Plaza to better serve the bus traveling population.

2.1.7 Establish a rail transit center at the site of the historic East Cotati Avenue transit stop along the Northwest Pacific Railroad right-of-way.

2.2.1 Establish and maintain continuous clearly identifiable bicycle routes and facilities on Old Redwood Highway, East Cotati Avenue, Gravenstein Highway, and West Sierra Avenue.

2.2.2 Maintain and develop a network of walkways and sidewalks along arterial and collector streets to provide for safe and efficient travel.

2.2.3 New development shall provide the rights-of-way for bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

2.2.4 Priority shall be given to upgrading and maintaining existing bicycle and pedestrian routes before new routes are established.

2.2.5 Continue to provide secure bicycle racks in the Hub, future and existing commercial areas, park-and-ride transit facilities, schools, and multiple unit residential developments.

2.2.6 Provide curb cuts and ramps at the intersections along Old Redwood Highway and East Cotati Avenue and throughout the community, to serve the needs of the mobility-impaired.

2.2.7 Identify streets on the west side of Highway 101 where reduced pedestrian facilities, such as an asphalt path, would more closely support the rural character.

## **ATTACHMENT 3**

### **1998 GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES: TRANSPORTATION**

2.2.8 Establish pedestrian facilities under the Gravenstein Highway and West Sierra Avenue interchanges to facilitate safe and efficient pedestrian and bicycle travel throughout Cotati.

2.2.9 Enhance the safety of pedestrian crossings in the Hub area while ensuring a delightful downtown experience.

2.3.1 Require future commercial development near residential areas to provide adequate parking so that those adjacent areas are not impacted with spillover parking demand.

2.3.2 Multiple unit residential developments shall provide adequate parking facilities to serve both residents and guests to minimize on- street parking impacts.

2.3.3 Encourage the use of multi-purpose parking lots that serve both multi-family residential and commercial uses.

2.3.4 Pursue the formation of downtown parking assessment districts which assembles parking to the rear of Hub businesses as depicted in the City of Cotati Downtown Specific Plan.

2.4.1 Seek alternatives to traditional traffic solutions; these measures could include traffic signals, street widening and stop signs. Traffic calming measures, which decrease environmental impacts, slow vehicular speed and encourage pedestrian and bicycle modes of transportation, shall be given the highest priority above the traffic improvements recommended below.

2.4.2 Policy 2.4.2 deleted by City Council Resolution No. 04-79, adopted November 10, 2004.

2.4.3 The following intersections and street segments are congested or near capacity and should be given a high priority for improvements (see map 7a and 7b):

2.4.4 Realign Madrone Avenue so that it forms a four-way intersection with Gravenstein Highway and Locust Avenue.

2.4.5 Realign the U.S. 101 Highway northbound on-ramp.

2.4.6 Allow a maximum of 1,500 to 2,000 vehicles per day on all residential streets which have more urban facilities such as curb, gutter and sidewalk and well-conditioned pavement. Allow a maximum of 1,000 to 1,500 vehicles per day on all residential streets which are more rural in nature and are typified by poorly conditioned pavement and the absence of pedestrian walkways. If residential streets moderately to significantly exceed these standards, the City should consider measures to reduce through traffic volumes. These measures would primarily include diversionary devices to prohibit movements and/or traffic calming devices. Traffic calming devices are simple street design features that cause motorists to drive with more care, to drive more slowly or perhaps via another route. A menu of traffic calming devices can be found in the Appendix.

**GOAL 3        MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF THE CITY'S RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS.**

## ATTACHMENT 3

### 1998 GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES: TRANSPORTATION

3.1.1 Reduce automobile trips and local traffic congestion. Refer to, Goal 2, the transportation section for additional policies that would reduce automobile use.

#### **GOAL 6        ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF COTATI RESIDENTS THROUGH THE CREATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WELL-DESIGNED AND APPROPRIATELY SERVED NEIGHBORHOODS.**

6.4.1 Site designs shall minimize paved surfaces and roadway lengths while providing adequate access for normal circulation and emergency vehicles.

6.4.2 Site design shall minimize vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian conflicts.

6.4.3 Site designs shall maximize access to commercial uses, recreational uses, employment, public services and other destinations using a minimum of pavement.

#### **GOAL 7        MAINTAIN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT BY PROVIDING ADEQUATE PROTECTION FROM TRAFFIC, FIRE, CRIME, NATURAL DISASTER AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS.**

7.6.1 Sites with a high frequency of traffic accidents shall be modified to minimize such occurrences.

7.6.2 A "Level of Service D" shall be the minimum Level of Service maintained at all intersections. (See Appendix for definitions of "Levels of Service" and an Intersection Service Levels analysis of already impacted intersections. See Map 7a for the current Level of Service ratings for these intersections.)

7.6.3 Bicycle paths shall be established, maintained in good condition and/or repaired, in order to keep bicyclists safe from vehicular traffic. (See map 5.)

7.6.4 Safe pedestrian paths shall be maintained throughout the community. (See map 6.)

#### **GOAL 9        PROMOTE CONSERVATION OF ENERGY AND OTHER NATURAL RESOURCES.**

9.5.3 Layout and design of future development shall be such that the use of transportation modes other than automobiles and trucks shall be feasible and practical.

#### **GOAL 11       ESTABLISH THE INNER HUB AREA AS A PRINCIPAL RETAIL AND SERVICE CENTER.**

11.1.2 Provide sufficient funds for anticipated traffic improvements.

11.1.3 Decisions on individual site uses in the Hub shall consider potential impacts on the Hub and on collector and arterial streets.

11.1.4 Provide safe walking areas for pedestrians, allow safe on-street parking and provide adequate street width for fire safety vehicles in the Hub.

11.2.1 Provide off-street parking behind existing and new businesses or in centrally located shared parking areas.

## **ATTACHMENT 4**

### **1998 GENERAL PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES: NOISE**

#### **GOAL 3        MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY, SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF THE CITY'S RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS RELATED TO TRANSPORTATION IMPACTS.**

3.3.1 Encourage the maintenance of the Noise and Land Use Compatibility Standards indicated in Table 3.1 (Appendix).

3.3.2 Control non-transportation related noise from site specific noise sources.

3.3.3 Develop and enforce a City of Cotati Noise Ordinance.

3.3.4 Local truck traffic, including loading and unloading, shall be limited to specific routes, times and speeds appropriate to each zoning district.

3.3.5 Encourage the enforcement of sections of the California Vehicle Code relating to adequate vehicle mufflers, and modified exhaust systems.

3.3.6 Work with Caltrans to ensure that adequate noise studies are prepared and alternative noise mitigation measures are considered in State projects.

3.3.7 Require acoustical studies and mitigation measures for new developments and transportation improvements that affect noise sensitive uses such as schools, hospitals, libraries, group care facilities, convalescent homes, and residential areas.

3.3.8 Stationary equipment, such as air compressors, shall be located as far away as feasible from sensitive noise receptors, and shall be shielded. Construction equipment shall be fitted with effective mufflers. The hours for construction operations shall be limited to the weekdays and the daytime where extreme noise sources are found.