



TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Vyto Adomaitis, Neighborhood Services and Public Safety Director

CONTACT: Jaime A. Valdez, Principal Project Manager

SUBJECT: Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program

RECOMMENDATION:

- A. Receive a presentation from the County of Santa Barbara's District Attorney's Office and Second District Supervisor's Office on the Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program ("Pilot Program"); and
- B. Consider supporting the Pilot Program by directing City staff to help promote volunteer recruitment efforts, provide a meeting space, and eventually provide/suggest community service opportunities for program participants.

BACKGROUND:

Over the past year, Santa Barbara County Second District Supervisor Gregg Hart's Office has met with City of Goleta management staff, Mayor Paula Perotte, and Councilmember Kyle Richards to discuss the City of Goleta's potential involvement in the Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program, a restorative justice-based program aimed at diverting low level offenses from the criminal justice system.

On December 2, 2020, the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Standing Committee ("Committee") received a presentation from the County on the Pilot Program. Upon hearing from Second District Supervisor Hart and Second District Representative Ethan Bertrand, the Committee recommended that City staff bring the Pilot Program to the full Council for consideration.

DISCUSSION:

The District Attorney's Office and Second District Supervisor's Office will present a short summary on the Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program, a restorative justice-based program aimed at diverting low level offenses from the criminal justice system (Attachment 1).

The City is being asked to consider supporting the program by helping promote volunteer recruitment efforts, providing a meeting space, and eventually providing/suggesting community service opportunities for program participants. Attachment 2 is a memo provided to the Committee outlining the Neighborhood Court Pilot Program that includes eligible offenses.

GOLETA STRATEGIC PLAN:

City-Wide Strategy: Maintain a Safe Community.

Strategic Goal: Participate in regional public safety collaboration.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Other than occasional staff time related to promoting opportunities and coordinating facility scheduling, there do not appear to be any fiscal impacts from supporting the Pilot Program.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may take no action at this time on supporting the Pilot Program or may choose to support one or more of the requested items .


Reviewed By:

Legal Review By:

Approved By:


Kristine Schmidt
Assistant City Manager


Michael Jenkins
City Attorney


Michelle Greene
City Manager

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program Summary Presentation
2. Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program Memo to the Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Standing Committee for its December 2, 2020 meeting

Attachment 1

Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program Summary Presentation

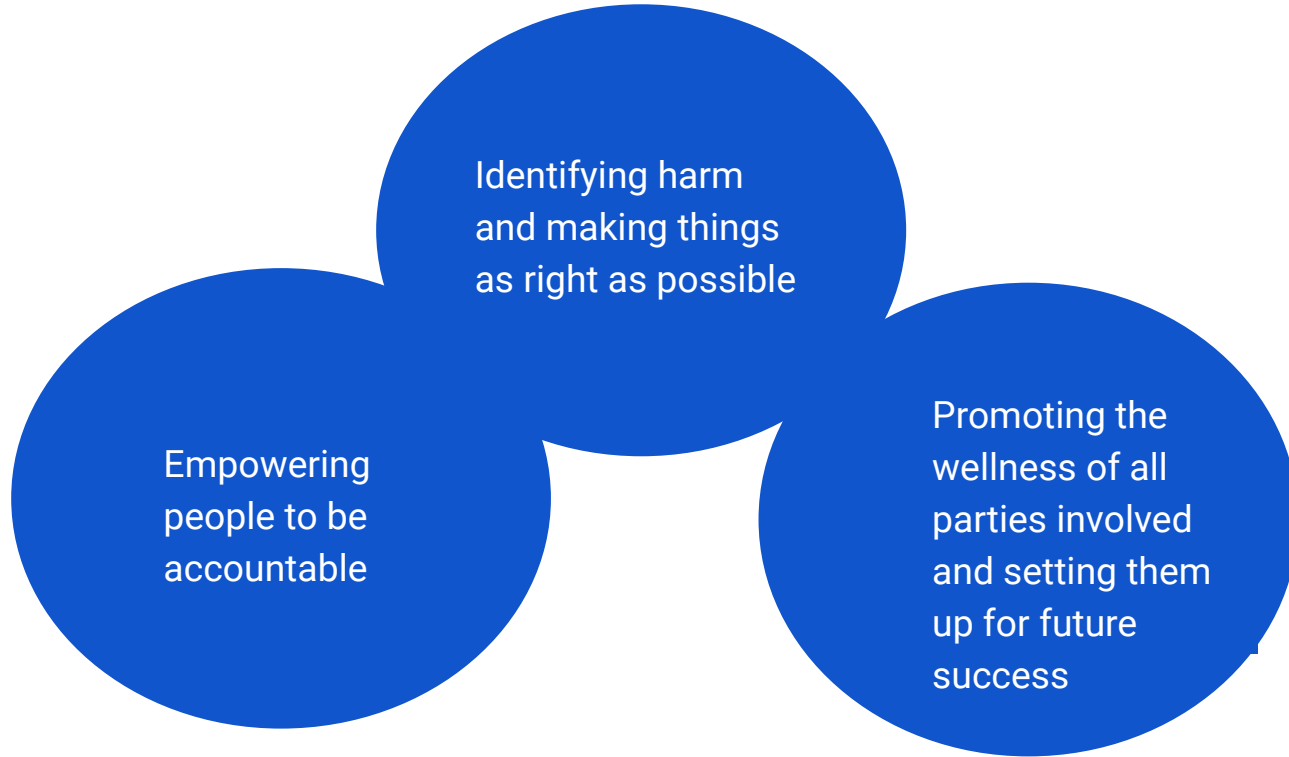


Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court

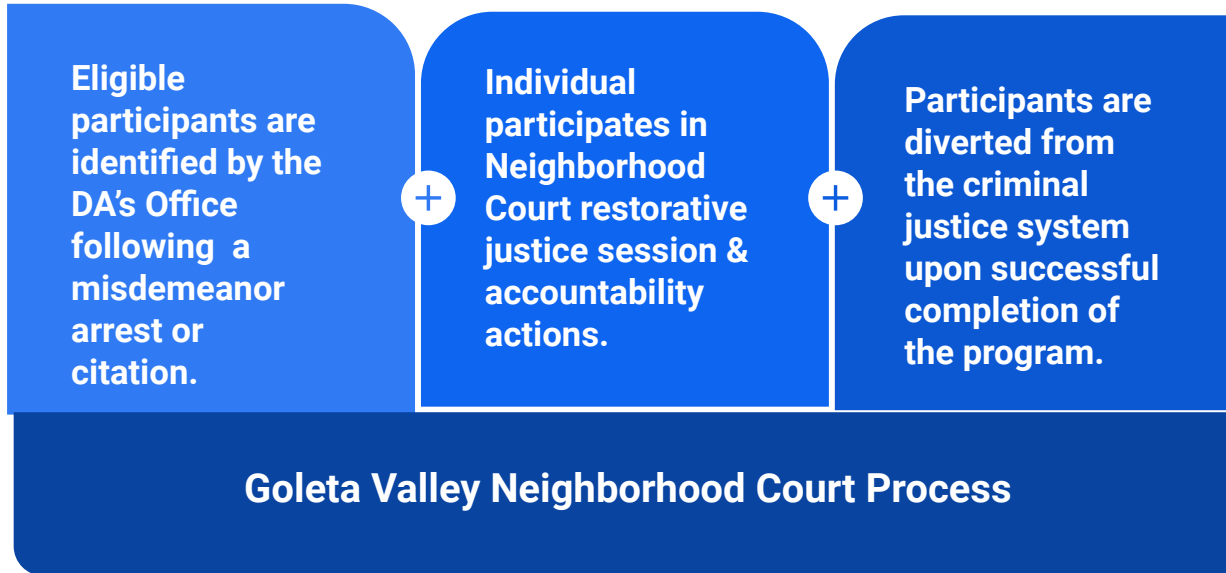
Presentation to Goleta City Council
February 2, 2021

Offices of District Attorney Joyce Dudley & County Supervisor Gregg Hart
John Savrnock, Chief Deputy District Attorney
Ethan Bertrand, 2nd District Representative

What is restorative justice?

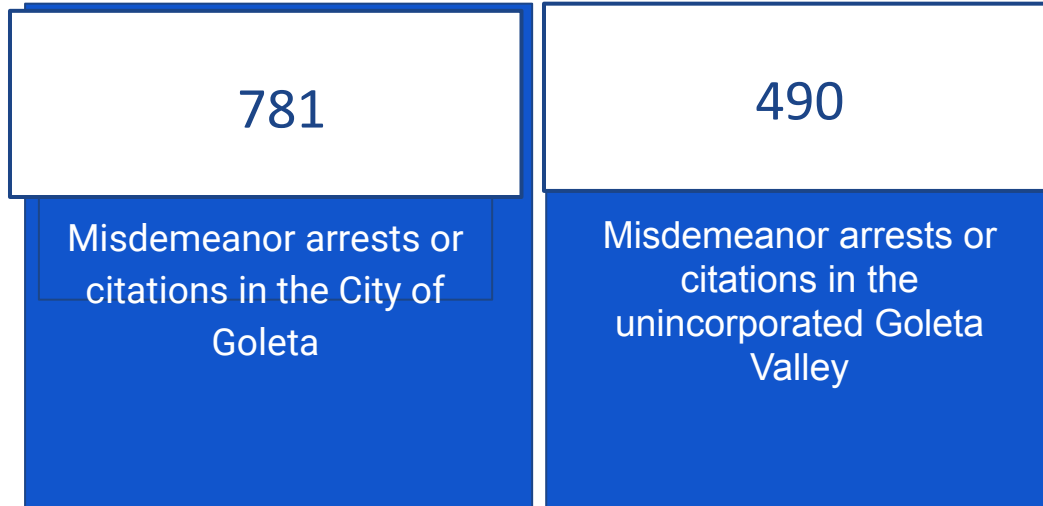


What is a Neighborhood Court?



Who will this program serve?

- Most misdemeanor offenses will be eligible for diversion through this program, as determined by the District Attorney's Office (certain exclusions apply)
- In 2019, there were:



How can the City of Goleta help?

Providing space for neighborhood court sessions to be held.

Spreading the word on volunteer opportunities.

Identifying community service projects for participants to help with.

Attachment 2

Goleta Valley Neighborhood Court Pilot Program Memo to the Public Safety and
Emergency Preparedness Standing Committee for its December 2, 2020 meeting

Memo: Neighborhood Court Pilot Program

To: City of Goleta Public Safety & Emergency Preparedness Standing Committee

From: Offices of District Attorney Joyce Dudley & County Supervisor Gregg Hart

Staff: John Savrnich, Chief Deputy DA & Ethan Bertrand, 2nd District Representative

District Attorney Joyce Dudley and County Supervisor Gregg Hart have secured funding from the Community Corrections Partnership for a Neighborhood Court pilot program to take place during Fiscal Year 2020-21. The Goleta Valley (including the City of Goleta) has been identified as an ideal area for this pilot program to take place.

A neighborhood court program is a restorative justice-based pre-filing diversion program for certain misdemeanor offenses and infractions. Through a neighborhood court program, a person who commits a qualifying offense will appear before a panel of trained community volunteers to discuss the offense that took place, the impact of the offense on the community, and actions that the individual can take to make amends with the community and prevent future offenses from taking place. After meeting with neighborhood court volunteers, the participant will complete the agreed-upon accountability actions such as community service, letters of apology, educational opportunities, counseling, etc. Upon the participant's successful completion of accountability actions, the District Attorney's Office will not file the charge in court.

This program will divert low level offenses through a restorative justice process that promotes accountability, increased community involvement in advancing public safety, and a reduction in time and money spent on adjudicating low level offenses in court. A list of guidelines for determining qualifying offenses can be found on Attachment A.

To administer the program, the District Attorney's Office is hiring a full time Neighborhood Court program director. This staff member will be responsible for coordinating volunteers, keeping track of participant progress, supporting neighborhood court sessions, conducting community outreach, and more (see Attachment B). The District Attorney's Office has been allocated \$154,500 in the Fiscal Year 2020-21 Public Safety Realignment Budget to fund the position and pay for program startup costs. Implementation of the program has been delayed due to COVID-19, but community outreach and planning efforts are ongoing. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, this program will need to be launched with precautions in place (including by meeting virtually).

Over the past year, Supervisor Hart's Office has met with the City of Goleta's management team, Mayor Paula Perotte, and Mayor Pro Tempore Kyle Richards to discuss the City of Goleta's potential involvement with this program. Although the Neighborhood Court program will be carried out by a staff member and community volunteers, the program would benefit from the City of Goleta's assistance in: promoting volunteer recruitment efforts, providing a space for the neighborhood court sessions to take place a few nights per month (at a time when it is safe for people to gather), and eventually providing some community service opportunities for program participants (i.e. picking up trash in parks, volunteering at the library, and other tasks). We ask that the Public Safety/Emergency Preparedness Committee advance the Neighborhood Court program to the City Council to establish a partnership between the City and the Neighborhood Court.

Attachment A: Neighborhood Court Eligible Offenses



All misdemeanor offenses shall be eligible with the following exceptions:

1. Any case involving domestic violence or stalking;
2. Any case involving registration as a sex offender or involving inappropriate sexual conduct as an element;
3. Any violation of the Vehicle Code;
4. Any case involving the sale of alcohol or tobacco products to minors;
5. Any case involving firearms;
6. Any case involving physical injury;
7. Any case involving criminal sophistication (such as a shoplifting or identity theft scheme);
8. Any case involving trespass on railroad or freeway right of ways (this is a particular public safety concern in the Goleta area);
9. Any case where first responders are the listed victim(s);
10. Solicitation of prostitution (due to the fact that this crime contributes to individuals being the victims of human trafficking)

The filing Deputy District Attorney shall reserve the discretion to refuse to refer cases to the program where there is the threat of harm to any individual. Any suspect with a felony record will also be excluded from eligibility, unless the felony is remote in time and not of a violent nature. The District Attorney's Office shall reserve the right to exclude other offenses from participation.

Attachment B: Neighborhood Court Program Manager Responsibilities

- Work with DA staff, justice partners, and community stakeholders to establish the Neighborhood Court Pilot Program
- Identify and make contact with individuals who are eligible to participate in this pre-filing diversion program, in consultation with DA staff and law enforcement
- Recruit, train, and coordinate community volunteers to serve as neighborhood court panelists
- Schedule and provide support for neighborhood court sessions
- Maintain records of neighborhood court session outcomes
- Track participant progress from start of neighborhood court involvement to completion of program requirements
- Work with public agencies and nonprofit organizations to establish and facilitate community service opportunities for neighborhood court participants
- Conduct community outreach to raise awareness about the program, encourage community members to apply to volunteer, and build partnerships with community based organizations
- Serve as a point of contact for neighborhood court participants as they complete the program
- Prepare grant applications for future program expansion
- Collect information and verify that restitution payments have been paid