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## Bill Macfadyen: Let's Talk Westside, Where THRIVE Is Alive

Best of Noozhawk 01.20.12 also features bells tolling for SOPA and PIPA, alarms sounding for scams, and a boarding call for Portland

By William M. Macfadyen, Noozhawk Publisher | [@noozhawk](#) | Published on 01.20.2012



### 1. Let's Talk Westside

Late last year, the nonprofit [Just Communities](#) invited [Noozhawk](#) to partner up on an online public-engagement project for [THRIVE Westside](#), a foundation-led initiative aimed at identifying community-building improvements for Santa Barbara's Westside. We leaped at the opportunity.

Thanks to Noozhawk's own partner, [MindMixer](#), we were able to quickly put together [Let's Talk Westside](#), a virtual town hall that enabled Noozhawk readers and Internet users to join the conversations that were occurring in small, face-to-face meetings over about a two-month period. If you couldn't be there in person, Let's Talk Westside offered a pathway to participation that expanded the universe by more than 1,500 people.

Your time is almost up if you haven't yet gotten involved. Just Communities and the THRIVE organizers are holding the final

wrap-up session Saturday and the public is invited to join the summit from 2 to 4 p.m. at the [Westside Boys & Girls Club](#), 602 W. Anapamu St. All of the groups — along with Let's Talk Westside participants — will be discussing the suggestions, choosing strategies to pursue and creating action plans to turn the ideas into reality.

Among the more popular ideas:

- » Improving police-community relations through dialogue and collaboration
- » Creating a Westside zócalo or town plaza where the neighborhood's diverse residents can come together
- » Establishing a women's resource center at which women can talk about the joys and challenges of motherhood and receive advice about professional services, career training and other topics
- » Improving lighting
- » Strengthening businesses and economic development
- » Improving [Bohnett Neighborhood Park](#)
- » Improving youth services
- » Building a community swimming pool
- » Addressing gangs and bullying
- » Developing a per-to-peer mentoring program through which college students mentor high school students and high school students mentor junior high students

Noozhawk intern Daniel Langhorne will have a follow-up story Saturday night, but please try to attend the meeting if you can.

Lead sponsors of Let's Talk Westside are [MarBorg Industries](#), [Wells Fargo](#), [Southern California Gas Co.](#) and [Paul Cashman of State Farm Insurance](#).

Additional Let's Talk Westside sponsors include the [Academy of Koei-Kan Karate-Do](#), [Business First Bank](#), [El Zarape Mexican Food](#), [Griffith & Thornburgh LLP](#), [Meridian Group](#), [Paper Moon Printing](#), [ParentClick.com](#), [Presidio Sports](#), [Santa Barbara Community Housing Corp.](#), [Santa Barbara Home Improvement Center](#) and the [South Coast Community Youth Cultural Center](#).

THRIVE Westside is a partnership of [Harding University Partnership School](#), [McKinley School](#), [La Cumbre Junior High School](#), [San Marcos High School](#), the [Santa Barbara Unified School District](#), the [James S. Bower Foundation](#), [Just Communities](#), [One Nation Foundation](#), the [Orfalea Foundations](#) and the [Santa Barbara Foundation](#).

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