



City of Palmdale General Plan Update Joint General Plan Advisory Committee #16 and Public Workshop: Economic Development and Military Compatibility

August 5, 2021 | 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom livestreamed to YouTube

Special Meeting Minutes (Approved August 11, 2021)

Meeting Objectives

- Review existing setting related to economic development and military compatibility topics
- Review and refine preliminary economic development and military compatibility recommendations for the General Plan Update

Attendees

GPAC Members

Present:

Tony Avila, Juan Blanco, Colby Estes, Lourdes T. Everett, Laura Gordon, Theresa Hambro, Matthew Harris, Aurora Hernandez, Pat Hunt, Sheri Kaneshiro, and Jason Zink

Absent: Deborah Rutkowski-Hines and Teresa Lamping

City Staff

Carlene Saxton, Director of Economic and Community Development; Megan Taggart, Planning Manager; Ben Fiss, Senior Planner; Shant Taslakian, Assistant City Attorney; Sophia Reyes, Housing Manager; and Ruben Hovanesian, Senior Civil Engineer

Consultant Team

Raimi + Associates: Simran Malhotra and Melissa Stark
HR&A Advisors: Amitabh Barthakur and Jazmin Harper

Public

Eleven members of the community joined the Zoom meeting, though no public sign-in is available.

Meeting Summary

1. Introduction

The virtual meeting began with a review of the joint meeting agenda, roll call of GPAC Members, introductions of City staff and the consultant team, and recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Lourdes Everett made a motion to approve GPAC #15 meeting minutes (July 28, 2021) and Juan Blanco seconded the motion. None opposed so the motion passed.

2. Presentation & Feedback

Simran Malhotra provided an overview of the General Plan, which included the project schedule and an introduction to the policy frameworks.

The presentation was led by Simran who reviewed the background military compatibility information and proposed draft policies. Amitabh Barthakur provided an overview of the economic development background including existing plans, programs, feedback from the community, and proposed draft policies.

During the presentation, the group stopped for questions and to answer interactive polls. All poll questions—except for the meeting minute approval poll—were available to members of the public and GPAC, but please note that not all participants responded to all polls.

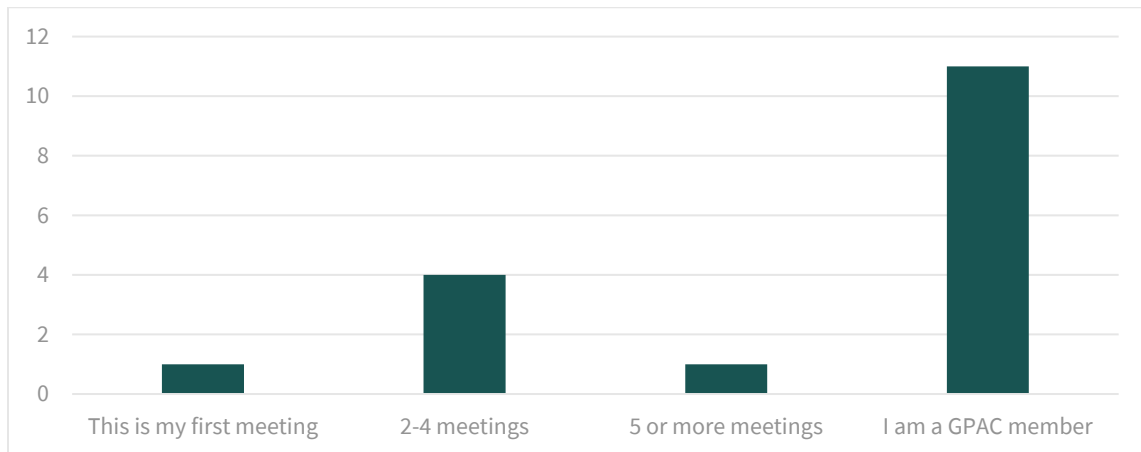
In advance of the meeting, the project website was updated with background materials including the economic development policy framework and military compatibility background report. In addition, GPAC members were emailed these materials to review as context for the meeting.

Below are descriptions of each presentation section and summaries of responses to each poll question. Poll responses are combined for GPAC members and members of the public.

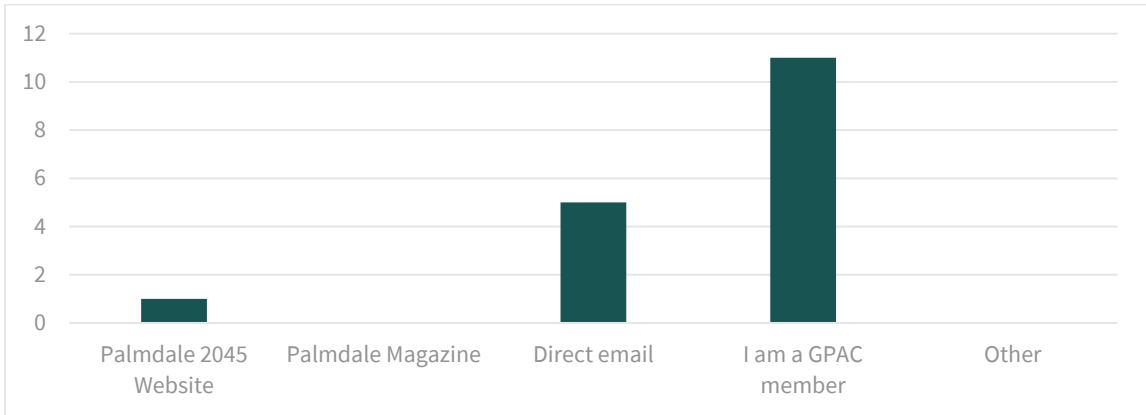
General Plan Overview

The background component of the presentation began with an overview of the General Plan process, how it is defined, the Palmdale 2045 schedule, summary of community engagement activities to date, major General Plan vision themes, and an introduction to the policy frameworks.

How many General Plan related meetings have you attended?



How did you hear about this meeting? (Select all that apply)



Existing Setting

As a precursor to the draft goals and policies, Simran and Amitabh provided background on economic development and military compatibility conditions in Palmdale, including defining both general plan elements and key requirements.

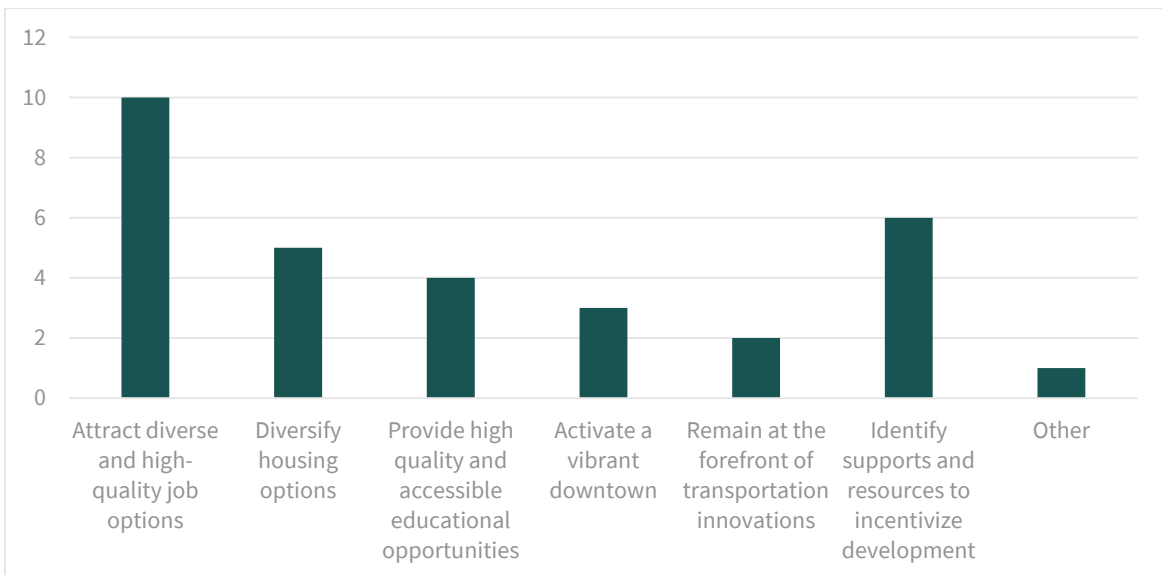
Existing Plans/Policies and Feedback from Community Engagement

Simran and Amitabh reviewed existing plans and programs in Palmdale and highlighted community feedback related to both topics.

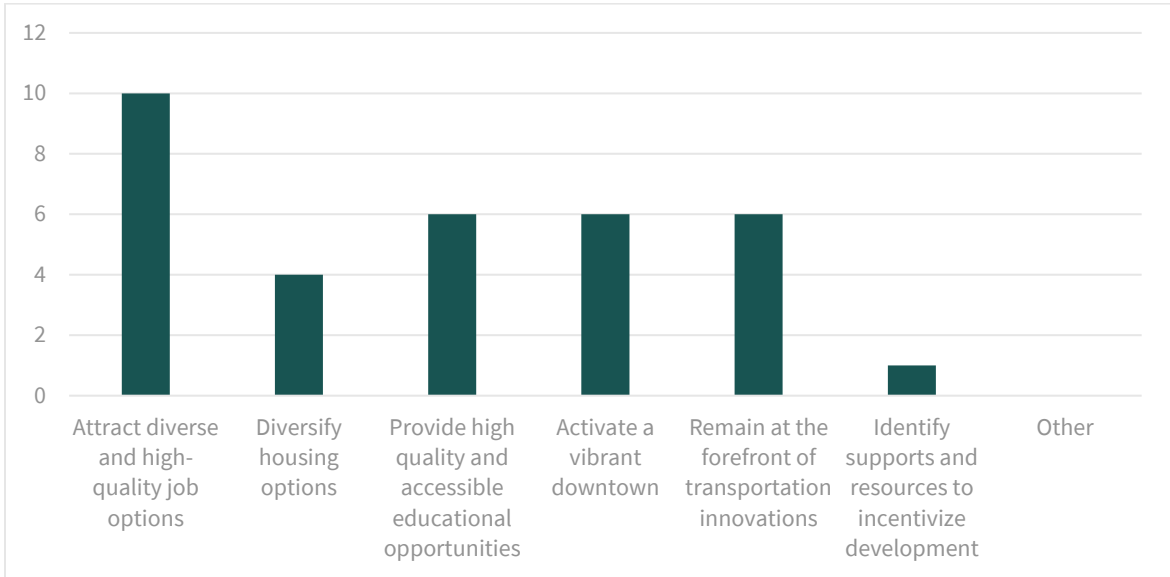
Policy Framework

Proposed goals and policies were introduced in this section of the presentation. Simran and Amitabh provided an overview of the framework structure, followed by review of desired outcomes, performance metrics, and draft goals and policies for economic development and military compatibility.

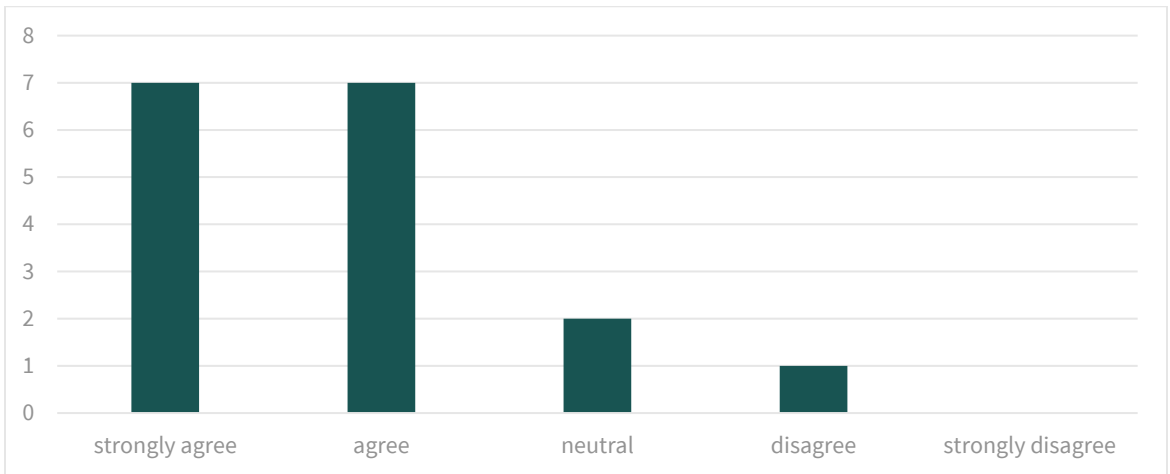
Which of the following should be the short-term priorities for Palmdale's economy? (Please select top 2 only)



Which of the following should be the long-term priorities for Palmdale’s economy? (Please select top 2 only)



Do you feel the goals and policies presented support the community priority of preserving Plant 42’s mission in Palmdale?



Comments from those who selected neutral or disagree

- My interest rests in monitoring of the environment - in the past, military and aerospace industries have contributed to pollution.
- Will Plant 42 dictate growth and/or our plans for the future?
 - *The General Plan Land Use map was developed to support Plant 42 in a way that future growth will not hinder the Plant’s operations or limit economic prosperity.*

Other Questions and Comments

Dr. David Smith, Director of US Air Force Base Plant 42 joined the GPAC discussion and answered several GPAC member questions directly. Dr. Smith and General Plan Team’s responses are shown in italics.

- In response to an earlier remark:
 - *Dr. Smith - Environmental restoration is in place to counteract past practices. At the time, we didn’t realize the long-term impacts of certain actions. Plant 42 tracks everything from wastewater to production chemicals to be good stewards and partners with the community.*
- What is something Plant 42 would oppose in terms of new economic opportunities in the City of Palmdale? And does the southwest runway get used?
 - *Dr. Smith - Both runways are used regularly. Runway closures are expensive, so our hope is to keep both in use. Related to compatibility with other developments, we need to maintain a sensitive environment. I personally am a strong proponent of a regional airport in Palmdale. With any airport (commercial or military) certain uses are prohibited. Many of the listed economic industries related to renewable energy can be managed, or certain types wouldn’t interfere with Plant operations. Wind and reflective solar are problematic while photovoltaic solar is okay.*
- How do crews prepare for an emergency at Plant 42?
 - *Dr. Smith - Emergency responders train every day. We’ve shifted our training considering the persistence of PFAS and PFOS—manmade chemicals that don’t breakdown in the environment or the body¹—present from firefighting foam, to be more environmentally friendly.*
 - *Dr. Smith - Restoration advisory board meetings will resume shortly and are open to the public.*
- Can the City survey Plant 42 employees to learn what type of housing they’re looking for in Palmdale?
 - *Dr. Smith - We would welcome a survey like that. Housing is a key issue and a major barrier to recruitment. Rental homes and apartments are not available, and homes for sale go very quickly.*
 - *GP team - The City has conducted a survey of employees related to housing needs, which has informed much of the General Plan progress to date.*

3. Small Group Discussions and Report Out

Following the presentation, the GPAC and members of the public separated into two small groups for further discussion. Once completed, a member of each group shared highlights to all attendees of the meeting. More detailed notes from each small group discussion are attached to these minutes.

Public Group Report Out

- Pursue environmental tourism as an economic opportunity
- Continue environmental protection for natural habitat and Joshua Trees
- Expand educational opportunities, and improve existing schools in Palmdale

¹ Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). *Basic Information on PFAS*. EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/pfas/basic-information-pfas>.

- Diversify housing options
- Create a true downtown
- Work on all economic goals simultaneously
- Allow for flexibility in land use and zoning to promote mixed developments and placemaking
- Tie medical uses to educational opportunities and economic development
- Attract manufacturing and industrial uses near Plant 42

GPAC Group Report Out

- Provision of affordable housing and greater housing options
- Desire for diversification of the economic base
- Expand job industries to include drone technology, film, private aerospace, and aerospace start-ups
- Expansion of regional and state opportunity zones to incentivize new businesses
- Provide land assembly in the Downtown area
- Promote alternative transportation modes connecting key employment centers and neighborhoods
- Promote and train local workforce

4. Public Comment

Members of the public who joined the meeting were invited to share public comments, though none provided public comment.

5. Policy Framework Comments

Melissa shared how to comment and review the policy framework document, by visiting the Palmdale2045.org website and clicking on “Policy.” All policy framework documents will be uploaded to the website and will remain open for review and comment through August 2021.

6. Next Steps and Wrap Up

Simran shared upcoming meetings and next steps at the close of the meeting. The last policy framework meeting will take place on Wednesday, August 11th at 6:30 pm and will cover health, equity, parks, and recreation.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

Attached: Facilitator notes from the small group discussions.

A recording of this meeting is available on the [Palmdale 2045 YouTube Channel](#)

Facilitator Worksheet

Meeting: Joint GPAC and Public Workshop

Policy Framework Series: Military Compatibility and Economic Development | August 5, 2021

GPAC Discussion

Questions, Notes, and Report Out:

1. Are there any outcomes we should consider?

Notes

- Palmdale needs more low-income housing options
- Palmdale should be identified as a federal, state, and local opportunity area
- Transportation connections from the Anaverde and Ritter Ranch areas to Plant 42
- Junior College in east Palmdale
- Electric monorail connecting Palmdale to Plant 42
- Attract private aerospace companies
- Greater access to vocational and trade schools
- Attract innovative job industries like cyber security
- Pursue greater entertainment opportunities

2. Are there any policy ideas that we should consider?

Notes

- N/A

3. Of the policy ideas, which resonate the most?

Notes

- Diversification of the local economy, peaks and valleys of aerospace contracts affect the entire community
- Film industry is a great opportunity area
- Land assembly support s needed in the Downtown area

4. Is there anything else you'd like to share about these topics?

Notes

- N/A

Facilitator Worksheet

Meeting: Joint GPAC and Public Workshop

Policy Framework Series: Military Compatibility and Economic Development | August 5, 2021

Public Breakout Group

Questions, Notes, and Report Out:

1. Are there any outcomes we should consider?

Notes

- Approach all economic goals simultaneously

2. Are there any policy ideas that we should consider?

Notes

- More flexibility in zoning
- More streamlined development process and incentives
- More opportunities in healthcare industry
 - Connecting local teachers to healthcare industry
 - Connections to hotels
- Leverage industries adjacent to the airport, support other manufacturing and industry uses not related to the airport
- Eco-development: Nature museum, leverage the natural assets such as Joshua trees to attract tourism

3. Of the policy ideas, which resonate the most?

Notes

- Diverse and high-quality jobs tie into educational opportunities – talent doesn't stay due to school ratings
- Diversify housing options also helps retain local talent

4. Is there anything else you'd like to share about these topics?

Notes

- The airport is vital and is the focal point of all things for economic development and growth in AV. Without it, the aerospace industry will maintain but not thrive.
- While the Film TMZ is a nice to have, remember that Aerospace is bigger than film and agriculture combined to the State's economy.