

# City of Palmdale General Plan Update

## General Plan Advisory Committee

Meeting #8: September 23, 2020 | 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
*Virtual Meeting via Zoom livestreamed to YouTube*

### Meeting Minutes (Final Approved October 28, 2020)

## Meeting Objectives

- Provide background on Palmdale parks, open space, conservation, and natural resources and their relationship to the General Plan
- Brainstorm goals and policies that can be included in the General Plan

## Attendees

### GPAC Members

**Present:** Tony Avila, Juan Blanco, Colby Estes, Lourdes T. Everett, Laura Gordon, Theresa Hambro, Matthew Harris, Aurora Hernandez, Pat Hunt, Deborah Rutkowski-Hines, Sheri Kaneshiro, and Jason Zink

**Absent:** Teresa Lamping and Joe Parisio

### City Staff

Department of Economic and Community Development: Carlene Saxton, Deputy Director; Drew Pletcher, Deputy Director; Megan Taggart, Senior Planner; Ben Fiss, Senior Planner

### Consultant Team

Raimi + Associates: Simran Malhotra and Melissa Stark

Rincon Consultants: Joe Power, Lexi Journey, and Andrew Hatt

### Public

This was a virtual meeting; hence no public sign-in is available.

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Call to Order & Meeting Procedures

The virtual meeting began with an outline of the meeting structure, roll call and introductions of City staff, the consultant team and GPAC members, and recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Then a brief overview of important Zoom features for GPAC members and procedure for meeting comments and questions was presented. GPAC members asked questions at multiple stopping points throughout the presentation. They also used the “raise hand” nonverbal feedback response in Zoom to alert the team of their question(s). Members of the public were encouraged to follow along and provide feedback through the Palmdale 2045 YouTube Channel and comments forum. Public comments and questions were shared throughout the presentation.

Next, Deborah Rutkowski-Hines motioned to approve GPAC #7 meeting minutes (July 29, 2020) and Pat Hunt seconded the motion, also requesting meeting minutes be shared with GPAC members earlier, none opposed so the motion passed.

## 2. Presentation

Simran Malhotra provided an update on the General Plan, including phase two community engagement and feedback on each of the three land use alternatives. GPAC members were reminded of upcoming small group discussions to hear detailed feedback on the land use alternatives from the Palmdale City Council and Planning Commission.

### Parks, Trails and Open Space

Lexi Journey and Andrew Hatt began the background presentation on parks, trails, and open space with an overview of General Plan regulations including federal and state requirements. The presentation also described how parks can be categorized as neighborhood, community or regional. GPAC members were sent electronic copies of the Public Facilities and Open Space Existing Conditions Report as well as the Conservation Existing Conditions Report in advance of the meeting for context.

The existing conditions overview included an inventory of current parks, trails, parks to population ratio, and parks access analysis.

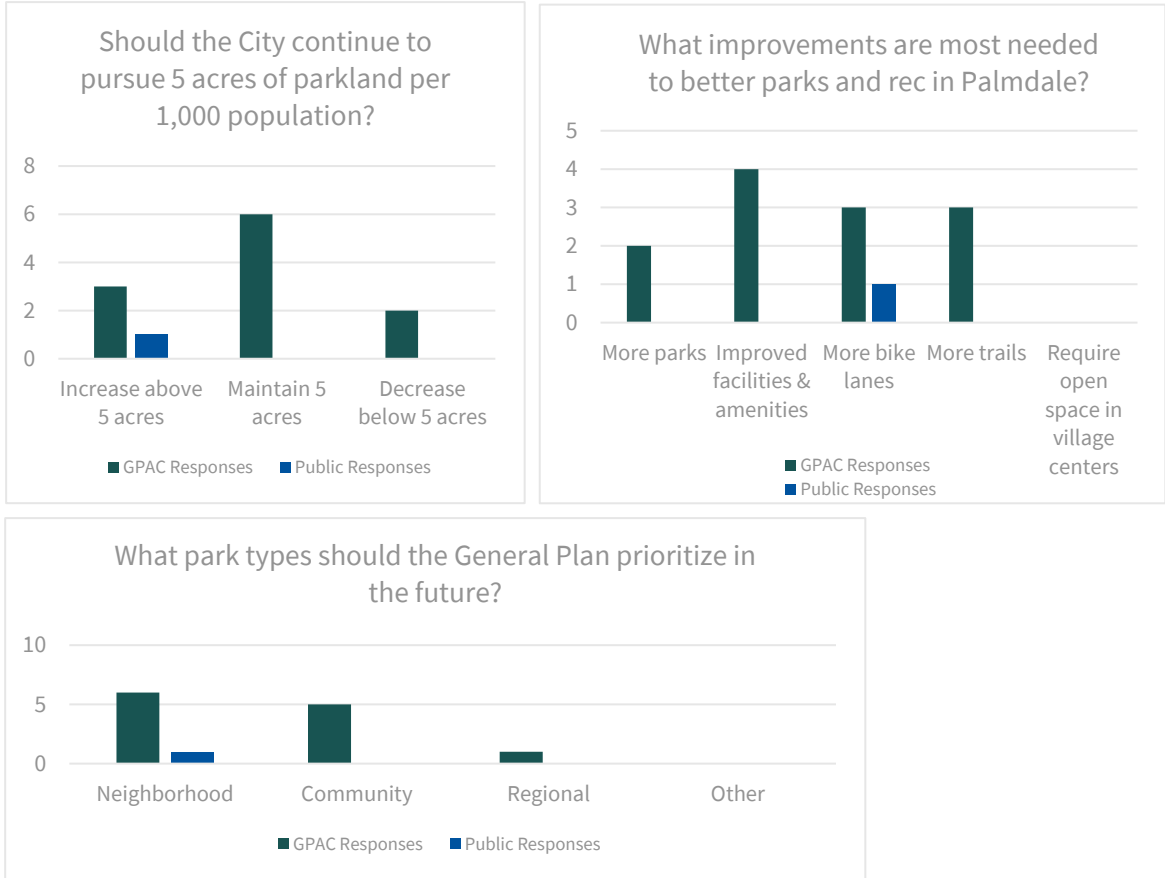
### Feedback

At the end of each section the group stopped for questions and comments. GPAC member comments on parks, trails, and open space are summarized below:

- Regarding the parks inventory, what factors determine the condition of parks in Palmdale?
  - *The team responded that the Los Angeles County needs assessment provides an assessment of all parks in the county. The team noted that they will clarify what factors are assessed.*
- Joshua Trees received a temporary federal designation as an endangered species due to climate change; how will that potentially affect the General Plan Update?
  - *The team requested to come back to this comment – as it is covered later in the presentation.*
- It appears that some parks are not showing on map including the Amargosa Park and Rancho Vista Park.
- The City should set aside areas for protecting Joshua Trees.
- Scenic highways in Palmdale should include Mount Emma Road, 47<sup>th</sup> Street, and Cheseboro Road.
- The parks proximity analysis map includes other recreation centers, like the little league field, that may not be public parks.
  - *The team responded that the parks access analysis was performed at a high-level and did not including amenities present at each facility. The team noted the community's strong desire for more parks in Palmdale while acknowledging the relatively good access to existing parks across the City.*
- One GPAC member requested an inventory of parks by ownership.
  - *The team responded that the Existing Conditions Reports include some ownership information for public facilities that can be referenced.*

**Polls**

Following the first Q&A, the General Plan Team polled GPAC members with a series of questions which a listed below. Please note that not all GPAC members participated in all polls, and members of the public had access to an online polling forum with the same questions as those presented to GPAC members.



**Conservation**

The following section provided background on conservation including protected wildlife species and significant ecological areas. Lexi highlighted several protected species in Palmdale and noted that the city lies almost entirely within the West Mojave Habitat Conservation Plan Area.

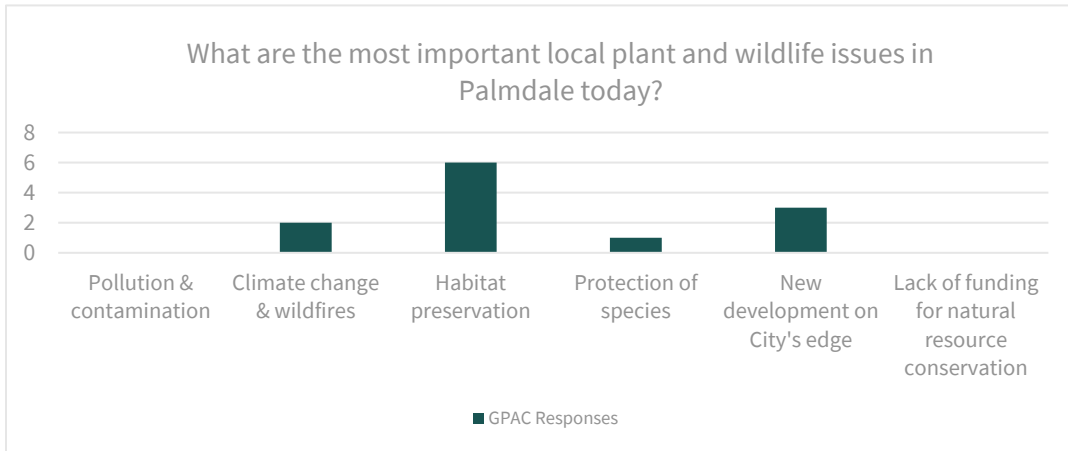
**Feedback**

At the end of each section the group stopped for questions and comments. GPAC member comments on conservation are summarized below:

- Only the trail within Barrel Springs trail is owned by the city, the open space around it is privately owned. The entire area should be protected.
  - *The General Plan Team noted that the policy discussion towards the end of the meeting includes a few suggestions for maintaining and preserving these areas given the ownership.*

**Polls**

The team asked one poll question following the conservation overview. The poll question and results are below. Please note that not all GPAC members participated in all polls, and members of the public had access to an online polling forum with the same questions as those presented to GPAC members.



### Natural Resources

This section provided an overview of the vegetation, natural resource communities, water, mineral, and agriculture resources in Palmdale, as well as existing ordinances in place to protect those natural resources.

On September 22, 2020, the California Fish and Game Commission held a hearing regarding the Joshua Tree, where it was given a temporary designation for a one-year period as a species listed under the California Endangered Species Act. The full impact of this designation is not yet known.

### Feedback

Following the presentation of natural resources, the group paused for discussion and to answer questions. A summary of feedback is listed below:

- How many streams in Palmdale are designated blue line by the Department of Fish and Game?
  - *The General Plan Team noted the Army Corps of Engineers does not have any designated water bodies within the city of Palmdale, and that they will investigate the blue line designations.*
- The City needs to have reclamation plans for the mineral resource areas in Palmdale. Some of the gravel mines are finished with operations, we need to consider what those areas will be in the future.
  - *The General Plan Team responded that each of Palmdale’s eight mines are required to have a reclamation plan approved by decision makers and the State, and an annual review of those plans.*
- Palmdale and the Antelope Valley lack a Conservancy District and/or job core program for youth. This should be a priority for the General Plan.
- How has the acreage for natural communities changed in the past 25 years?
  - *The General Plan Team noted that the existing conditions analysis utilized the latest available State data for natural communities.*
- Do we consider the land uses and industries in close proximity to natural communities?
  - *The General Plan Team responded that the focus thus far in the planning process has been on higher-level direct impacts. The General Plan will consider the presence of natural communities and will include policies to protect them. It should be noted that the Joshua Tree listing from the California Fish and Wildlife Commission was largely in response to climate change, which considers global and regional factors.*

- How many Joshua trees have been saved in Palmdale?
  - *The General Plan Team responded that the city has an existing Ordinance to protect Joshua Trees, in the last 13 years 500 Joshua Trees have been transplanted with a 99% success rate. The City is working to coordinate with California Fish and Wildlife to receive delegation authority to continue using the city's Ordinance for protection and maintenance of Joshua Trees. The existing ordinance requires a qualified professional evaluate the site and relocate or save-in-place two trees per acre of land. All transplanted trees must be monitored and thriving for at least two growing seasons.*
- Are there any existing opportunities for a regular citizen to adopt a Joshua Tree that is removed from private property?
  - *The General Plan Team responded that as part of Palmdale's municipal code ordinance, developers are required to notice transplanting of Joshua Trees for 30 days and make them available to the public to adopt for free. This is typically noticed to the public through the newspaper.*
- Does the city track the number of Joshua trees on private property?
  - *The General Plan Team responded that Joshua Trees are not rare in Palmdale and the City has extensive measures to continue monitoring and protecting them. The City is working to retain local control of Joshua Tree preservation, and report back to the group after responses from California Fish and Wildlife.*
- Joshua Trees can be dangerous and very painful.
  - *The General Plan Team agreed and noted that we may want to consider identifying specific remote areas for relocated Joshua Trees.*

### **Existing/Recommended Programs and Policies + Community Insights**

The remaining sections of the presentation reviewed existing programs and policies in Palmdale, community feedback related to parks, open space, natural resources, and conservation, and a series of recommended draft policies and programs based on the background analysis.

### **3. Discussion**

After the presentation, the General Plan Team posed a series of questions to spark discussion and collect GPAC member input. The General Plan Team answered various questions from the GPAC as well as those submitted through the online forum from the public. These discussions are summarized below.

#### ***Several GPAC members want to see more community parks in the city - what kinds of amenities should be in future parks?***

- Desire for more swimming pools since we are in the desert
- Need better access to active parks and trail space
- Desire for additional baseball facilities, youth sports are very important to our community
- Desire to expand current parks and offer other amenities onsite like Central Park in New York City
- Desire to have neighborhoods connected to open space and parks similar to communities in Arizona
- Desire to use reclaimed water to build several little lakes and/or parks within Palmdale
- Like the exercise areas and walking trails at Marie Kerr Park

**Are there any areas of Palmdale that are currently underserved for parks and rec facilities?**

- Generally, the West side of Palmdale is lacking parks
- Park accessibility is important, Marie Kerr Park not accessible for people with young children, need to consider how you access the park and if you have to cross a large street or intersection
- Consider enclosed pools to serve the public year-round
- Consider mini parks and other park types or plazas for new development
- Consider using reclaimed water for dancing fountains during hot months
- Status update on Rancho Vista Park?
  - *The General Plan Team responded that the park is scheduled to break ground in November 2020.*
- Should continue to require that new development provide additional park space
- Certain areas on the East side of Palmdale do not have access to park space
- Add public gathering spaces and park like features to future village centers as a part of private development, so that the City is not responsible for maintenance

**How should the city balance new development and conservation?**

- Adopt a new policy for Joshua trees including designated areas for relocation
- Focus preservation of Joshua Trees by Plant 42, where development could hinder plant operations
- Need policies to balance and control both new development and conservation, Palmdale needs economic development

**Are there other amenities you would like to see in parks and public spaces?**

- Consider using reclaimed water for splash pads around the city, like at Poncitlán Square
- Desire for more dog parks in Palmdale
- Protect bird habitat at Lake Palmdale
  - *The General Plan Team responded that there are existing strict Federal and State regulations in place protecting birds. New construction is required to perform nesting bird surveys prior to development. The team also noted that a bird watching area could be integrated into new parks and open space.*
- Consider adding misters and other water features to parks
- Consider retaining natural seasonal water to support wildlife in Palmdale
  - *The General Plan Team responded that California Fish and Wildlife is not a proponent of interfering with natural streams and wildlife, but a possible idea that could be explored further in the future.*

**Are there any issues related to park maintenance?**

- Concerns over light and safety, especially bathroom security, however, the City has done a great job of keeping the community updated through ongoing parks meetings

**Other comments**

- Desire for better access to Ritter Ranch and dam area
- Desire for a golf course on the East side of Palmdale
- Desire for the City to resume control of the flood control basin and use for recreation by adding trees, trails, add recycled water
- Desire to see a nature preserve like Lancaster's K8 and 30<sup>th</sup> Street West

#### **4. Public Comment**

A handful of viewers watched the livestreamed meeting on YouTube. None, however provided official public comment through the online forum.

#### **5. Wrap Up and Adjourn**

Simran closed the evening's meeting with an overview of next steps. The GPAC will return for a discussion on the preferred land use alternative in November or December 2020 with future meetings on other topics such as health and equity, safety, and transportation and land use.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

*One GPAC member sent additional thoughts during and after GPAC meeting #8 via email. Those messages are attached below for reference.*

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

*Note: this virtual meeting did not have a sign in sheet for GPAC members or the public.*

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## GPAC 8 Question

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Wed, Sep 23, 2020 at 6:17 PM

Where is AC Warnack Park and Armargosa Park?

it says we have a standard of 5 acres per 1,000

We have 356 acres We have population of 160,000 residents we should have 800 acres I think right...we need more Parks

What is the estimated build out population and what are the acres needed ....example 400,000 residence (5 acres per 1,00) = 2,000 acres needed?

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## GPAC 8 Question

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Wed, Sep 23, 2020 at 6:23 PM

Need Open Space Park Barrel Springs around Palmdale Lake, Una Lake, Indian Ponds(35th East Barrel Springs) and along Barrel Springs Rd and Palmdale Water District Ditch to save Desert Landscape and grass areas. Also not all the water ditch from Littlerock Dam to Palmdale Lake should be covered. It should run like a stream like now with trail bridges crossing over it.

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## Need more parks

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Wed, Sep 23, 2020 at 6:30 PM

Where is areas the GPAC thinks they should be. I saw a map that had mile circles around parks to show where they are needed. I don't know if that was from GPAC map hand out or another city map.





**Subject:** GPAC Feedback

I feel that the GPAC committee needs more information from City and more Vision and discussion time. If we are really going to bringing higher standards here. I hear everyone say "we want to be like Santa Clarita City and other places with higher nicer standards" then we need to visualize more pictures more ideas from other places to incorporate them here. Cut and Paste, take the best ideas from other places and make them in Palmdale.

We need to identify areas for parks and open space now so developers can design their housing tract maps to include trails to the parks. Master Plan so you can connect the dots(trails) to parks. In Arizona every housing tract has walk trails that connect to park and flood basin parks and its all green with desert trees and landscaping. And they have park lakes they use recycled water in them.....they have less water and its hotter there. If they can do it we can. Frist Park Lake(ground water recharge) should be at McAdams Park on 5 acres of vacant land to the north between park and bowling alley. Then Dry Town flood Basin.

Needs to have a Master Plan for Gravel Mines made right now. Hire a designer today to make a artis concept plan so its city has a reclamation overview plan of the whole area make it the city's responsibility paid for by gravel mine operators. It's really just Common sense to take the lead now because at the end city has to deal with it. I bet there is free grant money from California Minning Resources to pay for it.

Need Education Facilities needs study. Hire company today. Work with local School Districts(AVC, AVUHSD, PSD, Keppel, Wilsona, Charters) County and State on Junior College Campus and Lancaster and others on State University.

City might consider taking over flood control basins from County so we can use them for Parks. Example Dry Town ugly Eyesore Flood Basin, make it part of landscaping park with walking trail and lake in it. And we can clean up graffiti in those areas that city says is county responsibility. Make tax agreement with County and take them over today.

There is not one grass park East of Sierra Hwy North of Palmdale Blvd or South of Rail Road Tracks. Need to identify and buy now while land is cheap. Need a neighborhood park on far Westside(70th W & Ave M area)too. 20th E & Ave Q , 30th East & Q, 45th E & Q4, 70th E etc.... need staff to identify parcels now. I will help with my real estate background of local parcels. This park map GPAC members were given does not show

Rancho Vista, Armagosa, AC Warnack Parks. It should show them and future potential park sites and Bikeways in the next meeting. So we can plan. PWD just picked up 20 acres for back taxes on Ave S8 and 65th East for hardly nothing. Make it a park with a lake. Why should PWD spend \$100+ Million on land way out there and pump water back to the city. Take that \$+)100 Million and build parks in city. Be smart and make Palmdale a paradise. Common sense.

Bikeways should be Ave S(almost done), Ave R8, Ave Q, Rancho Vista Blvd(would of looked so nice to do one on the Northside of Blvd between Marie Kerr and AV Mall with white rail and trees, Armagosa, Elizabeth Lake Rd, Tierra Subdia, 70th E, 40th East maybe need to look at what streets are possible.

We need a Deseret Habitat Land Bank owned by the City for development impact. That way we can stay pro-business pro-growth. No road blocks or delays. No wasted time in long planning and council meetings people fighting development. I have expressed the need for city to own land along Barrel Springs Rd from Palmdale Lake-Una Lake-Indian Ponds-Cienega Littlerock Creek. S.E.A area. Look see the center on map in green San Andreas.

Buy this 230 acres(link below) for \$2M along with that 20 acres Barrel Springs trail head \$200,000 that I have suggested you to buy for last 10 years. Along with Indian ponds 63 acres for \$1M and you have a start to preserving land. For \$10 Million City investment the City could be set up nice with Land Bank Preserve that the developers will pay back city for over time(they pay mortgagepayments). Get a certificate of deposit city loan on City revenue. You could do this tomorrow, you should of years ago. Yiu could arrange SupervisorBarger to make mortgage payments on land with County Park tax generatedin City limits. Get them in escrow just say "Jason you have our blessing just get it done".....it's so simple and easy. Sometimes other people have talent and skills and you need to use it. 30 years since last City update and the city does not own one piece of land as a Habitat preserve that is of value like Lancaster Preserve, it's really Very sad for our city when it is so easy to do.

230 acres Una Lake Barrel Springs Rd \$2M

<https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/Multiple-Lots-Palmdale-CA/11894618/>

20 acres Barrel Springs Trail Head \$200,000

100+ acres of other properties in that stretch  
\$1M

63 acres Indian Ponds \$1M

<https://www.loopnet.com/Listing/Avenue-T-8-37th-St-Palmdale-CA/20451933/>

50 acres around Lake Palmdale \$1 M

\$5.5M to develop it with trails, park facilities, parking and signage.

\$10M Total

GPAC needs a Bus Tour of Palmdale like I suggested last year. I think City Council and Planning Commission needs to do this too by the way. Rent a Hollywood double deck open air bus for committee so we can see and talk together about Palmdale and Vision. There is not enough input coming from GPAC members of thoughts and ideas in my opinion and in my opinion it's because they don't know Palmdale like some other members do. They can't visualize what is being talked about. I don't like being the only one that talks....I wait for others to give input and very few do and I'm like well how about this and then consultant shuts me off. That is not cool. If I have ideas I should never be limited....no one should. We should go for hours in discussion, that is what this is all about. If we are just going to rubber stamp staff what is the point?

Remember Palmdale is huge even if you don't count the land around Airport or Ritter Ranch far away open space(which I think should not be included in living area of Palmdale discussion. We need to concentrate on Living area and then that area as a side-note. You can't say Palmdale is 50% undeveloped because you include that area. Needs two talking points of Palmdale Living land area and Palmdale with the Airport land. This area should have a specific plan

It was also discussed at GPAC 8 that residents could adopt Joshua Trees that are being torn down to plant in their yard. Never heard that before. Maybe advertise it more with web page off City Website.

What makes this picture of Barrel Springs Trail so beautiful?

Yes you have a trail but the beauty is the "LAND" that surrounds the trail and the city "doesn't" own any of it. Its very sad because everyone thinks the City does own it and it should. Action/Urgency needed in City Leadership!

We need a Antelope Valley State Conservancy and Ca Conservation Job Corp. We are one of the only places in the State that does not have one and we are losing millions annually from the State Budget and during State and County Park and Water Bonds in line item direct grants. Who ever wins in November; Steve Fox(who promised me he would propose legislation in the first year) or Lackey or Wilk, they have to make it happen. Mayor Hofbauer I thought of all people because of your background in Boy Scouts you would of been on this years ago to make happen when I brought it to your attention. Always No action and excuses but all it take is a city letter to start things. We have one of the top retired State Federal Forrest higher ups that lives in Palmdale and he is on board to help and you do nothing when you have the power to do it. If the Mayor doesn't push it, then Council members and/or staff should because it's the right thing and smart thing too do! We are too far behind the rest of California, we have to

advance and put Palmdale/AV at the State Table on an even playing field to get our fair share of respect and taxes.

Lastly Palmdale Blvd. control. I dont understand for the life of me why Palmdale City has not pushed and made Ave P8 Freeway from 14 Freeway to 50th St. East "FIRST PHASE OF HIGH DESERT CORRIDOR". Stop grouping this section with the whole damn project. This section is seperate and unique and serves more purpose then connecting Victorville. The money for it is there to finish this section for Hwy 138 realignment. \$300 Million is sitting there already in account(set aside for righ-of-way). This will give City control of Palmdale Blvd. And put in new Roundabout on 47th. Have City get estimates for this section of Freeway, 50th St. East improvements and Roundabout from Caltrans.

I hope this feedback helps you out. I hope the city takes my comments positive(I might sound negative at times but years has gone by and things that are easy aren'tbeing done). All I want is for a betterment of city to make it a beautiful place too live and be proud of. A Healthy Walkable Sustainable Lifestyle Community =)

Sincerely,

