



# City of Palmdale General Plan Update

## General Plan Advisory Committee

Meeting #5 PART 2: February 19, 2020 | 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm  
Chimbole Cultural Center “Manzanita Ballroom”

### Meeting Minutes (Final approved May 20, 2020)

## Meeting Objectives

- Refine areas of stability and growth
- Present overview of development constraints and capacity
- Prepare land use alternatives
- Discuss potential development location, type, and character

## Attendees

### GPAC Members

**Present:** Tony Avila, Juan Blanco, Laura Gordon, Theresa Hambro, Matthew Harris, Pat Hunt, Joe Parisio, Jason Zink, Aurora Hernandez, Sheri Kaneshiro, Teresa Lamping

**Absent:** Colby Estes (Alternate), Deborah Rutkowski-Hines, and Lourdes T. Everett (*signed-in and picked up the agenda packet, but was unable to stay for the presentation/activity*)

### City Council

Laura Bettencourt

### City Staff

City Manager’s Office: J.J. Murphy, City Manager; Noel Duran, Assistant City Attorney  
Department of Economic and Community Development: Mike Behen, Director; Carlene Saxton, Deputy Director; Nardy Lopez, Management Analyst

### Consultant Team

Raimi + Associates: Matt Raimi and Melissa Stark

### Public

Ten members of the public signed-in at the meeting, see attached sign-in sheet.

## Meeting Summary

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting began with recital of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Next, Joe Parisio motioned to approve GPAC #5 meeting minutes (January 19, 2020) and Laura Gordon seconded the motion, none opposed so the motion passed.

## 2. City Update on GPAC Procedures

J.J. Murphy (City Manager) introduced the agenda, welcomed City Council Member Laura Bettencourt to the meeting, and mentioned the upcoming Planning Commissioners Academy that will take place in Sacramento with five GPAC members in attendance.

Next, J.J. Murphy briefly described the changes taking place within the City of Palmdale, highlighting new City staffing and positioning to promote a more development-friendly City Hall with more flexibility in the future. J.J. mentioned that the city has not had market-rate multifamily development in 25 years, and that he sees this as a time for explosive growth for Palmdale.

One member of the public asked J.J. to describe what he thinks explosive growth looks like in Palmdale. He described growth in Palmdale as investments in downtown, regional transportation, creating walkable and robust public places, the ability to get around without a car, and convenient rail and airport opportunities.

After J.J.'s introduction and overview, Noel Doran (Assistant City Attorney) provided a refresher on the purpose of the GPAC, the Brown Act, and held a question and answer session. During his overview, Noel highlighted three things for GPAC members to bring to the group; knowledge of Palmdale, friends and neighbors; and an open mind to collaborate with others. Noel clarified that the GPAC is subject to Brown Act rules and regulations which prohibits a GPAC majority (more than 8 members) from collaborating outside of a noticed meeting on subject matters of the General Plan Update.

In response to a GPAC member question, Noel clarified that the General Plan Update does consider future land use changes; noting that property owners have certain rights, but they are not absolute. City Council has the ultimate decision on what land use changes take place and property owners are subject to those regulations. The GPAC will not make decisions on specific parcels of land and land transactions should not be based on GPAC meeting comments. As part of the current process, landowners can ask City Council to consider land use designation changes to specific properties at any time.

## 3. Overview Presentation

The consultant team provided a review of the GPAC #5 meeting presentation to prepare the GPAC for the mapping activity. This included describing the distinction between land use designations and place types. Matt Raimi (Raimi + Associates) highlighted that place types consider the character and atmosphere of an area, as opposed to being focused on individual projects.

Matt explained that General Plan land use designations identify use (broad allowed uses) and intensity (dwelling units per acre (DU/AC) and Floor Area Ratio (FAR)). Matt noted that the current General Plan Land Use Map is the starting point for this General Plan Update, and that the current task is to step back and look at the citywide structure.

Matt reintroduced the draft place types, which were developed based on community feedback. The consultant team added a few additional place types including "Industrial" and "Suburban Neighborhood" and "Multi-family," two place types which were previously included under "Traditional Neighborhood."

Next, Matt answered a few questions from the group. The questions and responses are summarized below.

- A GPAC member asked about single family residential tract maps to use as reference for the mapping activity. City staff responded that tract maps aren't all available in electronic format and therefore hard to produce a summary. Staff noted that they are available to serve as a resource for questions regarding existing residential tract projects.
- A GPAC member noted that California needs more housing, and asked how is it accomplished? Also noting that transportation is an important factor for new housing. The consultant team responded that transportation and housing are both important, but it's hard to say which comes first. Keeping in mind connectivity and how compact development can help encourage biking and walking in a region.
- A member of the public asked if there is a land use place type for conserving desert habitat? The Consultant team responded that within City limits all development proposals go through a review process including sensitive land and species review. The goal for this meeting is to identify best places for new development to go now, including areas that it shouldn't go.
- A GPAC member asked if the Consultant team would provide input on the mapping exercise. The consultant team clarified that this exercise is to get GPAC input, and that the consultant team will do additional analysis and brainstorming to prepare proposed land use alternatives subsequently.

#### 4. Group Activity

After the presentation and discussion, the GPAC and members of the public were invited to begin the mapping activity. GPAC members were arranged in three groups, and members of the public were at a fourth table. Each table/group was given a large aerial map of Palmdale with some of the development constraints and planning boundaries highlighted as well as custom place type stickers, pens, and sticky notes. The group worked from approximately 7:30 -8:10pm developing their own land use alternatives. The consultant team and city staff walked from table to table answering questions as needed.

#### 5. Group Activity Report Out/Discussion

At approximately 8:10 pm Matt Raimi invited all groups to stand and walk from table to table and listen to one member of each group report the highlights of their land use alternative. These individual report summaries are below. Photo results are provided at the end the meeting minutes.

##### Table 1 (GPAC)

- One of the primary concepts was to support Plant 42 and develop entire community around it, including: employment district, housing, mixed-use corridor, and village center that transitions into traditional neighborhood with parks and regional commercial
- Industrial complexes and parking garages surrounding the Palmdale Airport terminal (future planned for passenger air travel)
- High density residential north of Palmdale Blvd. between Highway 14 and Plant 42
- Convention center west of Highway 14
- East side of town has no facilities currently
- Suburban neighborhood with village centers near the far east side of Palmdale
  - Need for additional village centers throughout Palmdale so people don't have to travel as far to reach goods and services, using infrastructure that is already in place

**Table 2 (GPAC)**

- Establish bike trails with amenities like trees and benches, similar to Lancaster’s J8
- Preserve Lake Palmdale and natural ponds
- Create a natural corridor near the fault zone that connects to the existing residential neighborhoods
- Invest in regional amenities at Four Points, as it is a major connection to surrounding smaller cities
- Make Palmdale Boulevard into a walkable village
- Create Joshua tree groves along 50<sup>th</sup> Street to Lancaster
- Use Littlerock Creek as a pipeline to the aqueduct to make a series of lakes to recharge groundwater for the Eastside of Palmdale
- Develop mixed-use around existing and future commercial areas
- Plan a Junior College near 47<sup>th</sup> Street, promote education access on the Eastside of Palmdale
- Promote more mixed-use development along Rancho Vista Boulevard on the Westside to Marie Kerr Park and the AV Mall
- Plan for a four-year University near M Street and 10th Street West
- Create an Industrial center off Avenue M & Division Street
- Develop a trail system that ties into existing residential and natural water bodies
- Preserve the natural environment in South Palmdale
- Develop mixed-use around the Transportation center
- Develop apartments and multi-family residential near the future train station at Avenue Q

**Table 3 (GPAC)**

- Want to preserve the mission of Plant 42 and focus on commercial development
- Focus on creating downtown hubs like the transportation center, village center downtown, and employment district
- Equestrian uses near Ritter Ranch neighborhood
- Single family development is planned near the Amargosa recharge area and Highland High School, could include mixed-use and potentially multi-family development
- Develop commercial mixed-use, apartments or townhomes near the existing park along Avenue S corridor
- Keep natural environment in southern Palmdale near the fault zone, add parks or trails in the future
- Continue development of traditional neighborhoods into the Eastside of Palmdale up to the existing quarries
  - In the future, add entertainment like a moto track near the quarries

**Table 4 (Members of the Public)**

- Important to consider nature and existing habitat within future development
- Revitalize Palmdale Boulevard with what’s already developed, make it useful
- Attract people and revitalize businesses within Palmdale
- Create a downtown center or village center that is walkable, and a place people want to be
- Create more jobs, entertainment, and businesses near Palmdale Boulevard
- Encourage a small airport, nothing like LAX, and no commuter flights
- Create places for preservation and nature

- Improve bikeability, make it safer for people to utilize bike lanes and connect lanes to destinations with access to centers in town
  - Similar to Lancaster’s bike trails
- Consider the older population and housing for them within future development
- Create an aerospace village in Central Palmdale
- Create a pleasant residential village along Pearblossom Highway
- Ensure natural habitat is woven in throughout development with walking trails

After the group table report-outs, Matt Raimi asked the entire room to help summarize the commonalities and difference between the group land use map alternatives. Those accounts are summarized below.

**Commonalities (As reported by the group)**

- Mixed use corridor located near downtown and future train station
- Preserve habitat, natural water bodies, and encourage development of new trails
- Palmdale Airport runways make development near downtown difficult
- Similar vision of focused nodes with new development in similar areas
- Consider needs of senior population in the future

**Differences (As reported by the group)**

- Preserving Plant 42 mission – some groups encouraged development around the Plant, other groups avoided the areas and designed development further away as to not interfere with Plant operations
- Focusing development along one main corridor – Palmdale Boulevard versus Avenue P
  - Avenue P can be utilized to get across town and serve as central centers for goods and services
- Avenue S as a venue for restaurants, focusing on people who live in these areas and keeping things local

**6. Public Comment**

Ten members of the public signed in, but not all stayed for the entire meeting. Two members of the public shared comments at the end of the meeting, which are summarized below.

- Are there other cities we can look to that are successful as examples for how we should change and grow? The consultant team responded that yes, the group reviewed examples cities at previous meetings. Those presentations are available as reference on the General Plan website.
- We don’t want to see new development that creates new noise. The consultant team responded that new development can be visually attractive with sound buffers that aren’t the typical sound-wall.

One GPAC member also provided additional comment at the close of the meeting. This is summarized below.

- Interested in looking at ways to treat wastewater by pumping through the City to create ponds, and other water bodies. We should use water as a resource to make Palmdale into a paradise. We also should consider the visual points from the freeway; we need a vision for what people see entering Palmdale.

- New development can't be piecemeal, it must look beautiful, like a Biltmore Hotel for example.

## **7. Wrap Up and Adjourn**

The consultant team invited participants to write additional notes on their group map and add their individual names.

The consultant team also invited participants to provide supplemental notes via email that will be uploaded to the website as a separate record for what took place at each GPAC meeting. As previously mentioned in the GPAC email, these notes will not be voted on by the GPAC.

City staff offer additional follow-up via email for the Planning Commissioners Academy packet as needed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 pm.

*Attachment: Public sign in sheet and map activity results*

*Note: Individual names on activity maps have been redacted.*

Table 1 Map Results (GPAC)

# GPAC Meeting #5: Land Use Mapping Exercise







Table 3 Map Results (GPAC)



Table 4 Map Results (Members of the Public)



\*Note: not all members of the public participated in the mapping activity