

GPAC Meeting Summary

November 16, 2023, 6:30-9:00 PM

Introduction

Meeting Access

All GPAC Meetings are public, and this meeting was held in person at the Petaluma Community Center. Meeting information, presentation slides, and other materials are posted on the City's Meetings site and the Petaluma General Plan website: www.cityofpetaluma.org/meetings/ and <https://www.planpetaluma.org/>.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Project and Staff Updates
- Land Use "Areas of Discussion"
- Public Comment & Discussion
- General GPAC Member Comment
- General Public Comment

Attendance

There were 12 total members of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) members in attendance, as well as members of the public. The following GPAC members were present:

1. Dave Alden
2. Stephanie Blake
3. Phil Boyle
4. Mary Dooley
5. Ali Gaylord
6. Sharon Kirk
7. Kris Rebillot
8. Joshua Riley Simmons
9. Lizzie Wallack
10. Brent Newell
11. Bill Wolpert
12. Roberto Rosila Mares

The following GPAC members were absent:

1. Erin Chmielewski
2. Yensi Jacobo
3. Roger Leventhal
4. Bill Rinehart
5. Elda Vazquez-Izaguirre
6. Iliana Inzunza Madrigal

The following City and consultant staff were present at the meeting:

City of Petaluma:

Brian Oh – Director of Community Development, *City of Petaluma*

Katherine Mejia – *Spanish Interpreter*

Consultant Team:

Ron Whitmore – *Raimi + Associates*

Troy Reinhalter - *Raimi + Associates*

Michelle Hernandez - *Raimi + Associates*

Meeting Summary

The focus of the 27th GPAC meeting was to discuss and refine a working draft map of “areas of discussion,” which identifies areas in the City where changes in the General Plan land use designations could be considered.

Opening

The Spanish interpreters explained how live interpretation listening devices were available for this in-person meeting. Brian Oh followed by taking roll call attendance for GPAC members.

Project and Staff Updates

Brian Oh presented project and staff updates on the following topics:

- The Public Review Draft of the Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality (the City’s Climate Action Plan) was released for community review in October. Community engagement on the Draft Blueprint will include an open house, an online comment form, and CAC meetings in December and early 2024.
- The GPAC Working Groups have been reorganized to provide feedback and input on the draft policy frameworks. The reorganization better aligns with the policy framework topics.
- The next steps in the General Plan Update process include the development and review of land use alternatives and public draft policy frameworks. Upcoming GPAC meetings will dive deeper into each of these topics.

Please see the presentation slides and the project website (<https://www.planpetaluma.org/>) for more information about the project and staff updates.

GPAC Clarifying Questions & Comments

No questions were asked by GPAC members.

Land Use “Areas of Discussion” and Alternatives

The goal of this meeting was to re-initiate the land use alternatives process by refining the map of “areas of discussion.” The land use alternatives phase of the General Plan Update is meant to compare three implementable settlement pattern alternatives within the Areas of Discussion and result in the City Council selecting the Preferred Alternative, which lays the foundation for the General Plan Land Use Map.

Ron Whitmore presented the context and background leading to the discussion. Troy Reinhalter presented the existing land use designations and then walked the group through an initial areas of discussion map. This map was developed based off the first round of public engagement where the team asked the community and GPAC in which areas they would like to see change (and to what degree).

Please see the presentation slides for more information about what was presented.

GPAC Clarifying Questions & Comments

- Will we talk about the differences between SMART code and IZO?
 - A: We weren’t planning on it in this meeting, but it is relevant for the downtown area, so we will likely touch on it later in the meeting.
- How does the city engage with the county on zoning and land use?
 - A: Many of Petaluma’s borders are shared with the unincorporated county. The County is just now starting to discuss its land use update.
- The feasibility conversation during the housing element mentioned that higher density housing isn’t feasible
 - A: Yes, that is what the market looks like now, but since this is a long term plan, allowing for density allows for future flexibility as the market changes.
- How does the climate action plan call for 15 minute neighborhoods relate to this? Need to revisit that because we can’t create neighborhoods with complete uses when everything is zoned for residential.
 - A: This is not the 15 min neighborhoods concept plan; these maps show the parcels where we should explore changing the land use designation. Land use changes made at the neighborhood level are also needed; it’s just a separate discussion from today.
- What’s the difference between town center and neighborhood center?
 - A: It’s about the intensity of the center. A town center has more mix of uses and higher intensity and vertical mixed use. A neighborhood center might have lower intensity of horizontal mixed uses.
- What are we thinking about our abandoned golf course?
 - A: We have not had much discussion about that area, but we can discuss it during the main portion of the meeting.
- Is there a battery storage facility near that golf course?
 - A: Yes, on the county side .
- Can we discuss/show the Fairgrounds?
 - A: It will go through a master planning process in the next couple of years.

Public Comment on Agenda

The following public comments were presented after the presentation.

- The river area should be changed to support the community greenway and to preserve it as an open space. Excited for the future discussion of some of the 15-minute neighborhood areas.
- Please adjust the boundary for the proposed Corona Station Area UGB expansion to show a half-mile radius. Communicate with the nine families who own the land.
- Will the GPAC review the proposed hotel project overlay?

GPAC Discussion

After the presentation and public comments, Troy introduced each of the six “areas of discussion,” and GPAC members discussed them. This section summarizes key points made during the discussion as well as comments made on the printed maps. Pictures of the map comments are included below.

Area #1: Upstream River Buffer Areas

- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: Agreement on preserving a consistent open space buffer along the River (however we achieve it), plus strong support for the community greenway / parkway concept.
- Why aren't certain open space areas included/highlighted?
 - A: Areas that were left out are the areas where the current land use matches the zoning or General Plan Land Use. The areas highlighted are either vacant, areas where change may happen, or where we want to see more change.
- SB 330, do we know how that affects this?
 - A: State law says that if you downzone some areas, you have to upzone other areas. So, we are trying to downzone areas where we don't want to see development and upzone areas where we do want to see development in order to provide the same capacity for housing overall in the city.
- If we want to be supportive of the Petaluma River Greenway Concept, these are the areas we should plan to be open space?
 - A: Yes, these areas are similar to the Concept area. These areas could be zoned for open space, but need to keep in mind that some landowners here might not want the same vision for their property.
- This area could be more of a gateway into the Downtown.
- When we're talking about green space, is it accessible open space for the public or preserved open space?
 - A: It could be both, but a parks master plan would be specific about the uses of particular open space areas.
- Are we creating nodes of density at the outlets and creating empty open space around them?
 - A: That is to be determined. We would like to hear ideas about what the outlets should be in the future and what types of uses could be around them.
- What about the county islands that are in the middle of this area? One GPAC member thinks the City should pursue annexation.
- Other sites to look at:
 - Look at the Cattlemen's area
 - We should explore the golf course and some other areas in the northern portion, maybe at the FedEx site on North McDowell

Area #1 Map Comments

- Consider housing adjacent to the outlets... buffer at the river (?)

- Possible gateway
- De-intensify areas here
- From outlets to Lynch Creek prevent development. Preserve wetlands, natural resources
- Community interest in making Petaluma Blvd less auto-centric and more of an approach to the downtown. Make sure overlay/GPLU chosen will be able to achieve this, plus green space
- Petaluma Blvd North has an existing parkway that is underdeveloped
- Annex county islands
- North gateway to downtown Petaluma Blvd North

Area #2: “Core” (Downtown, Station, Warehouse, Petaluma Blvd South)

- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: Agreement on protecting downtown with future resilience and adaptation improvements/investments/projects.
- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: Ask about intensifying key sites only, not entire Core. Leave Warehouse area as is.
- It seems right to identify the areas around the stars
- The foundry/wharf zone has an appropriate level of density
- The bowling alley area could have more intensity
- An area not highlighted/identified: the area adjacent to new apartment development where there are several tall industrial buildings adjacent to/on the river and are consistent with the agricultural economy and character, curious to know whether we are exploring options for zoning those areas for high density housing? Is that a potential area of exploration?
 - A: The SMART code did preserve it as a historic agricultural/industrial use, but we can definitely look at it more specifically and changes could occur in a variety of ways
- The intent of the specific plan was to intensify areas along Washington, north of Washington; its already on the maps to have higher use
- The granary could be designated for mixed use for the future
- There are a number of underutilized parcels in the Downtown area, such as the warehouse district, that aren't identified here.
- Should look at the 1 story buildings in the heart of our town that if improved, could be more dense
- The map areas are good but would like more intensity on certain parcels
- Mountain View Ave and Petaluma Blvd intersection area could have a neighborhood center, and so could the area around the bowling alley and the dance hall

Area #2 Map Comments

- I think the SMART code gets it right for downtown. Expand it to both sides of Petaluma Blvd
- Rezone bowling alley (M02?)
- [Mountain Ave corridor area] could handle an increase in densification
- [area between Petaluma Blvd, D St, 6th St and I St] not suggest intense densification
- Consider creating more flexibility through mixed use zoning along river and bowling alley
- Cross McNear to expand #2 core for neighborhood center
- Allow increased heights and intensity along Petaluma Blvd South
- Intensify at the core
- Don't build housing outside of core
- Work in tall (7+ stories) residential around grain mills, i.e., Dairyman's, Hunt & Behrens, Clover

Area #3: Petaluma Blvd North

- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: Discuss potential intensification at Lucky's and of the MU1 areas.
- Do any of these maps look at the topography? The northernmost area behind Bill and Jay's has nice views, could be a nice residential area (where western rainier crosses the river)
- Would there be a river edge buffer?
 - A: Yes, the large orange parcel would consider a river edge within the parcel.
- All the parcels in red make sense for intensification, but keep the river buffer areas
 - One GPAC member disagrees, the orange parcel might be developed first but it's the farthest away from the services so would suggest a gradient of intensity. The northernmost areas could be designated as less intense but keeping mix of uses, and then more intensity on parcels the closer they are to Downtown.
- The area to the right of Petaluma Blvd. is part of equity priority areas (DACs) and so are the areas west of Washington in Area #4. As we are talking about intensifying these areas, it's important for the City to have an anti-displacement plan that can coexist with our zoning modifications so that we are living our values/principles of the GPU. Is there an anti-displacement plan being developed?
 - A: Anti-displacement policies are in the Housing Element. The GP will also have an equity/health element. There is new CalEnviroScreen data and new maps, so we will bring that back into the conversation.

Area #3 Map Comments

- Don't upzone [the northwestern-most parcel outlined in red] (edge of walkability)
 - [Located on left side of Petaluma Blvd N]
- Yes to #3 increasing density/mixed use, denser to less dense as moving south to north
- River open space buffer 500' edge area #3
- Gentle hill maybe good residential w/ SW exposure area #3

Area #4: Midtown

- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: Agreement with the areas identified – ask about E Washington St and Plaza.
- Washington Plaza makes sense as a neighborhood center
- Why aren't we outlining the Fairgrounds if we can make a GPLU designation and make our desires known?
 - A: The City will be developing a separate master plan for the Fairgrounds to determine the vision and land use of the site.
- The Fairgrounds master planning may pressure surrounding parcels to develop or intensify.
- Makes sense to allow for more density along Payren towards Lakeville.
- Could explore if it's just the corridor or if also the surrounding neighborhood area that should be intensified

Area #4 Map Comments

- #4 intensify along E Washington corridor between Payran and Lakeville
- #4 diversify land use, focus on Washington Sq but convert others to mixed use zoning
- East D Street should be major pedestrian & cycling corridor, connecting fairground w/ SMART station. More mixed use

- Shopping centers (Plaza North, Washington Square) should be more diverse, mixed use, including residential
- Intensity at Fairgrounds
- Intensify use at Fairgrounds

Area #5: Lakeville Highway

- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: RDI at Scannell is ripe for a change; western Lakeville GPLU is mostly ok.
- Is this a flood zone or is this just an area that is projected to have king tide and future flooding?
 - A: It is an area where we expect to see more impacts in the future under a scenario where no adaptation interventions are taken.
- What is the thinking behind linking each side of Lakeville when a portion of Lakeville is already in a specific plan and has already undergone so much work on the form base code?
- This seems right to me, less intensity around the marina and more intensity around the new Hampton Inn – agree with the areas identified as red and blue.
- Would think we want to incorporate more housing somewhere around here because there is a growing biotech center just east of this map area.
- Agree with exploring mixed use/residential uses here
- The historic, river dependent industrial uses were really desired to maintain in the SP but that's kind of changed and Lakeville is an area that could have more residential

Area #5 Map Comments

- Inactive RDI, especially within ½ mile of SMART, should be residential and/or mixed use
- Intensifying along Lakeville between Hampton and Marriott makes sense
- Rezone industrial area a la Scannell
- Scannell site [parcel directly right of the bottom right and southeastern-most area identified in Area #2]: rezone from RDI to park and housing to encourage opportunity adjacent to Petaluma River Park – while noting eventually a bridge across river connecting east to west
- Petaluma River Park current park location (not future) will become central park of Petaluma

Area #6: Potential UGB Expansions

- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: All GPAC members supportive of exploring Corona Station UGB expansion.
- KEY POINT OF CONSENSUS: Zero support for the southern Lakeville UGB expansion.
- Significance of 100 acre size of these areas?
 - A: You can annex up to 100 acres; current expansion areas allowed under the current passed ballot measure
- Corona parcel – are there disadvantages to expanding the urban growth area?
 - A: Extending services, but on the upside, the land value and taxes could help cover new utilities cost and it could help balance the no net loss and the new station area could be better supported by new surroundings. Another downside is expanding and developing on green fields when we have infill sites already within the city; it encourages sprawl.
- More concern about consuming green fields in the southern potential UGB area
- It seems like a waste of space to not have high intensity uses around the station, needs residential and non-residential – it could provide employment and housing.

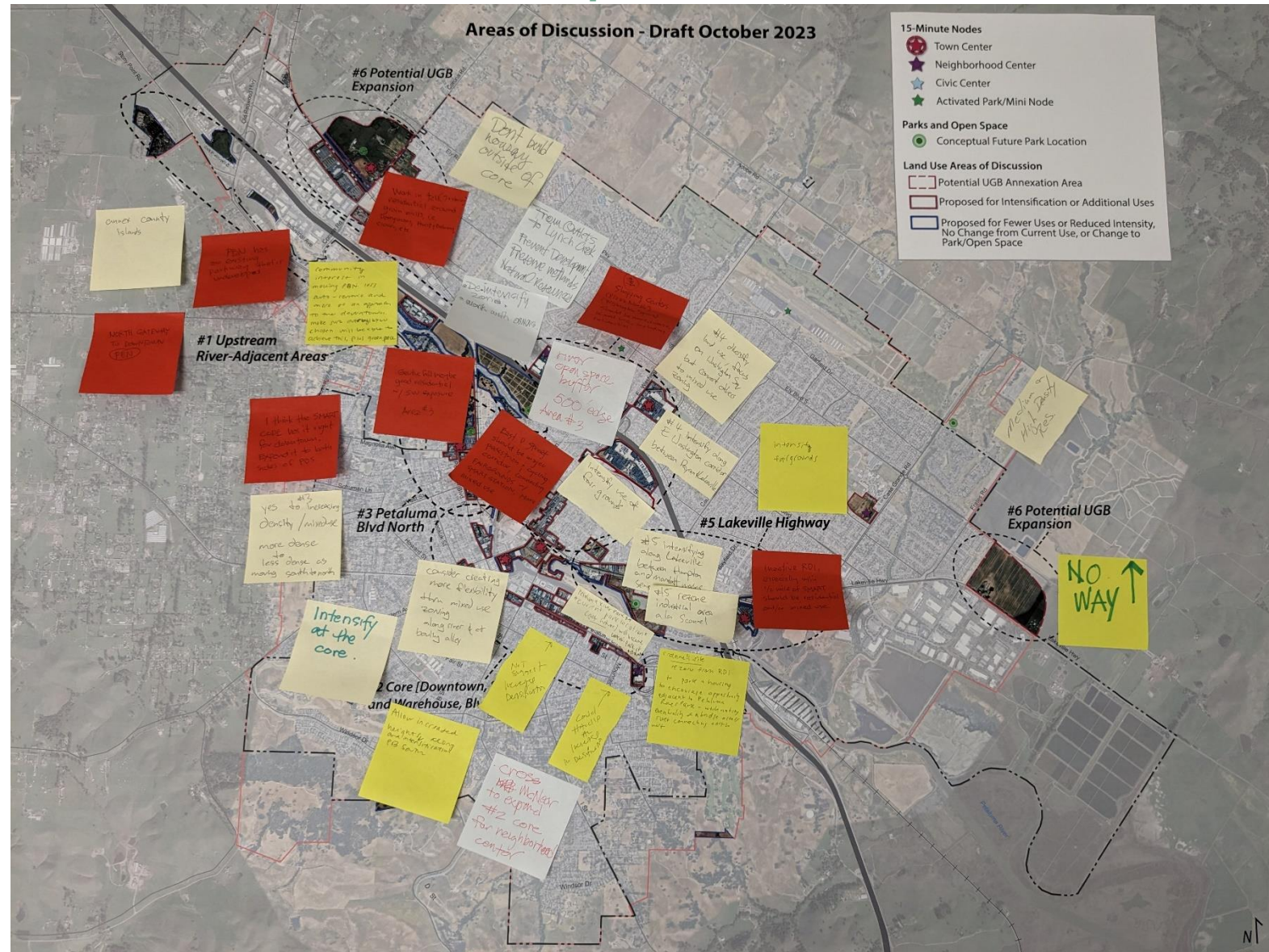
Area #6 Map Comments

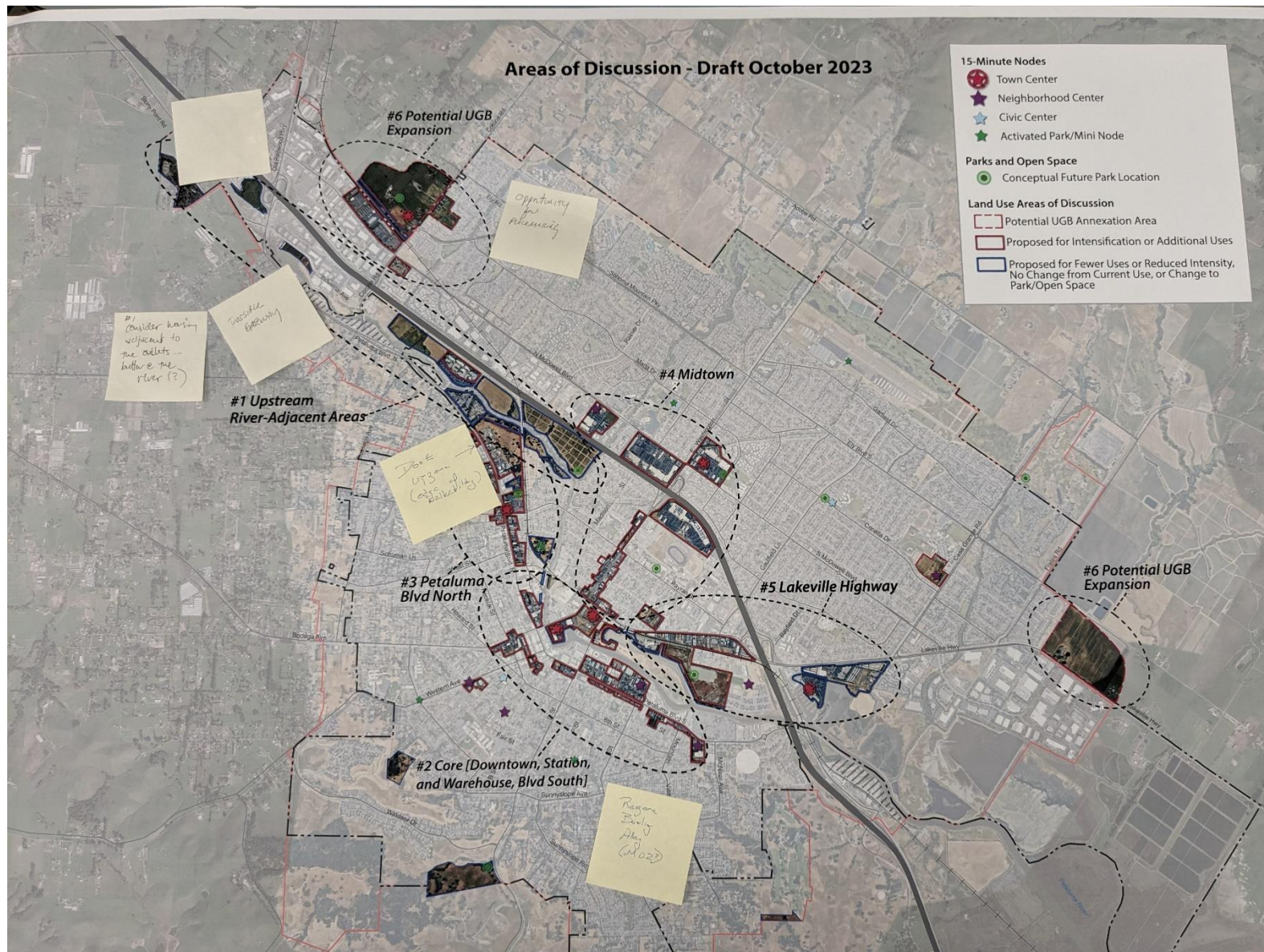
- [Corona Station potential UGB expansion area] opportunity for placemaking
- No way [to the Lakeville potential UGB expansion area]
- [end of Frates Road and Sphere of Influence] medium or high density residential

Additional Areas to Consider

- Adobe Creek Golf course
- Fairgrounds (we will outline and say “Future Master Plan”)
- Hunt & Behrens HASD parcel
- Around Applebee’s & Wilco at McDowell/Old Redwood Hwy intersection
- All 15-Minute Center parcels, including Leghorn Marketplace
- Airport?

Pictures of GPAC Comments on Maps





General GPAC Member Comment

GPAC members provided the following comments at the end of the meeting:

- Really appreciate meeting in person and having the back and forth; could improve the maps some more -- feels like we rushed over this stuff with a minimal understanding of what the opportunities/constraints are and what exists there now.
- Let's see other overlays and plans that impact these areas
- If we really had more time to discuss specific areas would be better; the order was good.
- The north business park area (where Applebee's is), is that county or city? It would be a great place to explore intensifying, its underutilized land (but it's a flood prone area).
- We have 15,000 people who commute in and the same amount who commute out; want to have a balance but are surrounded by communities who don't want to build housing, so we should maximize the space for affordable rentals within the city.
- Whenever we think about 15-minute neighborhoods, they can't happen without addressing single family housing, and maybe we can't dictate where these 15-minute neighborhoods happen
- It would be helpful to have more context before the next meeting; it's hard to agree to something that is going to affect other things we've talked about before without knowing the impacts. It would be helpful to know where the public facilities and utilities are.
- Would be helpful to have layers of background context for these areas
- Add airport area? would be nice to have more background info

General Public Comment

The following public comment was made at the meeting.

- A key underutilized area is near the Wilco, which is a gateway to the valley and wine country, as well as the area near Lagunitas. That area going up in intensity seems likely, as other future expected growth occurs adjacent to Corona Station.
- Opportunities around the airport that could be used for sustainable coops and agricultural uses; we need to find areas for tiny homes for homeless communities.
- The Planning Commission said that the GPAC will be discussing the downtown revitalization overlay.
- What is the public input process? Would appreciate more opportunities for the broader community to provide feedback?
- Need to stop subsidizing cars; stop building anything below 10 feet above grade.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:35 PM.