

GPAC Meeting Summary

January 16, 2025, 6:30 PM

Introduction

Meeting Access

All GPAC Meetings are public, and this meeting was held 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
- Recommended Land Use Designation & Map Changes
 - Presentation
 - Public Comment
 - Facilitated GPAC Discussion
- General Public Comment
- GPAC General Comment

Attendance

There were 11 total members of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) members in attendance, one City representative, two members of the consultant team, and several members of the public. The following GPAC members were present:

1. Dave Alden
2. Phil Boyle
3. Mary Dooley
4. Ali Gaylord
5. Sharon Kirk
6. Yensi Jacobo
7. Iliana Inzunza Madrigal
8. Kris Rebillot
9. Bill Rinehart
10. Robin Riley
11. Bill Wolpert

The following GPAC members were absent:

1. Stephanie Blake
2. Roger Leventhal
3. Roberto Rosila Mares
4. Lizzie Wallack

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

City of Petaluma:

Heather Hines – *Special Projects Manager, City of Petaluma*

Consultant Team:

Ron Whitmore – *Raimi + Associates*

Troy Reinhalter – *Raimi + Associates*

Meeting Summary

The focus of the 37th GPAC meeting was to discuss the recommended land use designations and map changes with the GPAC.

Opening

Ron Whitmore started the meeting by taking roll call attendance for GPAC members.

Recommended Land Use Designations and Map Changes

GPAC Clarifying Questions

GPAC members provided the following questions and comments after the presentation.

- The new concept of active use FAR requirements is good.
- Would 8 stories fit in the allowed building height (90 feet) for the T8 designation? It seems like rooftop projections count against the maximum height in the proposed downtown overlay.
- I would be interested in seeing the test fit models and calculations.
- Regardless of the growth projections and the existing capacity, what about building more housing for those commuting into town? How do we address the 16,000 in-commuters and improve the jobs/housing balance?
- What is the financial feasibility of building on small lots?

Public Comment

Members of the public made the following comments.

- Could we create a visualization model for the whole City? A company from Finland does it.
- Developers say they can't build new housing unless it's six stories. How does that track with Strategic Economics' financial feasibility analysis?
- Why isn't the revised map going back to PC?
 - A: It will, after we do the analysis.
- Where did the ADU projection come from?
 - A: The Housing Element.

- I like the idea of the stepdown mixed use. Would that allow for more accessible units, like cottage-style development?
 - A: Yes, the Stepdown Mixed Use would accommodate this.
- Are we just discovering that we have enough housing capacity in the city?
 - A: We completed the analysis recently.
- Do not let the developers control the conversation and do not believe that they can only build at six stories. We need to focus on creating more living wage job opportunities rather than dense apartments.

GPAC Discussion

Ron Whitmore made a short presentation to frame the GPAC's discussion. Slides focused on the updated General Plan Land Use designations and recommended changes to specific areas of the city were then referenced to support the GPAC's discussion. See the presentation slides for more details.

Land Use Designations

- What about historic districts?
 - A: The historic overlay would still apply, with various controls.
- The R6 designation is new but it isn't applied anywhere on the map?
- Want to see cottage-style and ownership units allowed and encouraged.
 - A: Cottage-style is included in the Plex definition
- Is a maximum of 45 du/a okay in the Downtown? There is no max in the CPSP, and LU policies allow for micro units. The density bonus can also be used.
- What does stepdown mean?
 - A: Reduced allowable heights abutting lower-intensity areas, like single-family residential.
- What is "commercial" in MU designations that allow standalone commercial?
 - A: We need to clarify what we mean by Standalone Commercial (what uses specifically are allowed) for the mixed-use designations.
- Should we even have Neighborhood Commercial anymore?

Area-Specific Recommendations

The responses below on the recommended land use changes per area of change summarize the GPAC input. Unless noted, there was consensus among GPAC members.

Downtown SMART

- Should we allow 8 stories?
- We need density to alleviate chronic overcrowding.
- Maybe flip the T6 and T8 on the station-adjacent block
- **GPAC Input: 8 members support a step back from 6 to 8 stories; 4 opposed to having T8**

East Washington

- Policy: Revisit the MU1 area of East Washington when the Fairgrounds Master Plan is underway.
- **GPAC Input: Unanimous support for policy and GPU Team recommendation**

Petaluma Boulevard North

- **GPAC Input: Unanimous support for GPU Team recommendation**
- Consider whether to de-intensify the undeveloped properties between the River, Cinnabar, the slaughterhouse, and PBN

Petaluma Boulevard South

- **GPAC Input: Unanimous support for GPU Team recommendation**
- There needs to be an emphasis on the streetscape and tree improvements and try to do it less piecemeal.

Bowling Alley

- Should extend the portion designated as Stepdown Mixed Use to the R4 site to the east
- **GPAC Input: Unanimous support for GPU Team recommendation plus the extension of MU2B to the R4 site**

Washington Square & Plaza Center

- Should remove the stepdown on the back side of Plaza North (near the freeway) and where Washington Square abuts lower-intensity residential
- **GPAC Input: 8 members in support of GPU Team recommendation with stepdown revisions; 3 members in support of original GPAC recommendation**

Casa Grande

- **GPAC Input: Unanimous support for GPU Team recommendation**

River Park

- Can there be a lower-intensity mixed-use designation that requires vertical mixed-use?
- **GPAC Input: Unanimous support for GPU Team recommendation (with the revision of showing the MU2B portion as a single large parcel instead of smaller blocks)**

General Public Comment

The following general public comments were made at the meeting.

- The Downtown area should have a maximum height of 45 feet to preserve its historic character.
- What is the number of housing units that come out of the recommendations?
- There needs to be more placemaking and urban greening.
- Eight stories do not make sense.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.