

# GPAC Meeting Summary

*July 18, 2024, 6:30 PM*

# Introduction

## Meeting Access

All GPAC Meetings are public, and this meeting was held on Zoom. 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/](http://www.cityofpetaluma.org/meetings/) and <https://www.planpetaluma.org/>.

## Agenda

- Welcome
- Project and Staff Updates
- Public Review Process for Land Use Policy Framework
  - Presentation
  - Clarifying GPAC Questions
  - Public Comment
  - GPAC Discussion
- General Public Comment

## Attendance

There were nine 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. Mary Dooley
3. Ali Gaylord
4. Yensi Jacobo
5. Roberto Rosila Mares
6. Kris Rebillot
7. Bill Rinehart
8. Joshua Riley Simmons
9. Bill Wolpert

The following GPAC members were absent:

1. Stephanie Blake
2. Phil Boyle
3. Sharon Kirk
4. Iliana Inzunza Madrigal
5. Roger Leventhal
6. Lizzie Wallack

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

**City of Petaluma:**

Heather Hines – Special Projects Manager, *M-Group Consulting Planner serving the City of Petaluma*

**Consultant Team:**

Ron Whitmore – *Raimi + Associates*

Michelle Hernandez – *Raimi + Associates*

Dave Javid – *Plan to Place*

## Meeting Summary

The focus of the 32nd GPAC meeting was to get GPAC feedback on the approach to public review of the Draft Land Use Policy Framework, confirm GPAC member roles in support of the public review, and confirm their approach to reviewing the Framework.

## Opening

Heather Hines started the meeting by taking roll call attendance for GPAC members.

## Project and Staff Updates

Heather Hines presented project and staff updates on the following topics:

- City Council approved the ballot language about extending the expiration date of the Urban Growth Boundary to 2050, which does not change the boundaries of the UGB.
- City staff are reviewing the Final Draft Blueprint for Carbon Neutrality, and it will be presented for adoption to the Climate Action Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council in the upcoming months.
- The consultant team is reviewing the feedback heard from the community, CCBs, Planning Commission, and GPAC, and all this input will inform the revisions and development of the draft General Plan elements.

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

- No clarifying questions

## Public Review Process for Land Use Policy Framework

The Public Review Draft of the Land Use Policy Framework incorporates feedback from the GPAC, City Council, City staff, and community feedback heard in the review of the other Frameworks. The Framework will have a structure similar to the other Frameworks but will have chapters on land use foundations, citywide land use evolution, 15-minute city, design & character, and subarea policies. The

Public Review Draft of the Framework will be released in August and be available for feedback through September.

The GPAC input will be critical in refining and revising the Framework. The Land Use Working Group will prepare written feedback, while all GPAC members will review and provide feedback on the framework. Future GPAC meetings will focus on facilitated discussion on the framework and presentation from the Land Use Working Group on their feedback and recommendations.

The community engagement focused on the Land Use Framework will consist of online resources, an online feedback form/survey, and in-person events such as pop-ups, area meetings, and focus group meetings, particularly with community members in disadvantaged communities.

## Clarifying Questions

GPAC members had the following clarifying questions.

- How many people are you expecting to attend pop ups and area meetings?
  - A: The pop ups are meant to go to where people are. When we did it initially at the farmers market, the library, and theater square, and they were great because we met people where they were and who hadn't been at other meetings, but there was a range of attendance, from some people just stopping to read a board versus those that stayed and had a conversation. For area meetings, they were all virtual and some were better attended than others.
- What is the relationship between the existing General Plan's subarea policies and existing specific plans? Did those plans come from the subarea policies?
  - A: Not all of them. The Downtown Specific Plan was adopted before the General Plan was last updated. Many of the existing subarea policies are a combination of specific standards, policies, and goals. We want to make sure that the revised subarea policies are implementable and will be part of the community engagement discussion.
- Is the team creating a manual to help people who are going to volunteer for pop ups or area meetings?
  - A: Yes, the team would like to host some training sessions with volunteers to ensure everyone is on the same page and can communicate the concepts of the Framework.
- Will the Framework have land use definitions, and are there new designations?
  - A: The framework currently has land use policies and alternatives and will have suggested revisions to the existing designations, with some new designations to make the General Plan consistent with State law.
- Will there be a land use map?
  - A: There will not be a revised land use map in the Framework, but the maps will identify the areas for land use change and the 15 minute centers.
- Is it possible to limit specific plans in subareas? Can a General Plan do that?
  - A: The team is not sure.
- When reviewing the identification of gateways, is the public art master plan reviewed to make the General Plan consistent with what it says?
  - A: Unsure about the role of the public art master plan plays with identifying or enhancing gateways, but there may be a policy or action in the Arts Framework to align the enhancement of gateways with public art creation.

## Public Comment

The following comments were made by members of the public.

### Community Meetings

- The Senior Center would like to host the planning team to conduct two meetings on the Land Use Framework, particularly because it is located in or near a disadvantaged community; one meeting should be during the day and the second should be during the evening. The Senior Center would also like to work with the City to invite representatives from the mobile home communities to these meetings and to provide food and refreshments to encourage community members to attend.
- Agreement with GPAC requests for having sufficient visual representation about the Framework content so that the average person can understand what is being asked about density and intensity for particular areas.
- We need to educate people on land use terms so they can understand what is being discussed.
- The City should provide the GPAC with a small budget to host community events so they do not need to spend their own money trying to gather feedback from the community.
- People are attracted to the idea of a town hall, and if we had one on the General Plan Update that explained the Land Use Framework, it could have activities for all age-groups and be the launching point for area meetings. A town hall event should also use different types of technology and visual representation.
- Materials used at community meetings should be made available online and be printable so the GPAC can hand out at smaller events.
- When we approach the public with the land use alternatives, I hope we are giving people options to choose from and then a space to discuss why they chose that. If we just talk about principles and words, people won't want to engage. But if we have them make a choice on a map and with visuals, we can get real feedback.

### Advertising and Outreach

- Banners and posters advertising the General Plan should be hung up in Downtown and at businesses to get more attention to this process.
- The team should reach out and invite community organizations to attend meetings, since many have said they did not know the General Plan Update was happening.
- The City website is very confusing and difficult to understand whether the GPAC meeting is occurring online or in person. Please get this information correct for future meetings so community members know what is happening.
- The team should use social media to engage people in this process, such as developing a 1 page flyer on what the General Plan Update is and when events are happening.

### Other Comments

- The owner of two parcels on the south side of Corona Road would like them to have a different land use designation because the current land use and zoning does not even match what is around it, it has a much lower density than the surrounding uses.

## GPAC Discussion

### Feedback on the GPAC's Review and Discussion of the Land Use Framework

- Agreement that there should be one group that does the deep dive but could consider dividing the rest of the GPAC into groups who look at specific chapters, not sure if that would cause duplicative work or mitigate it.
- Reviewing the Framework is abstract at this point because we don't know exactly what the Framework will look like, and it seems like much denser material that would need to be split up for review.
- Staff and the consultant team should provide the GPAC with direction on the big questions and area of change to help direct their review of the Framework.
- The review schedule should have the August GPAC meeting be an introduction to the Framework and a space for the GPAC to figure out how it would like to review it.
- Future GPAC meetings on the Framework could each have a very focused on a particular part of the Framework, though this may require multiple GPAC meetings to discuss the entire Framework.
- The GPAC would like more staff support in their review of the Framework.
- It would help the GPAC to have consistent meetings, with a combination of virtual and in-person, as they review it since there is so much material.
- Weekly virtual and in-person office hours (with a preference for evenings) with staff and/or consultant team are requested by multiple GPAC members so they can ask questions as they review the Framework.
- When the Working Groups were reviewing the other Frameworks at unstaffed meeting spaces, it would have been helpful to have City staff there for the groups to check in with.
- Multiple GPAC members emphasized the need for having graphics and visuals to communicate the content of the Framework and to help the GPAC, and the public, visualize what it's talking about. Especially when understanding the differences between densities and heights and land use designations.

### Feedback on the Approach to Land Use Engagement

#### Overall

- The format of Plan Fest worked because it was interactive and had breakout stations where individual conversations could happen.
- Considering that the general public does not get involved or become interested in the planning process until there is a specific project they have issues with or don't understand the context. Is talking about such a complex land use planning process with the public a good idea? Is it a required step in the process? How efficient is it? Would want the engagement done on land use to be real and valuable to the City and consultant team.
- It would be helpful to have a 3D model of what the Framework is proposing so that the public can understand the scale and intensity of the land use changes. This would be especially helpful for the GPAC and other volunteers who are staffing pop ups and community meetings.

- The GPAC would appreciate having large maps accessible in a specific place so that GPAC members or members of the public can see them and discuss them at a communal place - possibly at City Hall or the Lucchesi Community Center.
- When an SDAT event was conducted at a park, they had tables under the tree canopy that was covered with maps and everyone could write and draw on them, so we know it's doable and hope something like this is in the budget.
- The GPAC should be given a small budget to host its own events to hear feedback from the public.
- The team should make a video advertising the General Plan Update to promote on social media.
- The owner of Aqus Café has many connections and contact information for local organizations and people, they could be a good resource to tap into.

### Timing

- Is it possible to extend the engagement process to October in order to set ourselves and the team up for success to get sufficient feedback on the Framework?
- The pop ups could be used to help advertise the town hall or they could occur before and after the town hall to continue to gather input.

### Pop-ups

- Conducting pop ups has value because we can talk to people who may have never heard about this process and have not had their voices heard, since we are meeting them where they are.

### Area Meetings

- Instead of one big town hall, we could have one eastside meeting and one westside meeting that are paired with pop ups.
- There is some hesitancy with the town hall idea since the best conversations at Plan Fest were with people who were timid and hesitant about sharing their ideas. We can get more people involved with smaller meetings and with the pop ups since they provide better educational moments.
- Virtual meetings for engagement are not popular, they need to be in-person and tangible.

### Town Hall

- Could all of the engagement for this process be done at one town hall meeting that has breakout sessions on each engagement area? This could allow all of us to share resources and knowledge without having to duplicate efforts.
- Maybe the town hall could take the place of the area meetings, and we could still hold pop up meetings after or before the town hall and do presentations at specific organizations that want to host us.

## Suggested Locations for Pop-ups

### North Eastside

- Lucchesi Park Farmer's Market

- Leghorn's Park instead of the Safeway since the park is popular during the mornings and weekends, especially once school is back in session.
- Prince Park & Sporting Complex
- Lagunitas Brewing Company
- Hen House Brewing Company
- Deer Creek Village Shopping Center
- SRJC for both pop-ups and advertisements, and could present at certain classes and programs that may be interested in the planning process

### **South Eastside**

- Empty lot at intersection of Crinella Drive and Caulfield Lane – since it is an empty lot, the Framework would have to become an event with attractions to bring people out
- Casa Grande High School during sporting events
- Shollenberger Park
- Petaluma Airport Display Days
- Adobe Creek Center Starbucks - but would need to get creative since most of the people visiting it are in the drive-through

### **Far West**

- Lombardi's Gourmet Deli & BBQ
- Petaluma Village Premium Outlets
- The Lucky's does not get a lot of foot traffic though the pizza place is popular on weekends
- Petaluma Golf Center

### **Westside**

- Cherry Valley School during drop off and pick up time
- Ray's Deli
- Bowling Alley for evening pop ups
- Veteran's Center
- Petaluma High School

### **Midtown**

- Café Puente

### **Core**

- Brewster's Beer Garden
- The Block
- Aquas Café
- Acme Burger
- Walnut Park Farmers Market

## Suggested Locations for Area Meetings

### North Eastside

- Lucchesi Community Center
- Senior Center

### South Eastside

- Lucchesi Community Center (combine meeting with north eastside)

### Far West

- The Cinnabar Theater is not a good location for an area meeting

### Westside

- Veteran's Center

### Midtown

- Fairgrounds

### Core

- N/A

## Suggested Approaches for Engaging Disadvantaged Communities

- Conduct pop ups at community resources like the Petaluma Mini Library (which is doing free summer lunches for kids) and food banks which occur at different types of places (Senior Center, churches, etc.)
- Advertise through the transit system and the churches' newsletters
- Staff should work with the Senior Center in doing outreach to the residents of the mobile home areas.
- Could the City sponsor a block party in different disadvantaged community areas to get people to come out and talk?
- What about engaging the day laborers at the Shell gas station, Home Dept, etc.?
- It could be worth reaching out to the local newspapers and journalists to see if they have insights into key disadvantaged communities and how to get in contact with them.

## General Public Comment

The following general public comments were made at the meeting.

## Outreach

- Since the school districts are one of the top employers in the city, City staff should engage with them particularly because we are trying to change our live/work balance.
- The overarching idea of having a campaign for the GPU with fun graphics and messaging like the SDAT would bring people in. It has to be attractive to the average person and to get more and more people to talk about it.
- For the outreach process, the team should provide a media packet to get the information out there so organizations can spread the information to a lot more people. It needs to be a short, maybe 1-page, flyer that is relevant to the average person to get them interested and why they should care.

## Timeline

- We do need a longer timeline for the land use engagement process.

## Pop up locations

- The SDAT held pop ups at St. Vincent Church, Lola's Market, and another church on the eastside and received wonderful input in Spanish.
- Other ideas for pop ups include Freidman's and Kaiser. Kaiser in particular has held other community events.

## Area meetings

- If discussion about the land use in each particular area isn't possible at the introductory town hall event, the area meetings should still happen.
- The Senior Center has a lot of meeting rooms and could be used much more. There are so many seniors with knowledge and experience that use the center and can provide significant and deep feedback, so let's tap into that. Even a town hall event could be hosted there. The senior population in Petaluma is high, so there are many more people who visit it and use it every day.

## GPAC Member General Comment

- Is the plan Petaluma website not the media package? It has all the documents and maps and isn't it already made?
- All GPAC members should look at the Deer Creek housing proposal that is in the upper reach, which is in the river area we are talking about preserving. Please go onto the City website to look at it because it would reverse everything we have been talking about.
- Can you remind us of what the process is like once the City Council approves the Frameworks in November and the EIR process starts, will the team be writing the chapters of the plan? What will GPAC be doing?
  - A: We are assuming that once the plan writing begins, there will be conflicting ideas and questions that may merit discussion with the GPAC. We are hoping to meet as needed during that part of the process.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:30 PM.