
Date: July 12, 2024
To: General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) members
From: General Plan Update Team
Subject: July 18, 2024 GPAC Meeting

We look forward to the GPAC meeting on Thursday, July 18, starting at 6:30pm. The meeting will be held **in-person** at the **Petaluma Community Center in Lucchesi Park**, located at 320 N. McDowell Blvd. The meeting will be focused on the upcoming release of the Draft Land Use Policy Framework and associated land use alternatives discussion. More specifically, the meeting will be focused on clarifying the desired review process for the GPAC to comment on the Framework once released and a discussion of the public engagement activities and anticipated involvement of the GPAC. This memo is intended to help you prepare for that meeting.

Members of the public in attendance at next week's GPAC meeting will be invited to provide comments during the General Public Comment period as well as Public Comment on agenda items. Community members are also welcome to email comments for distribution to the GPAC. All written comments should be emailed to [Christina Paul](#), the staff liaison to the GPAC.

Evolution of the Public Draft Land Use Policy Framework

"Land Use" is essentially the discussion of what kinds of uses or buildings can go on different parcels, and how big or intense the uses or buildings can be. This is a pivotal part of the General Plan because it is the foundation of the City Council's ability to regulate and make decisions on land use and development. In the General Plan, the allowed uses and intensities are specified in the land use "designations" assigned to each parcel, such as open space, residential, commercial, or mixed-use. Those designations will be shown on the General Plan Land Use Map, and zoning will be assigned that is consistent with that map. General Plan land use policy and zoning are the foundation of the city's ability to regulate and make decisions on land use. To achieve the community's vision, updated designations on the General Plan Land Use Map must also be complemented with associated land use regulatory policies.

During meetings in November 2023 and January and February 2024, the GPAC discussed "alternatives" for changes in land use mix and intensity in "areas of change" as well as related land use policy direction. In April, the GPAC's input was brought to the Planning Commission and the City Council for guidance. During that time, the Public Draft Flood Resilience Policy Framework was completed, and the draft Parks and Open Space map was also updated.

All of this information has informed the evolution of the Draft Land Use Policy Framework, which integrates land use alternatives and policy. The Framework is on track to be released in early August for public review.

Land Use Community Engagement

A robust complement of community engagement activities is being planned to support public review of the Land Use Policy Framework during August and September, including:

- Online surveys and mapping tools
- Pop-ups at community gathering spots, 15-minute activity centers, and community events
- Focus group meetings
- Area workshops focused on 15-minute centers, potential changes in land use designations, and related policy

- “Deep dive” review by the GPAC and the Planning Commission.

During next week’s meeting, we’d like the GPAC’s input on the planned approach to public engagement on land use, including input on the best locations for pop-ups and other activities, and help identifying key “community connectors” and community events and meetings we can attend to extend our reach. We’d also like to discuss the GPAC’s role in supporting upcoming community engagement as ambassadors of the General Plan Update process, including help with pop-ups and co-facilitating events.

GPAC Review of the Public Draft Land Use Policy Framework

GPAC Working Groups were recently re-organized to collaborate amongst themselves and with other knowledgeable and active community members to provide focused feedback on the Draft Policy Frameworks. The Land Use Working Group was asked to lead the review of the Noise, Economic Development, and Land Use policy frameworks.

Because land use is so foundational to the General Plan, we also plan to use the August 15th GPAC meeting for focused discussions on key components of the Framework. We could also use the September 19th GPAC meeting to gather additional GPAC input.

During next week’s meeting, we’d like your input on how best to approach the GPAC’s review of the Land Use Policy Framework in the coming months.

As always, if you have any questions, please contact Christina Paul (cpaul@cityofpetaluma.org). Thank you!

Attachments:

Attachment A: Agenda

Attachment B: Summary notes from the June 20, 2024 GPAC meeting

GPAC Meeting Summary

June 20, 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/ and <https://www.planpetaluma.org/>.

Agenda

- Welcome
- Project and Staff Updates
- Working Group Feedback on Policy Frameworks
 - Public Comment
 - GPAC Discussion
- General Public Comment

Attendance

There were 10 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. Sharon Kirk
6. Roger Leventhal
7. Roberto Rosila Mares
8. Kris Rebillot
9. Joshua Riley Simmons
10. Lizzie Wallack

The following GPAC members were absent:

1. Stephanie Blake
2. Phil Boyle
3. Iliana Inzunza Madrigal
4. Brent Newell
5. Bill Rinehart
6. Bill Wolpert

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*

Heather Gurewitz – Senior Planner, *M-Group Consulting Planner serving the City of Petaluma*

Consultant Team:

Ron Whitmore – *Raimi + Associates*

Michelle Hernandez - *Raimi + Associates*

Meeting Summary

The focus of the 31st GPAC meeting was to discuss GPAC Working Group feedback on the Public Draft Policy Frameworks.

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 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 planning team is finalizing the 2nd Administrative Draft of the Land Use Policy Framework and the Land Use Alternatives Briefing Book, both of which will be released for the public's review in the summer.
- Community engagement events around the Land Use Framework and the Alternatives will begin in late summer and consist of an online survey, pop ups, area meetings, and GPAC and Planning Commission meetings.

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

- When will the GPAC review the Land Use Framework?
 - A: The timeline is not finalized but it will likely be available for the GPAC's review in August.
- There is a concern that the Blueprint to Climate Neutrality is setting such high goals that the City won't be able to reach them and lose credibility in what it can actually accomplish. To set us up for achieving carbon neutrality, the General Plan has to go far in pushing for change, especially in making our transportation system better and shifting people away from cars.
 - A: It is a delicate balance, whether to set smaller and more reachable goals or to set aspirational goals that push the needle but might not be reached that quickly. The

General Plan will be consistent with the adopted Blueprint and advances the goals it lays out.

- Will only the Land Use Working Group review the Land Use Framework or will all of GPAC have the opportunity to review as well?
 - A: All of GPAC will review it but the hope is that the Land Use Working Group takes a closer and deeper dive into the Framework and can then have more interactions and discussion with the rest of the GPAC.

Working Group Feedback on Policy Frameworks

The GPAC Working Groups each provided a high level summary of their review of the Public Draft Policy Frameworks.

Equity and Intersectional Justice Working Group

Reviewed the Health, Equity and Environmental Justice Framework

- Fully support the aspirations that are within the Framework.
- We did struggle to understand how the City would prioritize the goals and policies when they all seem important, and so began thinking about what would enable everything else to happen. We identified a set of goals, with more detail in the group's Feedback Form.
 - Community outreach
 - Engagement
 - Improving representation in CCBs
 - Community leadership development.
- Hosted a virtual meeting to discuss the Framework with members of the public and had a good turnout and productive discussion.
- There were specific things we didn't see or didn't see enough of it, like the following:
 - Improving mental health
 - Identifying queer and trans folks as an underrepresented or disadvantaged group
 - Improving indoor air quality, especially considering the public health impacts of poor air quality.
- Underscoring the needs of older adults and including age friendly as part of the equity conversation.
- Wrap the equity conversation around the need for housing; let's elevate it by making it the focus of equity and social justice.
- Can the Equity Priority Areas be called disadvantaged neighborhoods? We need to use clear language so that the community knows what we are talking about in this plan.

Mobility Working Groups

Reviewed the Transportation Framework and Governance & Implementation Framework

Transportation Framework

- The Working Group met with members of the public before the Frameworks were released to develop a list of policies that they hoped would be included in the Frameworks. It was difficult to

reach a consensus within the group after the Frameworks were released and discussed, so participants were encouraged to submit individual comments.

- The eventual transportation element should only have 5 goals: 1) seamless network for all methods of transportation, 2) specific actions to reduce car dependence, 3) actions to increase transit usage, 4) actions to increase bicycle use, 5) actions to increase walking.
- The Framework is lacking directness in what it is trying to accomplish, and we tried to articulate that in the feedback.

Governance:

- More folks should read the Governance Framework because it really helps you understand what the General Plan does and how it gets implemented, especially since so much of it comes down to how the City Council wants to implement it.

Culture & Community Working Group

Reviewed the Historic Resources Framework and the Arts, Culture and Creativity Framework

Arts, Culture, and Creativity:

- There was some redundancy in the goals and policies, so when we were choosing our top 5, we were looking for those that encompass the most topics.
- Strongly support the following:
 - Developing and leaning into the City's branding as it can help with economic development, and there is a big opportunity to be creative with it
 - Developing a multicultural center
 - Using arts and creativity to further other City priorities, like incentivizing public transit use and connecting the east and west side.
- Concern that non-profits and organization that do art and creative things in Petaluma are being ignored or have not been included in this work.
- Concern about how we can ensure funding for the arts and the implementation of creative projects. For example, is there a role for a City staff member to champion arts and to push these ideas and opportunities to overlap with other topics or city work? Want someone who is connected to the arts community and can bring art into the most mundane City activities.
 - A: The City does have a public art specialist on staff who is well connected to the arts community in Petaluma and leads many arts and culture projects. Maybe there does need to be more publicity about the creative endeavors the City is already doing.
- GPAC comment: We can also think about how to think outside of the box and incorporate arts into areas that are not super popular or at the center of town, maybe working with individual homeowners or property owners near walking trails.

Historic:

- Strongly support:
 - Establishing and funding a program so historic preservation is prioritized
 - Encouraging adaptive reuse
 - Ensuring the Petaluma is inclusive and adding in the recommendations from the City's Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Ad Hoc Committee.

- Concern on heritage tourism: is there enough content there to really elevate this type of tourism? Maybe need to extend the reach of what would be considered for heritage tourism.

Land Use Working Group

Reviewed the Economic Development Framework and the Noise Framework

Economic Development:

- It is important to invest in Downtown and refocus on incentivizing property owners to repair blighted properties.
- Could consider a vacancy tax or another program to revitalize properties that have been listed for lease for a considerable amount of time.
- Should encourage the development of more lodging in Petaluma because the transient tax can help the City's revenue.
- Support the policy on living wage job growth because to meet climate neutrality goals, we need to have people live and work in Petaluma. We can do that by building more affordable housing and paying people enough to live in Petaluma.
- Support needing to brand and promote Petaluma, especially because the "Made in Petaluma" branding has created Petaluma into a food hub that can only be expanded upon and further the economic development of the City.
- We also talked about allowing some alternative use for empty and blighted properties, to encourage property owners to do something with these underused properties.
- We should consider allowing zoning changes in primarily residential neighborhoods so to not limit entrepreneurs to expensive, existing commercial spaces.
- Don't support maintaining industrial land or expanding the Urban Growth Boundary to develop more light industrial uses.
- Don't support developing the industrial sites near Highway 101; wanted to see those transition into carbon neutral operations.
- Don't support designating shopping centers as community hubs because it feels like it's a way to do nothing new and innovative. They already exist, are parking lot forward, and are not destinations to people on public transit. Doesn't mean you can't open them up for other types of development, but unless the City is strict in what gets built there, there won't be actual change in their development into 15 minute centers.
- Don't believe it is the City's job to manage a Just Transition but that educational institutions should have programs to help with that.
- As we discussed the Framework, had to think about what the City could enforce and could actually get done.
- There are many policies that overlap and are redundant.
- GPAC comment: Petaluma is in a geographic location that is near to many academic institutions: is there a goal, policy or action about being connected to them and enhancing partnerships with them? There is young talent that can help amplify and contribute to Petaluma. If it wasn't included in another Framework, maybe it should be added to this one.
- GPAC comment: Agree with that idea, especially since the UC Davis Bodega Marine Lab is on the coast near Petaluma and Sonoma State University has some housing for its faculty right in town. There are opportunities to explore those academic partnerships.

- GPAC comment: There are overlaps with the Arts & Culture group in developing the City's branding with creativity and pushing forward the food innovation scene. Arts & culture is also a key part of economic development!

Noise:

- No particular comments.

Hazard Mitigation, Climate Change Adaptation, and Resilience Working Group

Reviewed the Safety Framework, Public Facilities Framework, and Flood Resilience Framework

Flood Resilience Framework:

- Noted that there are a lot of unfunded mandates that could attach a lot of costs to housing and to the City, like an unfunded home buying program. Unsure how much of that makes it into the General Plan.
- The group's Feedback Form contains more specific comments from an engineer's perspective.
- We need to have an eye towards making things achievable, and have some coordination with the Flood Master Plan, even if it won't be complete in time for the General Plan. It is easy to put all the wish list items onto the General Plan but need to look back at it and see what is possible for the City to achieve.
- The development standards in the Framework are high and big and had some questions on the references to the 100- and 500-year flood zones.
- The General Plan should explore how to use open space for multiple uses and for flood adaptation.
 - A: The Land Use Framework has a section that compliments the Flood Resilience Framework in preserving open space along the river for multiple uses, such as recreation, habitat preservation, and flood adaptation.
- GPAC Comment: We should be wary of things that add additional cost to housing construction and wary of anything that can make it more difficult to house people in Petaluma.
- GPAC Comment: We had previously talked about the norther reach of the Petaluma River being used for detention and slowing down floods: would that help with the flood adaptation strategy?
 - A: It could help with fluvial flooding but not with tidal flooding.

Safety Framework:

- Working Group members were not in attendance to provide comments.

Public Facilities Framework:

- Working Group members were not in attendance to provide comments.

Engineering Working Group

Reviewed the Infrastructure & Utilities Framework

- At a high level, it felt difficult to connect the dots in the Framework. It should be better organized in a way that the actions are listed in a chronological order or in the order they should be

completed. Just reading this version makes it difficult to understand what order they are supposed to be implemented in.

- Having a flow chart at the beginning of the chapter, and all the other chapter, would be helpful to understand how the actions relate to each other, and which need to be implemented first.
- We should have a broadband expert review the Framework and provide comments to ensure it is covering everything it should, like ensuring cybersecurity is addressed as well.
- GPAC Comments: Josh Simmons served on the Technology Committee, which presented a report to the City Council of action items to take to improve the broadband access and network connectivity of the community. Staff should review that report and integrate relevant policies into the Framework.
 - For many telecommunication companies, establishing fiber and connectivity in some parts of town doesn't pencil for them.
 - Some of the recommendations the report contains include extending fiber connection in innovative ways, such as micro trenching or running fiber through sewer lines. Fiber can also be extended when roads are repaired, or new roads are constructed. The City can also explore owning the fiber it lays down and leasing it back to the telecommunication companies.

Open Space and Natural Resources Working group

Reviewed the Parks & Recreation Framework and Natural Environment Framework

- Working Group members were not in attendance to provide comments.

Public Comment on Agenda

The following public comments were presented after the presentation.

- The Petaluma River Foundation acquired 60 acres of riverfront land to develop it into a river park and would like to advocate for it to be included in the General Plan in some way. The riverfront park captures so much of the spirit and tactical actions that are being put forth in the Policy Frameworks and including it in the General Plan will signal that it's a priority for the City to have this park completed.
- The Arts Framework should be renamed to "Arts, Design, Creativity, and Culture" so that it can capture the importance of design, as it sits in a place that isn't fine art or public art but contributes to a lot of the things the City does. Designers can be involved in multiple types of endeavors.
- More City RFPs should incorporate arts and design professionals, like the competition to add art to city bus stops and to the actual buses.
- Public art can also be included in much of the open space and underutilized buildings around town.
- The Arts Center is an important part of the community and should be more involved with what the City does.

GPAC Discussion

- The final plan will have metrics so we can track our progress, right? What will they track?
 - A: The final plan will have metrics, but it is not clear yet exactly what they will be.

- It would be a huge miss if we don't include a policy or action about working with at least the junior college in the city, ideally other academic institutions as well, and exploring potential partnerships.
- It would be good to include some policies on how we can manage school drop off and pick up traffic, especially since it's a combination of school district and City transportation network issue.

General Public Comment

No general public comments were made at the meeting.

GPAC Member General Comment

No GPAC members provided comments at the end of the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:00 PM.