



Petaluma General Plan

General Plan Advisory Committee

Meeting #1 Summary Notes

Date + Time: March 18, 2021 at 6pm

Location/Format: Zoom Webinar

Meeting Access and Recording

All GPAC Meetings are public and are accessible via Zoom and television (PCA channel).

Meeting details are posted on the City's Meetings site:

<https://cityofpetaluma.org/meetings/>

The link to the recording of this meeting is:

https://petaluma.granicus.com/player/clip/3239?view_id=31&redirect=true

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. GPAC Rules and Responsibilities Overview
3. General Plan Update Process and Background
4. Public Comment
5. Brown Act and Ethics Overview
6. Adjourn

Attendance

There were 21 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. Panama Bartholomy
3. Stephanie Blake
4. Phil Boyle
5. Matt Brown
6. Erin Chmielewski
7. Delia Diaz
8. Mary Dooley
9. Sierra Downey
10. Jessie Feller
11. Ali Gaylord
12. Yensi Jacobo

13. Roger Leventhal
14. Iliana Inzunza Madrigal
15. Roberto Rosila Mares
16. Kris Rebillot
17. Bill Rinehart
18. John Shribbs
19. Josual Riley Simmons
20. Janice Cader Thompson
21. Bill Wolpert

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

City of Petaluma:

Peggy Flynn - *City Manager*

Heather Hines - *Community Development Director*

Christina Paul - *Project Manager*

Eric Danly - *City Attorney*

Eric Roberts - *City of Petaluma*

Consultant Team:

Matt Rami - *Rami and Associates*

Ron Whitmore - *Rami and Associates*

Kelsey Hubbard - *Rami and Associates*

Dave Javid - *Plan to Place*

Paul Kronser - *Plan to Place*

SUMMARY

The focus of the first GPAC meeting was primarily on orientation and coordination. Other objectives included: introduce the members of the GPAC to each other and the consultant team; discuss roles and responsibilities of the GPAC; provide an overview of the Brown Act; provide background information on the General Plan and information on the General Plan update and schedule. The following notes summarize the key agenda items and the related discussion.

Welcome and Introductions

Peggy Flynn, City Manager for the City of Petaluma, opened the meeting with a welcome to the GPAC members and consultants. After project team introductions, the GPAC participated in an exercise to introduce themselves to each other, including how long they have lived in Petaluma, favorite place in Petaluma and why they applied to be on the GPAC. Many of the members

expressed that the reason they applied to be on the GPAC included giving back to the City of Petaluma, have a better future for the City to pass down to generations to come, and make sure Petaluma has a sustainable, resilient and equitable future.

GPAC Rules and Responsibilities

Matt Rami from Rami & Associates led the GPAC through an overview of the GPAC's purpose, roles, responsibilities, level of commitment, meeting formats and the ground rules as established by the City. See the [meeting slide deck](#). Following Matt's presentation, GPAC members shared their thoughts and suggestions about the ground rules or questions and comments about the role and responsibilities of the GPAC.

The following is a summary of the comments and questions from the GPAC related to the roles and responsibilities of the committee (responses from the project team are noted in *italics*):

- How often will the project team be interacting with the City Council in terms of updating them along the way?
 - *We will be going to Council at key times during the process. City staff will also provide updates - attempting to establish a constant feedback loop.*
- Will materials be translated in Spanish and will there be live interpretation available at the GPAC meetings?
 - *We had planned to have translation of materials and live interpretation at public workshops, as well as meetings facilitated entirely in Spanish. We will also look into having translation and interpretation services available at the GPAC meetings. (The City has subsequently followed up to confirm that GPAC meeting materials will be translated and live interpretation will be available during meetings.)*
- Is there time for a short public comment period at the beginning of the meetings? Since the meeting is so long it would be nice to hear from people upfront?
 - *We did not plan on that, but we can consider it.*
- Can closed captioning be turned on for meetings?
 - *Great point. It is now active and will be for future meetings.*

General Plan Update Process and Background

Matt Rami continued with a summary of the General Plan process and background. Topics included the purpose of a General Plan, why an update is needed and key outcomes. Next, potential future meeting topics were introduced, along with the project roadmap that illustrated phases of the project and related planned engagement activities and deliverables. See the meeting slide deck. Following the presentation, GPAC members were asked to

participate in a discussion to clarify any questions about the General Plan Update process and schedule.

The following is an overview of the comments received from the GPAC during the General Plan Update Process and Background discussion (responses from the project team are noted in *italics*):

- Clarification when talking about wish lists - Will cost elements be incorporated in a wish list?
 - *At a high level yes, but not for every single one. R+A will work with staff and team to identify general cost of suggestions and potential funding sources.*
- Who are considered stakeholders?
 - *Anyone with any interest in the City.*
- Will the GPAC be able to review the surveys before they are sent out?
 - *We are not planning on asking the GPAC to approve the material, but we will brainstorm with the group what should be on the survey.*
- The power dynamics need to be clear to understand those who make the final decisions and how they are making them. What is the point of the GPAC if there is no voting?
 - *The main goal is to provide the City Council with information in a collaborative way, which moves away from power dynamics or behind the scene politics. In some instances, the public may want something different than what the GPAC recommends, so we'll need to take it all to Council and let them decide. In general, the ultimate decision maker is the City Council.*
- Information management: Do you have a structure or recommendations on how GPAC should organize their digital files?
 - *The project website will house all files digitally.*
- Why isn't the Chat feature enabled and replaced by Q&A?
 - *The City typically does not offer the Chat feature in meetings, and we are not sure if we will continue with Q&A, but we can revisit that.*
- Would like to reconsider not taking votes. We should be recording our decisions even if they are just advising rather than deciding.
 - *The City and Consultant Team will revisit this as a group. (Shortly after the meeting, the City followed-up by email to explain the GPAC's voting options.)*
- Request for the GPAC presentations to be emailed to the groups 24-hour prior to meeting.
 - *The team will do their best to send out agendas, content before the meeting but in some instances, we will not be able to due to content/structure changing at the last minute.*

Public Comment

The following is a summary of the comments received from the meeting participants during the public comment section. Text in *italics* represents the project team's response to questions.

- Applaud the group. Consider using the tools we can, to enhance this experience, such as the Chat feature for participants to communicate with each other and the group.
- Each person should write a portion of the general plan.
- Happy that GPAC is representing their interest for the future. How strongly is the Climate Action Plan (CAP) going to be integrated into the GP?
 - *Yes, it will be incorporated throughout, and it will also have details not in the GP. It is happening at the same time because GP elements connect with the CAP.*
- Chat should be open and transparent.

Brown Act and Ethics Overview

After both the GPAC discussion and Public Comment, Eric Danly, the City of Petaluma's Attorney, provided a brief presentation on the Brown Act and Ethics Overview. The key points for the GPAC include:

- Who is subject to the Brown Act which include Legislative Bodies such as:
 - Governing bodies (City Council)
 - Boards and commissions, like the GPAC
 - Standing committees
- 'Meetings' subject to the Brown Act include
 - Collectively meeting at the same place to hear, discuss or take action regarding subject matter
 - Publicly noticed meetings (Regular, Special, Special, Adjourned & Emergency)
 - Serial Meetings (i.e., one member discussing the same matter with more than one other GPAC member in succession)
- 'Meetings' do not include:
 - When individuals meet one on one, attend conferences, community meetings, or social events
 - Staff Briefings
- It is recommended that GPAC members only attend as observers to standing committee meetings (Planning Commission/City Council).
- Official meetings have specific agenda, minutes, and public comment requirements.

Following his presentation, GPAC members were given the opportunity to ask questions or provide comments, which are summarized below. Text in *italics* represents the project team's response to questions.

- Can GPAC attend other sitting meetings as observers?

- *Yes, subordinate body meetings or jointly noticed meetings with the GPAC/CC.*
- Challenges with a body this size - query staff regarding upcoming meetings that members of the GPAC members will want to attend.
 - *Problem arises when 11 or more attend a meeting.*
- Question about the impact of the 2019 Court ruling that Public Officials cannot block critics on Facebook and other social media platforms.
 - *Members of a legislative body are subject to the Brown Act.*
 - *On social media platforms, members of bodies subject to the Brown Act can answer questions but not each other's posts. One way communication is OK, but they have to be careful of serial communications among members.*
 - *Even 'Likes' & emojis count as Brown Act violations.*
- Is it true that you can't have multiple GPAC members edit a document - can't access shared drives?
 - *Documents that are jointly edited can be considered 'meetings', so yes that is true.*

Public Comment

Following the discussion by GPAC, members of the public provided comments. An overview of the comments received during the public comment period are below:

- This General Plan update is important; your work as GPAC members will shape future policy/lawsuits.
- I'm thankful for translation services for ASL and for future events. If needed, contact universities for additional assistance.
- There should be clear rules for what happens in the GPAC and the outcomes of the committee.
- If straw-polls are allowed, it can be hard to get a consensus of the group when bringing them to the City.
- Please add a chat function.
- Currently in the shorter-term planning process, the Block Grant action plan is in the works and should have been advertised to this group. If you have not heard of the Block Grant action plan, then the City is not doing an adequate job advertising. These block grants are lacking recipients from minority communities and the public needs to make comments to help include these communities.

Adjourn

Dave Javid provided information about next steps for the GPAC and Consultant team in the General Plan Update process including:

- The next GPAC Meeting (on May 20)

- Planning 101 Session
- Engagement Working Group meeting

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9 pm.

For the meeting agenda, presentation, meeting recording and other information, please visit: www.planpetaluma.org

Follow Up

Following the GPAC Meeting, several GPAC members and members of the public communicated with the City via email. Those emails were included in the City Council meeting agenda packet on April 5th, 2021, and at the City Council meeting there were additional public comments about the GPAC Meeting related to the following topics:

- 1) GPAC members should have the ability to vote in the meetings;
- 2) Simultaneous interpretation in Spanish should be provided; and
- 3) There was a perceived discrimination event during the meeting.

The City provided GPAC members with a clarifying email on the topic of voting, which will be discussed further at the GPAC meeting on May 20th, 2021. The City also committed to providing simultaneous interpretation in Spanish at GPAC meetings. During the April 5, 2021 City Council meeting, the City Manager stressed that the City and the planning team are committed to equity, access and inclusion and apologized for any missteps that were taken during the March 18th GPAC meeting. As noted above, GPAC thoughts and concerns will be further discussed in the May 20 GPAC meeting.