

GPAC Meeting Summary

September 15, 2022, 6:30-9:00 PM

Introduction

Meeting Access

All GPAC Meetings are public and are accessible via Zoom and television (PCA channel). Meeting information, meeting recordings, and materials are posted on the City's Meetings site:

www.cityofpetaluma.org/meetings/.

Agenda

- Welcome
- General Public Comment
- Project and Staff Updates
- Public Draft Housing Element Presentation
- Public Draft Housing Element Public Comment and Discussion
- GPAC Working Group Updates
- Final Public Comment
- Final GPAC Comments

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:

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|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Phil Boyle | 6. Kris Rebillot |
| 2. Delia Diaz | 7. Bill Rinehart |
| 3. Sierra Downey | 8. John Shribbs |
| 4. Yensi Jacobo | 9. Joshua Riley Simmons |
| 5. Roger Leventhal | 10. Janice Cader Thompson |

The following GPAC members were absent:

1. Dave Alden
2. Stephanie Blake
3. Erin Chmielewski
4. Mary Dooley
5. Jessie Feller
6. Ali Gaylord
7. Iliana Inzunza Madrigal
8. Roberto Rosila Mares
9. Bill Wolpert

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

City of Petaluma:

Heather Hines – *City of Petaluma*

Christina Paul – Principal Planner, *City of Petaluma*

David Garcia – Associate Planner, *City of Petaluma*

Eric Roberts – Planner, *City of Petaluma*

Maria Galvez and Monica Aparicio – *Spanish Interpreters*

Consultant Team:

Ron Whitmore - *Raimi + Associates*

Michelle Hernandez - *Raimi + Associates*

Dave Javid - *Plan to Place*

Veronica Tam - *Veronica Tam & Associates*

Meeting Summary

The focus of the 16th GPAC meeting was to discuss and receive feedback on the Public Draft Housing Element and receive topic-specific recommendations from the GPAC Working Groups, in addition to hearing staff and project updates.

Opening

The Spanish interpreter, Maria Galvez, explained how to use the simultaneous interpretation tool on Zoom for attendees who wanted to listen in Spanish. Christina Paul followed by taking roll call attendance for GPAC members.

General Public Comment

No public comments were presented at the beginning of the meeting.

Project and Staff Updates

Christina Paul presented project and staff updates. The Fairgrounds Visioning Process is underway, and on September 10th, there was an in-person, open-house style community workshop at the Petaluma Regional Library. Approximately 200 community members attended this workshop and shared their ideas for the future of the Fairgrounds. On October 24th, City Council will host a workshop to consider the feedback heard at the September workshop and provide direction on the next steps.

City staff are reviewing greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction action policies and aim to release a public draft in the fall. These policies will continue to align with the General Plan, VMT reductions, adaptation planning, and the General Plan EIR.

City and consultant staff have recently conducted topic-focused technical meetings to confirm the baseline understanding of topics and broad goals based on Petaluma’s existing conditions and the Vision, Pillars, and Guiding Principles. The main focus of the meetings was to brainstorm strategy ideas - including potential policies, actions, and the GPAC working group recommendations - that will be furthered in the alternatives and policy development phases of the General Plan Update process.

Over the next few months, staff will be developing draft General Plan Policy Frameworks and Alternatives, which will be discussed in the upcoming GPAC meetings. The SDAT report will be released on November 8th. At the beginning of 2023, staff will host topic- and area-focused community meetings.

Please see the presentation slides and the meeting recording for more information about the project and staff updates.

GPAC Clarifying Questions

The GPAC did not ask any clarifying questions.

Housing Element Update

The Housing Element is a required element of the General Plan that must be updated every 8 years and certified by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The statutory deadline for this 6th Cycle Housing Element is January 31, 2023. A Housing Element contains two basic components: it must identify adequate housing sites to accommodate the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) and include goals, policies, and programs to advance equitable housing production. The Housing Element was developed through the analysis done in each of the following: the Evaluation of 5th Cycle Housing Programs, Needs Assessment, Constraints Analysis, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) assessment, and the Sites Inventory.

The Housing Element (HE) is also being shaped by community input heard at General Plan engagement events and the housing-focused workshops and meetings of the Planning Commission, City Council, and GPAC, in addition to the strategies shared by the GPAC Housing Working Group. Some of the community housing priorities heard at these events include eliminating homelessness, providing more affordable housing, preserving community character and sense of place, and advancing climate goals and equity.

The State and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) have determined Petaluma's Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) to be 1,910 units. The Sites Inventory must demonstrate that the City has adequate housing sites capacity to accommodate the city's total RHNA units. Identification of sites in this inventory does not automatically authorize construction, nor does it require the City to build or finance the housing. The current draft of the inventory includes a detailed data table of characteristics of all the sites and the buildout by income category. This draft removed six sites included in the May draft that were not aligned with the community vehicle-miles-traveled (VMT) goals and added two sites to support infill development and leverage City land. The inventory shows that no rezoning is required to meet the RHNA and that all site inventory capacity is currently allowed under existing zoning regulations. The General Plan Update will look more comprehensively at land use designations throughout the city, and the Housing Element will be amended as necessary, so it remains consistent with the General Plan.

The Programs section of the Housing Element divides programs and policies through six topics: Housing Availability and Choices, Development Constraints, Affordable Housing, Housing Preservation, Special Needs Housing, and Fair Housing. A new program focused on the conversion of shopping center parking lots was added to the previous draft.

The Public Review Draft of the Housing Element is currently available for feedback. The PDF file of the Housing Element and survey can be found on the project website: planpetaluma.org. The Housing Element will then be updated by staff and reviewed by HCD this fall. In early 2023, the Housing Element will be reviewed by the City's Planning Commission and adopted by the City Council before being certified by HCD.

Please see the Public Review Draft Housing Element and Appendices for more information.

GPAC Clarifying Questions

- What exactly are the buffers in the sites inventory? In the adjustments we have made to the table, why is there a surplus deficit number, and what is it?
 - A: The City is required to have the capacity to accommodate all of its assigned RHNA. It is common for the market to overproduce market-rate homes, so the inventory needs to have a buffer of lower-income units in case this trend continues and so that the City does not have a loss of housing capacity. This could happen with a site that originally was going to have affordable housing and does not end up with affordable units once it has finished construction.
- Wouldn't there need to be a zoning change if the shopping centers redevelop into residential?
 - A: The shopping centers currently allow housing to be built as a conditional use under current zoning.
- It seems that with just the pipeline projects, we could meet all of our RHNA numbers. We shouldn't dive into opportunity sites if we have included all the pipeline projects in the inventory. Is there a reason why not all pipeline projects are on here?
 - A: We have listed all the viable pipeline projects and have included ADUs, but all of this anticipated housing production does not meet the RHNA number of affordable units. This is why we have also identified opportunity sites.
- Can we convert in-lieu fees into required affordable units and require them through policy?
 - A: The in-lieu fees collected are not sufficient to meet the city's affordable housing needs, which is why the Housing Element includes a program to revise the in-lieu fee structure.

Public Comment on Housing Element

- A member of the public would like to better understand what General Plan and City Council mechanisms there are for enforcing the creation of affordable units. Various cities have good intentions, and various housing projects include affordable units on paper, but once the projects are completed, there are not enough actual units. Understandably, the City does not need to be bloated by too many market-rate projects to just barely reach the minimum affordable units, so would like to know how the City can accomplish these affordability goals.

GPAC Discussion Comments

GPAC members provided comments focused on the Sites Inventory, the Housing Element Programs, and the Housing Element overall. Please see the Appendix for a table of the notes.

Working Group Updates

The Equity Working Group let the group know that they are open to having new members join the equity discussion.

The Sense of Place Working Group has an edit to the previous meeting's notes and will share their presentation with staff.

The Open Space Working Group asked what the next steps are and if there will be another upcoming review process.

- Answer: The consultant team is drafting policy frameworks using the working group recommendations. For the time being, staff does not need any new working group outputs. As the GPU process continues with the next phase, working groups may be asked to contribute again.

Final Public Comment

- A member of the public agreed with John Shribbs' comment about a talk he attended that focused on urban forestry and wildlife and how she hoped more people in town could have listened to it. It is encouraging to hear that the town should encourage wildlife to exist alongside our communities.

Final GPAC Thoughts

There were no final GPAC comments.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:30 PM.

Appendix

GPAC Housing Element Discussion

Staff responses to comments are bulleted below the comment.

General Comments

- Wondering why the area along Petaluma Blvd North is not considered for annexation? Along the west side of that Blvd is county land that is currently rural but a part of the sphere of influence. Could be useful especially since it is on higher ground (when grappling with flooding concerns).
- If we create 15-minute communities in the eastside of town, we don't need to worry about VMT if we follow through in adding in more to these neighborhoods. If the GP and HE are different from each other and from what the SDAT says and the community thinks housing should go, they are not in sync and shows that this plan is not a reality. If developers see that, it can be problematic.
 - We can't identify the sites that would require a GP amendment and make the change for the HE, but we can update the HE to make it consistent with the GP (we are required by law to make them in sync). The HE and the GP are different exercises: HE shows where housing development could happen/capacity to happen, but GP shows where we want housing development to happen.

Programs

- The program called "Preservation of existing housing" should address the concern that potential affordable housing sites have been bought and converted into vacation housing. Bold action needs to be taken to incentivize people to convert them into residential units instead of Airbnbs and have policies limiting short-term rentals.

Sites

- There is concern about potential sites placed downtown since that is downriver and likely to be flooded in extreme flood events. Housing should be placed farther up and away from flood zones. Anything below elevation 16-20 feet is vulnerable; items like this were identified by the Climate Action Working Group.
- For the opportunity sites that were removed since the previous draft, the rationale was the VMT concerns, but maybe there was more to that. We should make sure we aren't privileging this metric and that it isn't limiting housing development in better locations, like being outside of flood areas that have a slightly higher VMT.
 - Many metrics are looked at for the HE sites, though the City Council did directly request some sites be removed.
- What is the protocol for removing and adding sites, and who gets the final say on sites?
 - The City Council. When staff presents the updated Housing Element in October, they will present the analysis and the tradeoffs of taking certain sites off the inventory, and then the City Council will provide direction.
- There is a huge difference between demonstrating we meet RHNA and where we are allowing housing to be built. Are we going to force every developer to develop these areas first before any other housing is built in the city? It seems like the plan is just to meet RHNA requirements and

allow people to construct in other places. The shopping centers conversion idea is worrisome because we already have one lawsuit from one of them. Do we have cooperation with the rest of the shopping centers? We need an agreement before putting this out and identifying these sites, such as a letter of support from them. Also, we have seen letters of concern about the sites in the upper river area - if we do build there, will we have higher requirements for sediment building, and requirements for water catchment to ensure there isn't pollution coming from one of the sites? Also, there is a parcel near Corona station that got a grant to develop, and it isn't included in this draft.

- No, developers are not required to only develop on the sites identified in this sites inventory. The HE identifies where it is likely housing will be developed over the course of the next 8 years. There are other sites in town that are zoned for housing but not identified in the inventory, but nothing requires the inventory sites to be constructed before other housing projects. Flood control and the expansion of the UGB are topics that will be further discussed in the GPU process, not within the HE. We don't need to expand the UGB to meet RHNA so that is not proposed in the HE.
- The idea of recycled sites and ministerial approval of projects is worrisome and agree that there shouldn't be a huge sites buffer number. Sites in potential flood areas (like Sites O-8, 9, 10) should be taken off, and some of the sites that were removed could be added back in to replace sites 8, 9, and 10, preferably infill sites.
- Site O-15 is next to Corona Road, where there aren't many other uses there now, so confused as to why it's listed now?
 - The site has significant capacity for future residential development (it is 5 acres).
- The Thompson property next to the Wilmington property was seen as contiguous initially, and when Council asked for the Wilmington site to be removed, they should have asked for both to be removed.
 - In the previous HE, the Wilmington parcel is north of O-9 and not included here. The Planning Commission expressed interest in removing sites 8, 9, and 10, and staff will look into doing that and see if the inventory still meets RHNA.
- Why isn't the Scott Property on here?
 - It is not currently zoned for residential and would require a GP amendment to be able to include in this inventory.
- Site 15 on Corona - was that an opportunity site in previous drafts or a recent addition? Curious if the adjacent site was ever considered as it could be looked at as an opportunity site
 - It was in the previous inventory draft.