

# GPAC Meeting #12 Summary

April 19, 2022



# Introduction

On April 19, 2022, the City of Ventura General Plan Update (GPU) team convened the 12th meeting of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC). The primary meeting objectives were to:

- Meet and get to know other GPAC members in person
- Review preliminary draft land use designations
- Work together informally and in small groups over maps to develop land use concepts and alternatives based on existing plans, concepts developed by the General Plan team, and new ideas from GPAC members

The meeting was open to the public and held **in person for the first time** at City Hall in the Community Meeting Room (Room 202). The main sessions were recorded and uploaded to YouTube following the meeting. This document summarizes the key content presented and themes discussed.

## Meeting Participants

The following participants attended the meeting:

### General Plan Team

- Matt Raimi, Raimi + Associates
- Lilly Nie, Raimi + Associates
- Susan Harden, Circlepoint
- Peter Gilli, City of Ventura
- Neda Zayer, City of Ventura

### GPAC Members

- Lorrie Brown, GPAC Chair
- Doug Halter, GPAC Vice Chair
- Philip Bohan, GPAC
- Nicholas Bonge, GPAC
- Stephanie Caldwell, GPAC
- Kyler Carson, GPAC
- David Comden, GPAC
- Joshua Damigo, GPAC
- Peter Freeman, GPAC
- Kacie Goff, GPAC
- Kelsey Jonker, GPAC
- Stephanie Karba, GPAC
- Louise Lampara, GPAC
- Scott McCarty, GPAC
- Sabrena Rodriguez, GPAC
- Alejandra Tellez, GPAC
- Dana Worsnop, GPAC

*Absent: Bill McReynolds, Daniel Reardon, Erin Kraus, Nicholas Deitch*

# Meeting Format

Matt Raimi welcomed GPAC members and the public to the 12th GPAC meeting. He began the meeting with a brief overview of the meeting agenda and staff updates. Notable updates included results from the Vision Survey and a summary of the City Council meeting that occurred in late March, where City Council unanimously approved the direction of the draft Vision. Matt then gave a [brief presentation](#) covering draft land use designations and land use concepts for some of the “Areas of Discussion” in the city.

Following this overview, GPAC members were split into two groups to discuss areas of the city where additional feedback and direction was needed. Each group focused on a different subset of areas in the city and documented their ideas on maps using stickers, post-its, and markers. The GPAC groups spent approximately half of the discussion time on one subset of areas and then switched tables to discuss the second subset of areas. An additional two tables were set up outside the Community Room in the hallway, where Susan Harden facilitated the same discussion activity with members of the public.

In the report out session that followed, Matt, Simran, and Susan each gave a summary of what was discussed at the two GPAC groups and at the public tables, respectively. The meeting concluded with public comment.

## GPAC Small Groups and Discussion

GPAC members were asked to provide feedback on the preliminary land use concepts presented at the meeting and to brainstorm a range of alternatives for each “Areas of Discussion” that could help the City achieve its overall vision. Below is a combined summary of what GPAC members and members of the public discussed. Images of the maps are attached.

### Group 1 Discussion (with Matt)

#### Johnson Corridor/Metrolink Station

- As the southern gateway to the city, this area needs to have some sort of statement/landmark
- Keep Metrolink station on the Johnson Corridor (if pursued, need to make area a destination and phase out industrial uses)
- Relocate (or add a new) Metrolink station to Downtown at the Ash St location proposed by the consultant team or combine with where the Amtrak station is now. If the station is relocated to Downtown, the plans should consider parking needs for riders, such as families doing day trips to Santa Barbara.
- The area is limited by on/off ramps; the plan should include a reconfiguration of the ramps to US 101.
- Transform to a transit village with office, light manufacturing, and residential that can increase Metrolink ridership and create a new neighborhood for Ventura. Multiple options of land use patterns were discussed by the groups including making both sides of Johnson residential, only allowing 1 side of Johnson to be residential, creating a flexible zoning for all employment uses, and redesignating some areas for office/R&D.
- Potentially an area where city can intensify both residential and employment uses

- Allow existing employment uses to remain rather than trying to remove them.
- Potential location for corporate headquarters
- Potential depot station for transporting agricultural goods

## Westside

- Explore making Ventura and Olive one-way streets to create a transit loop
- Encourage noxious industries to move by changing zoning to a higher density district so that land values increase, and owners are incentivized to sell and relocate to other areas in Ventura.
- Consider moving some noxious industrial businesses up to the North Avenue oilfields or to other areas in the City.
- Need to improve egress along Ventura Ave during natural disasters.
- Build off existing Westside Community Plan: prevent area from becoming a bedroom community (not an area for more residential); prioritize keeping jobs and support the large makers community on the Westside
- Explore creating a trade school at the Avenue School site

## Victoria Corridor

- Caltrans' proposal for an interchange at US-101 and SR-126 could alleviate traffic on Victoria but would require losing park space
- Another alternative to explore is continuing SR-126 to the harbor

## Group 2 Discussion (with Simran)

### Downtown

- Keep the Downtown Specific Plan as is (maintain its height limits) and keep existing street widths in mind
- Need more studies to find exact location if relocating the Metrolink station to Downtown
- Explore keeping the Metrolink station at Johnson but creating a new station that comes into Downtown
- Explore mixed use or employment intensification around the Patagonia area (west side of Downtown)
- Re-envision the waterfront
- Consider converting golf courses to parks
- Encourage adaptive reuse for historic buildings
- Relocate the City maintenance yard

### Midtown Corridors

- Thompson has potential with deeper lots to explore slightly higher densities than what's allowed today
- Keep Main as is or consider even downzoning Main to just allow retail and neighborhood-serving uses

## Pacific View Mall/Five Points

- Be flexible about uses in the area. Could include jobs, makers spaces, experiential retail, entertainment, and higher density housing (4-6 stories)
- Santa Ana Row in San Jose is a good case study to explore

## SOAR Areas Within City Limits

- Explore connecting the two SOAR areas at Telephone and Telegraph along the barranca under the freeway; use that connection to leverage additional improvements in both areas
- Explore developing more parks and grocery stores in these areas
- Address pesticide issues
- Continue to study rezoning the SOAR areas for development, which requires a vote of the people

## Public Group Discussion (with Susan)

### Westside

- Designate neighborhood centers along Ventura Ave
- Annex North Avenue for more housing
- Encourage more non-noxious industrial and office/R&D uses
- Add trees and common recreation areas along Ventura Ave

### Downtown

- Continue view protection in downtown, with maximum 3-4 story buildings (no 6-story structures)
- Create a Downtown/Westside transit hub that connects the westside to the eastside
- Don't relocate Metrolink to Downtown; it only goes South and Montalvo is more convenient for east Ventura residents

### Midtown Corridors

- Do not allow 5/6-story buildings on Thompson; would block views and divide the old neighborhoods
- I don't think taller buildings will block any views
- Add more park space in Midtown

## SOAR Areas Within City Limits

- Maintain SOAR areas
- Develop SOAR areas in city – we need to grow somewhere
- With development anywhere, we need to plan for more parks/plazas

## Pacific View Mall/Five Points

- Keep as much flexibility as possible

- Allow multifamily (up to 4 stories), office/R&D, and general commercial uses
- If other uses are developed on existing parking lots, add a parking structure

## Harbor

- Explore developing hotels along the Harbor
- Explore adding a public park

# Public Comments

Several individuals spoke during public comment at the close of the meeting. Comments are summarized below:

- Safety is a critical element for the Westside, as reinforced by the poor evacuation process during the Thomas Fire. A lot of businesses in our industrial areas are trades, and there is an opportunity to use some of these existing areas for incubators and other complementary uses. Relying on existing air pollution management regulations and encouraging responsible land use practices will help keep jobs in our community while uplifting the work-life balance that allows community members to walk up the street to work. We don't want to completely remove them but do want to limit noxious uses.
- If the Metrolink station was relocated to Downtown, it is unlikely that people from East Ventura would want to drive to Downtown just to take the Metrolink, since the line only goes south. Designate at least part of the Pacific View Mall for civic use, since it is a community gathering space. The proposed Mixed Use 4 designation (up to 6 stories tall) may get a lot of push back from locals; when preparing the Downtown Specific Plan and Midtown Corridor Code, four stories seemed to be the maximum that people would accept.
- As our city becomes denser, parks, open space, and trees become increasingly important for the physical and mental wellbeing of the community. The General Plan needs to address the preservation and enhancement of the city's street canopy.
- An overlay of fire hazard zones can help determine where it makes sense to densify. Housing near transit needs to be compatible with ridership (i.e., housing near the Metrolink station should be geared towards people who use the Metrolink to commute to Los Angeles)
- The city needs more parks and public realm spaces, particularly along sections of Victoria and Johnson. The mall is a perfect spot for a community center since it is next to the hospital district and several schools; it could be designated as institutional.

GPAC Notes (Matt's Group)





could be MU or just employment  
North Wave 5-story or

Adaptive reuse for historic bldg.  
intensity as

Keep DTSP as is

Keep street widths in mind

relocate maint. yard

Keep as is

Keep as Neighborhood Center

Keep flexibility retail hsg experiential retail! (Santitas Row)

More Metrolink Station here - parking - closer to DT

Change already happening by MTRC residents

More infill Increase density?

Higher density housing (4-6 stories) w/ retail, services, live/work

reenvision water front

Consider converting golf courses to parks

flooding

Consider

Feet 800





These are the areas I think we need to focus on

Don't need to have a lot of parking in these areas

De Arza Tech school could be complementary to a state of art trade school

(Corridor) along the corridor with the addition of more common street areas

Use on transportation in downtown - 3-4 story buildings are the way to go

Don't want to have transit into public transit loop connects west to east

Break up the "neighborhood" type and use designations like 3 story, 4 story, etc.

↑ 100 Metropolitan Ave. It's only one block, but it's a major corridor. It needs to be more prominent for transit.

100 Sixty Stories on Thompson will block view and shade the old neighborhoods

How do we add more park space in Midtown?

From old area and Thompson area, we can have a lot of park space. It's a great idea to have a park in that area.

These MPD districts are based on the same (7) Add Park at Lemon Plant

Re 120 to 101 structure with more SS and public space. Make it a more vibrant area.

Still like high rise. Use for more housing. Use for more housing. Use for more housing.

What is the best way to handle the area? It's a great idea to have a park in that area.

Develop this for better transit. Fine solution.