

Attachment 1

Draft Minutes of September 16, 2025

**CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH
GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA
CIVIC CENTER COMMUNITY ROOM – 100 CIVIC CENTER DRIVE**

**September 16, 2025
REGULAR MEETING – 4:30 P.M.**

I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Co-Chair Evans called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

II. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Co-Chair Evans conducted roll call:

Present: Virginia Anders-Ellmore, Curtis Black, Susan DeSantis, Jeremy Evans, Rita Goldberg, Arlene Greer, David Guder, Ruth Kobayashi, Scott Laidlaw, Katie Love, Anthony Maniscalchi, Thomas Meng, Jim Mosher, Amber Snider, Debbie Stevens, Christy Walker, and Paul Watkins

Staff: Planning Manager Ben Zdeba

Excused Absent: Dennis Baker, James Carlson, Annie Clougherty, Chuck Ebner, Lynn Hackman, and Laird Hayes

Absent: Nicholas Acevedo

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

(This item includes written correspondence received that is not related to items on the agenda.)

Co-Chair Arlene Greer reported that Art in the Park will be held on Saturday, hosted by the Newport Beach Arts Foundation, to support the City Arts Commission's programming. She encouraged all to attend.

In response to GPAC Member Walker's inquiry, Planning Manager Ben Zdeba confirmed that he can pass along to City staff her thoughts on ways to potentially repurpose the tree at the Balboa Branch Library and Fire Station in the event it is removed.

GPAC Member Paul Watkins recommended that GPAC Member Christy Walker discuss the matter with Library Services Director Melissa Hartson for potential inclusion on the Board of Library Trustees' October meeting Agenda.

IV. CURRENT BUSINESS

a. Meeting Minutes of August 6, 2025 (Attachment 1 – Draft Minutes)

Recommended Action:

Review and approve the minutes of August 6, 2025.

Motion made by Co-Chair Greer and seconded by GPAC Member Virginia Anders-Ellmore to approve the meeting minutes of August 6, 2025, with GPAC Member Jim Mosher's edits.

The motion carried unanimously with Co-Chair Jeremy Evans abstaining.

b. Draft Land Use Element (Attachments 2 – Draft Element)

The GPAC Land Use Subcommittee met on July 24, 2025, August 11, 2025, and August 27, 2025, to review the draft Element. GPAC Member Susan DeSantis was identified as continuing to serve as the Subcommittee Chair and will provide an overview of the Subcommittee's discussions alongside the Subcommittee members. At the conclusion of the Subcommittee's meetings, those in attendance agreed to allow City staff to make revisions and to share the Element with the full GPAC for consideration and continued discussion. Attachment 2 is the draft Element, as reviewed and revised by the Subcommittee.

Recommended Actions:

- (1) Receive an overview from the GPAC Land Use Subcommittee;
- (2) Provide any feedback on the Subcommittee's efforts; and
- (3) Conduct a vote to support moving the draft Element forward for the GPUSC's review, and for public review, thereafter, including any related City Boards, Commissions, and Committees.

Planning Manager Zdeba noted that the Land Use Subcommittee met three times. He reported that the Land Use Element is the longest in the General Plan, but added that much of it is adapted from the current General Plan.

Consultant Janet Rodriguez (Dudek) reported that the current Land Use Element is 70 pages long, whereas the Draft Element is only 35 pages with a reduction in redundant policies and a more streamlined framework for policy organization.

Consultant Rodriguez noted that new policies were drafted, and existing policies were revised in response to community input, citing as examples Policy No. LU-11.4 prioritizing local workforce housing, Policy No. LU-12.4's call for enhanced shared parking facilities, and Policy No. LU-17.4's support for community-serving commercial uses of land.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that the five in-depth Subcommittee discussions focused on development capacity limits, defining neighborhood and land use characteristics, accommodating planned housing and opportunities, guiding future change, and interagency coordination. He cited examples of draft policies touching on each of the five focus areas, along with defining communities where housing accommodations could be needed during the current Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) cycle.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that staff is looking for the GPAC to support moving this Element forward to the General Plan Update Steering Committee (GPUSC) for concurrence with a goal of presenting the Draft Element to the Planning Commission at its October 9th meeting.

GPAC Member DeSantis, Chair of the Land Use Subcommittee, noted that they did not start off with a blank slate because they had the 2006 General Plan's Land Use Element to work off, background reports prepared by Dudek, the vision statement, and the Housing Element, which was updated recently for the current RHNA cycle. She reported that the Subcommittee found the backbone for its work in the Vision Statement, citing a call to preserve natural resources for future generations as an example of the vision statement's influence. She noted how the Land Use Element must account for anticipated growth prescribed in the Housing Element in addition to anticipated demographic shifts. She reported that the Subcommittee decided not to have excessive detail in the Land Use Element due to the many potential variables as the Housing Element is implemented.

GPAC Member Rita Goldberg stated that the younger future residents the City would like to attract value quality of life through mixed-use developments and pedestrian connectivity, as assessed by a Walk Score walkability analysis.

GPAC Member Watkins requested that the Land Use Element have a placeholder policy stating that the City should consider annexing the Santa Ana Country Club if the opportunity presents itself over the life of the General Plan. He stated that public beach and harbor access is important, noting how much different beach usage is in areas served by the boardwalk as opposed to the less-active areas away from the boardwalk. He recommended maintaining different beach experiences for those with different interests.

In response to GPAC Member Virginia Anders-Ellmore's inquiries, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed that Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) production counts towards the City's RHNA goals. He explained how the City and Orange County have some administrative responsibilities in the Newport Coast area, adding that the reference in the Draft Element is to encourage the City to work with the County to take over permitting authority in the coastal areas. He clarified that Randall Preserve is in the City's sphere of influence, and policies in the current General Plan discussing its potential future annexation are unchanged in the current draft. He stated that there is a development intensity associated with Randall Preserve, but the City Council has yet to provide guidance on removing the figure, noting that this is separate from the Land Use Subcommittee's work.

In response to a comment from GPAC Member Walker, Planning Manager Zdeba further clarified that Land Use Table 2 includes a development limit for Randall Preserve, and it is yet to be determined whether it should be incorporated into the Land Use Element prior to taking the General Plan to the City Council or if it is a separate recommendation.

GPUSC Chair Nancy Gardner reported that a previous City Council insisted on leaving the Randall Preserve development limit included in Table 2, denying a request to remove it despite local and State agencies prohibiting development on the land.

GPAC Member Ruth Kobayashi expressed her opposition to extending the boardwalk. She agreed with GPAC Member Watkins both in questioning why the City would want to discourage the creation of gated communities and in his endorsement of removing the term "equitable" from many policies.

GPUSC Chair Gardner noted that the California Coastal Commission (CCC) does not permit gated communities in a coastal zone.

Planning Manager Zdeba added that the City's Local Coastal Program (LCP) prohibits new gates in the coastal zone, which is likely why the restriction is included in the General Plan.

GPAC Member Kobayashi stated that, aside from the elderly community, the State's environmental justice mandates are less applicable to the City due to its demographics. She recommended replacing the phrase "environmental justice" with softer phrasing such as "healthy environment for all."

GPAC Member Watkins stated that his understanding is that the phrase "environmental justice" and its conceptual inclusion in the General Plan are mandated by the State. He theorized the phrase "environmental justice" could be used on first reference and then softened on secondary references while still appeasing State officials.

GPUSC Chair Gardner expressed concerns about GPAC Member Watkins' call to edit Policy No. LU-2.8 to include the phrase "unreasonably intrusive" because the intent of the policy is to prohibit oil facilities regardless of their appearance.

GPAC Member Scott Laidlaw commended the mixed-use verbiage in the Cannery Village and Balboa Village sections. He added that the same phrasing should be included in the Corona del Mar (CdM) section. He lamented that housing above commercial properties is not currently allowed in CdM and proposed encouraging the concept as a future option to increase the viability of CdM's commercial center. He responded to GPAC Member Kobayashi's comments about gated communities by adding that if the City owns the road, then the gate is a significant impediment.

GPAC Member Kobayashi reported that many CdM residents are already vexed about potential commercial corridor changes, largely out of parking fears. She added that mentioning the concept of mixed use as a possible future solution is agreeable, as there are ugly old buildings in the area.

GPAC Member Debbie Stevens reported that there is an ongoing study of CdM's commercial corridor, so including mixed use as an option in the General Plan would prejudice the study, which should ideally be completed first.

In response to GPAC Member Tony Maniscalchi's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed that the CdM commercial corridor study is ongoing. He added that there will be several upcoming opportunities for community input and encouraged those with strong opinions to attend. He agreed with GPAC Member Stevens that it would be premature to overtly include mixed-use in the General Plan for CdM, adding that there could also be California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) impacts. He noted that they could include phrasing such as "continue to study the opportunities for change in CdM."

GPAC Member Maniscalchi clarified that they are not looking to abandon CdM's commercial properties – merely add residential space above it.

Planning Manager Zdeba noted that a mixed-use option is one piece of the CdM study, with consideration also being given to parking issues and incentivizing certain uses.

In response to GPAC Member Laidlaw's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba stated that it remains to be seen if the CdM study or the General Plan will be completed first. He noted that they can make revisions once the study is finalized.

In response to GPAC Member Curtis Black's inquiry, GPAC Member David Guder asserted he thought that Balboa Island is included in Balboa Village.

GPAC Member Black decried grouping Balboa Island in with Balboa Village, stating that Balboa Island must be accessed by a ferry and has distinct issues. There was audible agreement from the GPAC.

GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore stated that mixed use in CdM could be a possibility for creating affordable housing opportunities in the City.

GPAC Member Black stated that there should be a perspective gathered about Balboa Island, noting as a former resident that it has some unique issues.

GPAC Member Katie Love stated that pollution could be reduced if cars did not have to circle blocks repeatedly while looking for a parking space in her beach neighborhood. She lamented the exhaust's negative impacts and called for an extensive look into parking issues citywide, noting how frequently parking concerns appear in the Draft Element.

GPUSC Chair Gardner recommended creating a policy encouraging the City to communicate better about traffic and parking availability, particularly at the beaches, in a live electronic format.

GPAC Member Maniscalchi stated that State politics do not support parking. He called for more development in CdM, like the recently added condominiums, and an improvement to the community's retail options.

GPAC Member Walker agreed with GPUSC Chair Gardner's recommendation of a real-time app to allow visitors and residents to track parking availability.

In response to GPAC Member Waker's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed that there are minimum parking requirements for new residential and commercial development, adding that they can be adjusted through discretionary action. He reported that the City was settled a long time ago and continues to face the challenges of insufficient parking. He added that draft policies like the ones related to evaluating the cost of curbside parking will encourage the City to search for creative solutions. He agreed with GPUSC Chair Gardner's call for a policy discussing the use of best-available technology to manage parking inventory through live messaging.

In response to GPAC Member Goldberg's inquiries, Planning Manager Zdeba stated that traffic issues fold into the Land Use Element and the Circulation Element, citing how Draft Policy No. LU-25.6 discusses increasing access through public transportation and mentions the Bicycle Master Plan. He stated that part of this process is to enhance the tools the City already has relative to parking concerns.

GPAC Co-Chair Evans stated that there are plans to expand the trolley system.

GPAC Member Walker validated GPAC Co-Chair Evans' comments about the trolley expanding.

GPAC Member Jim Mosher stated that any ministerial changes to numbers in the General Plan should include a public notation of the change and its reasoning, adding that the ministerial change process should be documented as a policy. He reported that, in addition to the Santa Ana Country Club, there is another area of unincorporated Orange County land near the intersection of Irvine Ave. and Mesa Drive mainly developed as residential, and encouraged including both parcels of land if annexation is discussed. He reported that there are residential concerns about boardwalk extensions at both ends and added that the two ends should be considered together. He recommended removing Randall Preserve from Land Use Table 2. He recommended that the City's planning staff introduce a new Land Use category due to lettered lots in Newport Coast, where homes have been built on lots originally designated as reserved buffer space.

In response to GPAC Member Maniscalchi's inquiry, GPAC Member Mosher showed maps with lots marked as private open space that were developed as residential lots.

GPAC Member Mosher reported that Draft Policy No. LU-21.5 was deleted by recommendation at the Land Use Subcommittee's August 11th meeting. He stated that the 500-foot residential development buffer from California State Route 73 is listed as a mitigation measure in the Housing Element due to pollution concerns and inquired if this impacts whether the Land Use Element policy should remain.

GPAC Member Mosher stated that more work must be done in connecting the Draft Land Use Element with the current Element's 187 policies, noting that 83 current policies did not carry over to the latest draft. He cited as an example an existing policy about discouraged land uses in the Old Newport Blvd. Corridor, which did not carry over, noting that there was no discussion about removing this policy.

Co-Chair Evans conducted a straw poll, and there seemed to be consensus to not move the Draft Element forward to the GPUSC due to the revisions suggested at the meeting.

Planning Manager Zdeba stated that the timeline is tightening, as the City prepares for the General Plan Open House in October. He added that all questions and comments raised at the meeting are easy to address, except for the "why" behind the inclusion and exclusion of every policy. He stated that many of the policy removals were made to streamline the Element, adding that many of the discouraged land uses have been adopted into zoning codes which is the more appropriate location for discouraged uses.

In response to GPAC Member Maniscalchi's inquiries, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed that Old Newport Boulevard has needed some enhancement to its older and under-utilized buildings, although he could not confirm the exact number of discouraged land uses. He added that there are some similar incentive policies in CdM to encourage redevelopment. He clarified that the non-conforming chapter of the Newport Beach Municipal Code (NBMC) covers buildings citywide and not just in select areas, but the policy in question allows someone to voluntarily remove a building and replace it with one at the same square footage.

GPAC Member DeSantis agreed that today's comments, including those by GPAC Member Mosher, can be addressed without a delay in moving the Draft Element forward.

In response to GPAC Member Black's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed that many of the revisions can be made before the GPUSC meets on the Draft Element, with an opportunity for the GPAC to view the draft again in the interim. He clarified that staff is looking for approval to move the draft forward as part of a continuing conversation, noting that the draft can also be revised between the GPUSC meeting and its presentation to the Planning Commission. He stated that GPAC Member Black's previous comments about Balboa Island are a good example of edits needing to be considered.

GPAC Member Black reported that Balboa Island has changed since 2006, and part of his hesitation to approve moving the draft forward to the GPUSC is wanting to see how the policies appear after editing. He agreed that Balboa Island revisions can potentially happen parallel to a Planning Commission presentation.

Planning Manager Zdeba acknowledged that the Land Use Element is more complicated than the other elements. He stated that sending it forward to the GPUSC and eventually the Planning Commission would allow staff to make some initial revisions in the interim.

Ms. Gardner noted that, in addition to herself in her role as the GPUSC Chair, GPUSC Member Kimberly Carter is also at the meeting and has heard all the GPAC's comments. She noted that the GPUSC can also request that revisions based on GPAC commentary be made before the Draft Element is forwarded to the Planning Commission.

Motion made by GPAC Member DeSantis and seconded by GPAC Co-Chair Evans to forward the Draft Land Use Element to the General Plan Update Steering Committee for review, and for public review, thereafter, including any related City Boards, Commissions, and Committees, with the amendments suggested at the meeting.

Although a passing vote occurred, as a point of order, GPAC Member Love requested to have the opportunity to discuss the motion prior to voting. In response, Co-Chair Evans brought the item back to the floor for additional discussion prior to voting.

In response to GPAC Member Love's inquiry, GPAC Member DeSantis clarified that her motion includes the premise that staff and consultants will make revisions based on today's discussions and move the updated draft forward to the GPUSC. She clarified that the GPAC would see the updated draft as it is moving forward, but the GPAC would not have another meeting to discuss the draft before the GPUSC sees it. She noted that they can provide written comments on the draft presented to the GPUSC if they do not feel the revisions have been handled sufficiently.

Kimberly Carter requested a bullet point list of comments made at the meeting so the GPUSC can check off comments that were sufficiently addressed.

Planning Manager Zdeba stated that he would prepare an itemized list of comments made and requested that it be added to the motion.

GPAC Member DeSantis stated that the other aspect of her motion would be for Planning Manager Zdeba to work with GPAC Member Mosher on connecting the current General Plan's Land Use policies to the Draft Element.

Planning Manager Zdeba agreed and called for confirmation that the motion includes all GPAC Member Watkins' comments, including the boardwalk and annexation components.

GPAC Member DeSantis accepted Planning Manager Zdeba's friendly amendments.

Substitute Motion made by GPAC Member Mosher and seconded by GPAC Member Maniscalchi to forward the Draft Land Use Element to the General Plan Update Steering Committee for review, and for public review thereafter, including any related City Boards, Commissions, and Committees, with the amendments suggested at the meeting, but for the Draft Land Use Element to be presented to the Land Use Subcommittee after the General Plan Update Steering Committee and before its presentation to the Planning Commission.

In response to GPAC Member DeSantis' inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba stated that the entire process is designed to be responsive to the GPAC's needs and desires, so staff can adapt and adjust its timeline if the GPAC is uncomfortable sending the Land Use Element to the GPUSC. He noted that the City has planned an in-person General Plan Open House for October 21st and a virtual event on October 22nd with a goal of having all draft elements out for public review but added that staff can adjust its plans.

In response to GPAC Member Black's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba stated that it is especially important to have the responsible boards, committees, and commissions see the draft elements before the open house.

GPAC Member Mosher clarified that he is uncomfortable with the original motion's modifications because it assigns him the role of editing the work for an entire group's worth of opinions.

In response to GPAC Co-Chair Evans' inquiry, GPAC Member Mosher did not withdraw his motion, adding that he is uncomfortable making changes that the rest of the GPAC would not have seen and had an opportunity for agreement before they advance.

Planning Manager Zdeba clarified that there was no intention in GPAC Member DeSantis' motion to have GPAC Member Mosher serve as the editor, but rather the intention was to have Planning Manager Zdeba take the information GPAC Member Mosher has already prepared about unincluded policies, review it, and distribute updates.

GPAC Member DeSantis confirmed Planning Manager Zdeba's assessment of her intent.

In response to GPAC Member DeSantis' inquiry, GPAC Co-Chair Greer clarified that they could vote on the substitute motion and take the next steps accordingly.

The substitute motion failed with GPAC Members Anders-Ellmore, Love, Mosher, Snider, and Watkins voting in favor.

Amended Motion made by GPAC Member DeSantis and seconded by GPAC Co-Chair Evans to forward the Draft Land Use Element to the General Plan Update Steering Committee for review, and for public review thereafter, including any related City Boards, Commissions, and Committees, with the amendments suggested at the meeting, inclusion of GPAC Member Watkins's annexation and boardwalk comments, and direction to Planning Manager Zdeba both to work with GPAC Member Mosher on policy continuation,

and to provide a bullet point list of comments made today for the General Plan Update Steering Committee's Land Use Element discussion.

The motion carried with GPAC Members Love, Maniscalchi, Meng, Mosher, and Snider voting against.

c. Subcommittee Reports

Since the GPAC last convened on August 6, 2025, the GPAC Noise Subcommittee met. Subcommittee Chair Jim Mosher will provide verbal updates.

Recommended Actions:

- (1) Receive an overview from the Subcommittee Chair Mosher, Subcommittee members, and City staff; and
- (2) Provide any feedback on the efforts.

GPAC Member Mosher reported that the Noise Subcommittee met with Dudek for a third time yesterday morning, adding that the Noise Survey results were shared at the latest meeting along with the State-mandated noise contour maps and a proposal to overhaul the existing Noise Element policies. He expressed disappointment that the Noise Survey did not cover the entire city and only focused on traffic noise, ensuring measurements were consistent with traffic flow levels. He lamented that only a small number of roadway segments were analyzed, adding that the selection of roads was based on the Housing Element's Environmental Impact Review (EIR). He stated that there is no documentation of why these roads were selected, leading to an incomplete set of contour maps, providing insufficient guidance to City planners.

GPAC Member Mosher reported that two new policies addressing construction site noise were recommended by Dudek, noting that restricting construction activity vibrations are included in these policy discussions. He added that there were also discussions about the enforcement mechanisms, including a call to review the NBMC at least once every 10 years to ensure the noise ordinances are sufficient.

GPAC Member Mosher reported that the Subcommittee will meet at least once more with Dudek before the Draft Noise Element is presented to the GPAC.

d. Updates and Overview of Upcoming Deliverables, Objectives, and Schedules

City staff and the consultant team will provide updates since the GPAC last convened on August 6, 2025, and what to expect from here in terms of deliverables and timing.

Recommended Actions:

- (1) Receive a presentation from City staff and the consultant team; and
- (2) Provide any feedback on the efforts.

Planning Manager Zdeba thanked GPUSC Chair Gardner for her suggestion to start the meetings half an hour earlier. He reported that the Safety Element and Land Use Element will be brought to the GPUSC for review, with the Safety Element including the redlined changes from the GPAC meeting. He restated his earlier response to GPAC Member Black that it is especially important to bring the draft elements to the responsible boards, committees, and commissions prior to full public review.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that he will be presenting the Arts and Culture Element and Historical Resources Element to the City Arts Commission on October 9th. He added

that staff is targeting October 9th to present the Safety Element and Land Use Element to the Planning Commission. He reported that there will be an editorial review window for the elements prior to the full public review to catch typographical mistakes, inconsistencies, and other errors.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that there has been an uptick in traffic to the City's General Plan update website. He encouraged the GPAC members to assist with outreach in addition to the City's two formal open house events on October 21st and October 22nd.

V. **COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR MATTERS WHICH MEMBERS WOULD LIKE PLACED ON A FUTURE AGENDA FOR DISCUSSION, ACTION OR REPORT (NON-DISCUSSION ITEM)**

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that the next meeting is tentatively scheduled for October 1st, but the date may change depending on the progress of the Nosie Element.

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Co-Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 6:18 p.m.

Next Meeting: TBD