

Attachment No. 1

Draft Minutes of July 2, 2025

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

**July 2, 2025
REGULAR MEETING – 5 P.M.**

I. CALL THE MEETING TO ORDER

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) Co-Chair Evans called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

II. WELCOME AND ROLL CALL

Co-Chair Evans conducted roll call:

Present: Virginia Anders-Ellmore, Dennis Baker, James Carlson, Annie Clougherty, Jeremy Evans, Rita Goldberg, David Guder, Laird Hayes, Scott Laidlaw, Jim Mosher, Amber Snider, Debbie Stevens, Christy Walker, and Paul Watkins

Staff: Planning Manager Ben Zdeba

Excused Absent: Curtis Black, Chuck Ebner, Arlene Greer, Lynn Hackman, Ruth Kobayashi, and Thomas Meng

Absent: Nicholas Acevedo, Susan DeSantis, Katie Love, and Anthony Maniscalchi

III. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

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

None

IV. CURRENT BUSINESS

a. Meeting Minutes of June 4, 2025 (Attachment 1 – Draft Minutes)

Motion made by GPAC Member Watkins and seconded by GPAC Member Mosher to approve the meeting minutes of June 4, 2025, with GPAC Member Mosher's requested amendments.

The motion carried unanimously. Co-Chair Evans abstained due to his absence at the June 4th meeting.

b. Draft Recreation Element and Draft Natural Resources Element (Attachments 2 and 3 – Draft Elements)

The GPAC Recreation/Natural Resources Subcommittee met on May 15, 2025, to review the draft Elements. GPAC Member Dennis Baker was identified as the new Subcommittee Chair, and will provide an overview of the Subcommittee's discussions. At the conclusion of the Subcommittee's meeting, those in attendance agreed to allow City

staff to make some small revisions and to share the Elements with the full GPAC for consideration.

Attachments 2 and 3 are the draft Elements as reviewed and revised by the Subcommittee.

Recommended Actions:

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

Planning Manager Ben Zdeba reported the Recreation/Natural Resources Subcommittee met on May 15th and named GPAC Member Baker as its Chair.

GPAC Member Baker reported most of the red-lined changes to the Recreation Element involved inserting the word "reasonable" and changing "older adults" to "seniors." He reported that "reasonably" was similarly inserted into multiple areas of the Natural Resources Element, and its overview has been rewritten.

Consultant Asha Bleier (Dudek) reported the key focus areas of the Recreation Element are new parks and connections to increase access and open space, having parks and facilities to meet a variety of needs, and protecting public beach access. She reported on the nuanced wordsmithing approach to multiple policies for flexibility and highlighted the Subcommittee's call in Draft Policy R-3.4 to consider establishing a Parks Master Plan. She noted the focus on having parks meet a variety of needs is inspired by State legislation related to accessibility and other areas, including the improvement of cooling centers.

In response to Planning Manager Zdeba's inquiry, Consultant Bleier clarified that there is an index assessing how the sun hits pavement, confirming lighter colors of pavement generally reduce the urban heat island effect. She noted the Recreation Element encourages the use of cooler pavements.

Consultant Bleier noted that tree canopies and shade coverings are also essential to keeping spaces cool during extreme heat, along with cooler pavements, and this is reflected in Draft Policy R-5.8.

GPUSC Chair Nancy Gardner recommended being specific about which trees can be used along parkways, with less of a focus on palm trees because they provide little shade.

GPAC Member Baker reported that the City extensively uses concrete paving in alleys, which helps keep things cooler as it is more reflective than asphalt.

In response to Co-Chair Evans' inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed the City maintains a street tree inventory and approved planting list. He agreed that this list can be revisited to ensure the City is providing shade canopy in addition to decorative trees.

GPAC Member Stevens noted there are occasionally issues weighing the merits of the type of trees as it relates to views, citing Ocean Boulevard as an example. She stated

residential view concerns could be considered, adding that it is likely covered in the Draft Element's wording.

In response to Co-Chair Evans' inquiry, GPAC Member Stevens reported that there are all kinds of trees along Ocean Boulevard, and not just pine trees. She added a City plan to add shaded areas, which was not well-received by area residents for concerns about views.

GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore stated the City should use trees not requiring a lot of water due to drought conditions.

Consultant Bleier noted that this tree-type discussion is also reflected in the Natural Resources Element when it comes up later in the meeting.

Consultant Bleier reported on how nuanced wordsmithing is included in the draft policies, focusing on the key area of protecting public beach access, including planning for adaptations to be necessary with rising sea levels.

GPAC Member Baker stated Draft Policy R-7.4 should read "reasonable perpendicular beach access" out of concerns for future extensions of the boardwalk into the western areas of the City.

In response to GPAC Member Watkins' inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed "vertical" and "lateral" would fit the intent of Draft Policy R-7.4 better than "perpendicular."

Chuck Fancher stated Draft Policy R-7.5 might be limiting because there are many contributing factors to the need for beach sand replenishment besides rising sea levels. He encouraged adding a reference to natural erosion to this Draft Policy.

GPAC Member Mosher stated, regarding Draft Policy R-7.4, after the Subcommittee meeting, he recommended changing "perpendicular" to "vertical," and reworking the phrasing to indicate the City wants to maintain both vertical and lateral beach access by blocking new development hindering people from moving laterally along the beach.

In response to GPAC Member Goldberg's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba reported that including an online process for residents to reserve tennis and pickleball court times was not discussed while compiling the Draft Recreation Element. He added that this concept gets to a more granular implementation level and noted there is a goal of speaking to the City about conducting high-quality recreation programs. He stated that mentioning implementation technology to facilitate proper use of recreational assets can be included there.

GPAC Member Baker agreed that having an online court reservation system and/or the phrasing recommended by Planning Manager Zdeba is something he would like to add. He agreed this is more of a micro-level matter, but added there may be a way for the Subcommittee to draft a general statement speaking to this point.

In response to GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba clarified that the implementation program is integral to the General Plan's goals and policies. He reported that there will be a table in the final version speaking to specific actions taken to meet each policy, using the implementation of an online court reservation

system as a potential example. He added that staff will also note responsible departments for each policy and timelines for implementation, with GPAC Members providing input.

GPUSC Chair Gardner noted there has been discussion in subcommittees of having more continuity from the policy creators to ensure the General Plan's intent is being followed by staff. She reported that an annual review has been suggested that would potentially involve GPAC members.

GPAC Member Guder stated that the Draft Recreation Element varies significantly from the current Recreation Element. He called for a revision of Table 1 in the Draft Element to be more consistent with the current version. He added that beach acreage should be a distinct column in Table 1, as it becomes confusing when combined with park acreage. He encouraged clarifying footnotes explaining how the park service areas changed so dramatically from the current version, citing the drastic acreage change of Harbor View as an example.

In response to Co-Chair Evans' inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba clarified that Table 1 reflects what the projected needs by 2045 are in the left column compared to what exists today in the center column.

In response to Co-Chair Evans' inquiry, GPAC Member Guder confirmed he is encouraging a revision of Table 1 in the Draft Element so that it matches the current Recreation Element because the current version's format is clearer.

In response to Co-Chair Evans' inquiry, GPAC Member Goldberg reported on how the process of claiming pickleball courts presently works on a first-come, first-served basis.

GPAC Member Watkins agreed with GPAC Member Goldberg's example about a need to reserve pickleball courts online in advance and stated Recreation and Senior Services Director Sean Levin should be made aware of this discussion. He agreed that the matter of reserving courts is more granular than what the GPAC needs to address, but added that the GPAC should consider working on the importance of evolving technology.

GPAC Member Laidlaw lamented that the City is restricted by federal and State laws in its approach to Draft Policies R-5.3-4. He expressed his appreciation for the efforts made to create flexibility in the wording of those two policies, but stated they should be worded more firmly instead of flexibly due to legal compliance requirements and potential liability exposure around matters of access.

Co-Chair Evans agreed with GPAC Member Laidlaw and added that GPAC Member Kobayashi wrote a letter about this subject that is included in the Agenda packet.

GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore noted several things are not included in their work because they are covered by superseding State and federal laws, but added the public will not know this is the reason why an area of concern may not be mentioned in the General Plan and wonder if an issue was overlooked. She cited the lack of a policy on methane emissions from abandoned wells as an example of something the City does not need to address due to guidelines imposed by others. She encouraged referencing areas of potential residential concern where the City pledges to follow applicable laws.

In response to GPAC Member Baker's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba stated they can work with Dudek on how to incorporate language about adhering to State and federal laws. He added that Existing Conditions and Background Analysis reports will have references to State and federal regulations, and these will be hyperlinked for context into the General Plan when published. Consultant Bleier added that this documentation serves as an accessible appendix to the General Plan, even if it is not directly embedded into each element. She added that there will also be a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document noting all applicable legislation and reflecting the City's compliance. She reported that some State laws require the insertion of specific language or policies into a jurisdiction's General Plan.

GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore stated it is important to have a document pleasing to the City Council, but also one where the public feels its concerns are addressed.

Consultant Bleier agreed but clarified she was referring to pieces of legislation requiring a General Plan amendment to insert a specific policy. She cited Senate Bill 1425 as an example of a State law where General Plan policy language is a compliance component. She confirmed that background materials and requirements will be included as an accessible appendix in the finalized General Plan regarding policies not specifically mentioned in the General Plan.

In response to GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore's inquiry, Consultant Bleier confirmed that the appendix and General Plan will be connected.

GPAC Member Mosher encouraged the GPAC members to attend subcommittee meetings, noting that it is not possible in these full GPAC meetings to review all the policies in each element. He cited as an example Draft Policy R-2.2, where his comments to the Subcommittee led to a change in wording to a more acceptable phrasing of "financially sustainable." He echoed GPAC Member Guder's concerns about Table 1 and questioned whether the horizon year should be 2045 or 2050, along with whether the expected population increase figure of 6,000 is accurate.

In response to GPAC Member Mosher's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed the current drafts include his previous comments. He added that his comments have also been shared with Dudek's Rose Newberry for consideration, as some of his comments were more overarching questions than calls for direct edits. He added that these are drafts in progress and are not being solidified by the Committee today. He apologized for not including GPAC Member Mosher's comments as an attachment to the meeting's Agenda packet. He cited the "financially sustainable" phrasing as a change he was comfortable making, as it aligns with the City's direction.

GPAC Member Mosher stated it is good to receive a response to a comment so the writer knows whether it may lead to a result or if it is being dismissed and, if so, why.

Ms. Gardner stated future comments should be attached to the Agenda, and then either the GPAC or the appropriate subcommittee can react to it.

GPAC Member Mosher noted the current Recreation Element had specific recommendations on what new facilities would be needed, but the latest Draft Element is vague about facility needs for the expected population growth, including reference to areas of the City where this growth is expected to occur. He encouraged inclusion of

expected new facility needs, noting most of the ones identified in the current General Plan were built.

Consultant Bleier noted the forthcoming Land Use Element discusses areas of expected population growth. She added that they will work to ensure continuity between the General Plan's elements. She confirmed she will work with Consultant Newberry on GPAC Member Mosher's higher-level strategic comments.

In response to GPAC Member Mosher's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed there are future population projections in the Land Use Element, mainly tied to the Housing Element. He added that there is an intention to achieve consistency between elements. He added that GPAC Member Mosher's latest round of comments was technical and complicated, so staff have not had time to address all of them before the meeting.

Consultant Bleier reported that the Natural Resources Element's four focus areas are Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, the orderly transition of oil and gas resources, electrification incentives, and habitats in parks and public open spaces. She reported on the planned approach to EV infrastructure for both cars and boats, noted the transition of oil and gas resources will include monitoring of evolving State laws, and discussed options for the City to increase its gas-powered vehicles and renewable energy sources.

GPUSC Chair Gardner stated that the sample policies presented by Consultant Bleier are repetitive. She encouraged an introduction clarifying that all the policies are being applied to the extent reasonable, unless specifically mentioning they are mandatory policies.

GPAC Member Watkins agreed. He noted some areas may need to be clarified, as they are based upon State mandates, but in other areas, the City is simply encouraging the policy's specified action. He recommended a conversation with the City Attorney to determine if an overarching introduction can discuss this difference and help eliminate repetitive phrasing from many policies.

Planning Manager Zdeba stated that Ms. Gardner, in her role as the Chair of the General Plan Update Steering Committee (GPUSC), has encouraged putting this concept on the GPAC's Agenda. He added it would be appropriate to agendize the discussion of either having a preamble or repetitive clarifying statements for a future GPAC meeting. He confirmed the City Attorney will review the entire General Plan, but they would prefer the review to happen when the document is closer to completion.

GPAC Member Walker expressed concerns about Draft Policy NR-5.1's call to make all City vehicles electric. She expressed concerns over the potential ramifications of a future disaster causing issues with the electrical power grid and stated that including hybrid and fuel-efficient vehicles should be considered.

Co-Chair Evans agreed and called for the policy to call for adding EVs to the City fleet, but not completely replacing all City vehicles exclusively with EVs.

Mr. Fancher noted the Draft Element focuses on electrification, but added that there are also EVs fueled by hydrogen and stated the Draft Element should also consider

hydrogen-powered vehicles and their requisite infrastructural needs. He stated studies are showing hydrogen, particularly, works better than electricity in powering heavy vehicles and theorized they could gain in popularity. He encouraged including phrasing alluding to “other” fuel opportunities, proving to be commercially reasonable.

GPAC Member Guder recommended adding the phrase “financially feasible” to several draft policies because some consideration will have to be given to the supply side of electricity in addition to the demand.

GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore noted the State is moving towards alternative fuels to help reduce greenhouse gases. She added that compressed natural gas is also a fuel source growing in popularity. She encouraged incorporating vaguer terms such as “innovation” or “alternative energy sources.”

GPUSC Chair Gardner agreed with Mr. Fancher about using vaguer terms such as “alternative sources” to also include cleaner energy sources.

Co-Chair Evans agreed with Ms. Gardner and recommended using GPAC Member Guder’s suggestion about incorporating language about new fuel sources that are also financially feasible in the consumer marketplace.

GPAC Member Baker stated that foreseeing the next 10 years is difficult. He noted the City of Los Angeles jumped into free EV charging stations early on, soon experiencing equipment issues, and the commercial aspect of EVs has since caught up, where users must pay for the service. He noted that sometimes a technology matures quickly and sometimes it dies out, leading to the unknown of how popular hydrogen vehicles may or may not be in 10 years. He encouraged writing flexibility into the Draft Element to accommodate future technological changes and advances.

Consultant Bleier cautioned they must work within the State’s mandates as they contemplate terminology relating to emissions goals, but agreed there should be flexibility to accommodate innovations beyond EVs.

GPAC Member Walker stated they cannot predict the future and need to be flexible in their policies as it relates to new trends such as hydrogen-powered vehicles. She added that the City still must rely on the State’s power grid for its charging stations.

In response to GPAC Member Baker’s inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba stated that the General Plan is intended to be a long-term aspirational document, but they can only go so far with their projections. He added they must have the ability to be reactionary, so there is a way to update the General Plan in the future if needed to reflect changing conditions and emerging technologies. He encouraged flexible language.

Consultant Bleier confirmed she made a note about including language reflecting the potential for other viable clean fuel sources emerging in the future.

Consultant Bleier reported on the fourth focus area of habitats in parks and public open spaces, presenting several draft policies focused on protecting native plants and animals. She noted Assembly Bill 1889 requires local jurisdictions to analyze local habitats, and this State law establishes an underlying premise for this section of the Element.

In response to GPAC Member Guder's inquiry, Consultant Bleier confirmed their work cites specific areas of the City, like Buck Gully, where AB 1889 is already a focus.

In response to Co-Chair Evans' inquiry, Consultant Bleier clarified that Draft Policies NR-7.5-6 were already loose enough without including a qualifier of being reasonable. She cautioned that if the language were any more flexible, it might trigger State action.

In response to Mr. Fancher's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba clarified that the Agenda for today's meeting was updated on the GPAC webpage and apologized for it being wrong on the City's calendar webpage. He stated he can add Mr. Fancher to an email list of interested parties receiving the agenda directly. He added Item No. IV-c will include an update on upcoming public outreach efforts.

Mr. Fancher stated that using the term "sandy beaches" is redundant. He recommended including the sentence "beaches are sand environments and are at risk of coastal development, sea level, and ever-present erosions stemming from natural near-shore sediment flows" into the preamble to Draft Policy Section 15. He added erosion is a larger issue than sea-rise as it relates to the City's need to replenish its beaches. He recommended adding a second half to Draft Policy NR-15.1, calling to pursue measures to replenish the beaches in the absence of effective regional projects, adding that the City probably will have to take some steps on its own in this matter.

GPAC Member Baker noted there are also rocky beaches, so beaches are not by definition sandy. He encouraged Dudek to reach out to organizations like the Newport Bay Conservancy, as it relates to some of the City's nature corridors, such as Buck Gully, if they feel it is important to include their specific details, as alluded to in GPAC Member Guder's inquiry.

In response to GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore's inquiry, Ms. Gardner clarified that protecting terns and other wildlife is cause for having dogs leashed, adding that even the scent of the dogs can be destructive. She confirmed this is why dogs are not allowed in certain areas and must be leashed in other areas.

GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore stated that Draft Policy NR-19.2 seems excessive.

In response to GPAC Member Anders-Ellmore's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba theorized that Draft Policy NR-19.2's mention of temporary signs is likely for items like political campaign signage.

GPAC Member Walker stated she and her former real estate agent peers are guilty of littering neighborhoods with the sort of signs serving as the focus of Draft Policy NR-19.2. She clarified that it is visually junky when signs for things like political campaigns, garage sales, open houses, etc., linger too long after the event or election. She added that the policy intends to have people be personally responsible for their lawn signs.

GPAC Member Mosher stated he added the language related to dogs, adding that it is not being proposed as a policy but rather only appears in the background information narrative about measures the City has taken to protect wildlife. He noted Draft Policy NR-1.5 was an addition he recommended because, while the City does not control John Wayne International Airport, the emissions from airplanes flying over the City do impact its air quality. He stated that many see Newport Beach as a City of views, and the

protection policies in the Draft Element are unreviewable without corresponding figures included in the current General Plan. He stated the current General Plan's map needs to be reevaluated.

GPAC Member Goldberg inquired about having a dog beach like the City of Huntington Beach.

GPAC Member Hayes acknowledged unleashed dogs can cause problems on the beach and added the west side of the City could use a dog park.

In response to GPAC Member Hayes' inquiry, GPAC Member Goldberg stated the far end of Newport Shores near Huntington Beach would be a good location for a dog beach.

GPAC Member Hayes lamented that people live in the area GPAC Member Goldberg is describing, and dogs tend to roam, causing challenges for residents.

GPAC Member Watkins reported he and his wife carry pepper spray when walking on the beach near their west Newport Beach home due to potential issues with off-leash dogs.

Co-Chair Evans reported that Corona del Mar puts out signs about dog restrictions, but added he has also been chased by unleashed dogs before while running down the beach.

Motion made by GPAC Member Baker and seconded by GPAC Member Watkins to forward the Draft Recreation Element and the Draft Natural Resources 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.

The motion carried unanimously.

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

City staff and the consultant team will provide updates since the GPAC last convened on April 2, 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 reported that the elements will be redlined and shared with the GPUSC for concurrence, similarly to other elements. He added that the redlined version will also be sent to the GPAC.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that the Safety Subcommittee met in June and supported moving the Safety Element forward at the next GPAC meeting. He added that there will be an effort to convene the Noise Subcommittee in July with Dudek Acoustician Dana Lodico. He stated the Land Use Element is almost ready to share with the Land Use Subcommittee, possibly in July.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that the Arts and Cultural Element and Historical Resources Element will be presented to the City Arts Commission. He added that GPAC

Member Mosher recommended that the Board of Library Trustees also look at these two elements to provide feedback for the GPAC.

In response to Planning Manager Zdeba's inquiry, the Committee Members agreed to hold their next meeting in August.

Planning Manager Zdeba reported that the Phase 3 Outreach and Engagement Plan was shared with the Outreach Subcommittee. He clarified that the draft elements have been made available as part of the Agenda packets for public meetings, but the City is not preparing to specifically advertise them until they have been reviewed by the relevant Boards, Commissions, and Committees. He stated there is a goal of having a community open house to discuss the entire General Plan, but there is still a lot of work needed to be done on the drafts before the City is prepared to receive that level of public feedback.

In response to GPAC Member Baker's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed that staff can have subject matter experts attend Subcommittee meetings if there is such a desire.

In response to GPAC Member Watkins' inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba stated they would look to meet on August 6th.

GPAC Member Walker requested that the Noise Subcommittee and Safety Subcommittee address drones.

GPAC Member Hayes stated that drones are noisy and dangerous. He also expressed noise and safety concerns about power kites.

In response to GPAC Member Hayes' inquiry, GPAC Member Baker confirmed that drones and power kite regulations run through the Federal Aviation Administration.

GPAC Member Mosher reported the City Council held a Study Session last week about drones and agreed it is a General Plan issue. He confirmed that both the Noise Subcommittee and Safety Subcommittee have discussed having a representative from the airport or City staff inform them about upcoming issues. He stated that when the GPAC was formed, folders were created on the City's Laserfiche system for each subcommittee with an expectation of materials going into those folders, including meeting minutes. He lamented that the folders have not kept pace with initial updating expectations.

An unidentified resident expressed concerns about the tree at the Balboa Branch Library and Fire Station, which is expected to be demolished. She reported that an early childhood-focused playground is planned for the library after reconstruction, but lamented that the playground will eliminate a place where the community can gather. She added that residents meet and walk their dogs through the grassy area with the tree providing shade. She added that migratory great blue herons return to the spot annually. She critiqued an expert's assessment of the severity of a fungus impacting the tree and added that the building project can go through without removing the tree. She added that removing the tree is contradictory to what they have been discussing tonight in the Recreation Element about having canopies and open spaces.

In response to GPAC Member Walker's inquiry, Planning Manager Zdeba confirmed this matter is not under the GPAC's purview. He encouraged the speaker to continue her ongoing work with the City's project managers as it relates to the Coastal Development Permit.

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

None

VI. **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business, Co-Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 6:41 p.m.

Next Meeting: August 5, 2025

DRAFT