

# GENERAL PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING #1 MEETING SUMMARY

June 24, 2026



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All GPAC meetings are open to the public, and this meeting was held at the City of Hercules City Council Chambers. Meeting agendas, presentation slides, and other materials are posted on the Hercules General Plan website: [www.hercules2050.com/gpac](http://www.hercules2050.com/gpac).

## AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview of the General Plan Update and the GPAC
3. Issues and Opportunities Discussion
4. Suggestions for Engagement and Outreach
5. Public Comment
6. Next Steps

## ATTENDANCE

There were nine total members of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) in attendance, as well as City and consultant representatives. The following GPAC members were present:

1. Sam Ahmad (Finance Commission)
2. Darlene Almeida
3. Kaitlyn Azevedo (Community & Library Services Commission)
4. Stephanie Buquis
5. David Davenport
6. Hector Garcia
7. Sylvia Jimenez (Planning Commission)
8. Harjinderpal Pannu
9. Rachit Paudel

The following GPAC members were absent:

10. Steve Lawton (Hercules Historical Society)
11. Richard Mitchell

The following members of the General Plan Update (GPU) Team were also in attendance:

- Tim Rood, City of Hercules, Community Development Director
- Seana Field, City of Hercules, Senior Planner
- Ron Whitmore, Raimi + Associates, an Alta Company, Principal
- Michelle Hernandez, Raimi + Associates, an Alta Company, Community Planner

# OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND GPAC

The project team provided an overview of the General Plan Update process, the GPAC's role, and GPAC guidelines. See presentation slides 7-16 for more details.

## GPAC Question & Answer

GPAC members asked the following questions.

- What is an EIR?
  - An EIR is an Environmental Impact Report, a document that discloses the potential environmental effects of a project and identifies measures to minimize or mitigate those impacts.
- What will be the process to update the General Plan Elements?
  - Many of the Elements are dated, so they will be updated using current planning best practices and integrating the community feedback we hear during the entire planning process. There will be a series of GPAC meetings and engagement activities that will each be focused on the community land use vision, focus areas for where change should occur, and policy development. See presentation slide 12.

## ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES DISCUSSION

The project team facilitated a discussion on the issues and opportunities Hercules is facing. A Mentimeter poll was used to brainstorm responses to the discussion questions listed below, and the “word cloud” results of the poll are included under each question. GPAC members also provided additional verbal comments in response to the word clouds, which are listed below the Mentimeter poll responses.

## What do you love about Hercules and want to preserve?

### Question #1

What do you love about Hercules and want to preserve?



- Regional location – this side of the bay has a lot of potential
- Climate
- Parks, trails, open spaces, nature, and the waterfront
- Walkability
- Family-oriented and small-town vibe
- Low crime and safe neighborhoods
- Sense of community
- Helpful City staff
- The future Hercules Hub and its potential and role in future growth
- Possibility of growth along the Interstate 80 corridor

# How would you like Hercules to change between now and 2050?

Question #2

How would you like Hercules to change between now and 2050?

sustainable businesses  
transit hub open space more businesses  
i-80 and hwy 4 on and off better school ratings real downtown  
keep the small town feel appropriate retail more business and project  
more afterschool activiti active downtown good businesses  
more local shopping better cross walk eastern city exit thriving waterfront  
generate more revenues more restaurants  
more retail and dinning strip mall

- More sustainable and appropriate retail and commercial activity within the city (e.g., restaurants, neighborhood markets and stores, shopping, family activities)
- After-school activities
- Pedestrian safety between future retail and commercial uses and residential areas
- Safer routes to school (such as school crosswalks in a “pedestrian scramble” configuration)
- A real town center/active downtown
- A thriving waterfront

# What challenges does Hercules face in that horizon?

Question #3

## What challenges does Hercules face in that horizon?

regional housing pressure  
empty storefronts  
stable tax base  
money  
budget  
over population  
revenue  
closing our open spaces  
over crowded schools  
vacant apartments  
traffic studies  
manage traffic  
blocking the waterfront  
attracting businesses  
adding new businesses  
eastern city exit  
crime  
rise in school transfers  
congestion  
suburban constraints  
family affordability  
state housing laws

- Circulation
  - Traffic congestion and local impacts from Interstate 80 (I-80) and State Route 4 (SR 4)
  - No eastern exit out of the city (concern for evacuation scenarios) or another connection to SR 4
  - School drop-off/pickup traffic and issues with specific intersections
- Growth
  - Attracting and keeping new businesses
  - Enough school capacity for anticipated population growth within the city or the region
  - Regional housing pressure
  - State housing laws
  - Concern about the people potentially moving into new apartments
  - Concern that new development is blocking waterfront views
  - Perception that new apartments are consistently vacant
  - Community disappointment when the development that has been envisioned for the city is not built, or what is built is different from the original plan
- Crime
- Finances
  - Stable tax base
  - Revenue

# What opportunities should Hercules take advantage of?

Question #4

What opportunities should Hercules take advantage of?

transportation access      train station  
invested community member  
numerous freeway access      discretionary income      vacant storefronts  
easy access      central location      the climate  
waterfront access      location      central business area      great weather  
where is the ferry      ferry terminal      develop the waterfront      the people  
geography      open land  
partner with other agenci      relatively wealthy base

- Vacant retail and commercial spaces; creating incentives to fill them
- Location and transportation access (freeways, future train station, future ferry terminal)
- Waterfront access and undeveloped land
- Vacant storefronts
- Discretionary income and a relatively wealthy base
- Invested community members
- Partnerships with other agencies

# ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

The project team discussed the planned engagement approaches and public outreach tools that the team will use for the Hercules General Plan Update process. The team also discussed the preliminary feedback gathered from Survey #1, which includes questions about community engagement and public outreach. See presentation slides 20-25. GPAC members provided the following responses and comments to the discussion questions.

## What are the best ways to keep people updated about the GPU?

- A clear and streamlined website
- Email notifications
- Flyering
- City bulletin
- Signage and banners at stop lights, near parks, and other popular locations in town

## What are the best ways to engage the community in the General Plan Update process?

- Outreach to the senior center
- School PTAs
- Library
- City events: National Night Out, Cultural Festival, Tree Lighting, Halloween Trick or Treat, Coffee with a Cop, summer lunch, food giveaway events
- If we did popups, where to go?
  - Safeway, Luckys
  - Library

## What has and hasn't worked in the past?

- Hasn't worked: when mailers or text content is too long
- Has: email notifications

# PUBLIC COMMENT

Members of the public made the following comments.

- I am excited that the GPAC exists and that this process is starting.

- We want City information to be easy to access, so that people interested in specific topics can be notified when there is new information, educational materials, or engagement events.
- Consider adding an AI chatbot to the City website to help sort through all of the City's documents and make it easy for people to find what they are looking for.
- We were interested in this because of the Bayline project meeting but are excited to see what the General Plan comes up with for developing the waterfront and how it can generate revenue for the City.
- There should be guidelines for how to bring revenue to the City overall and they could be applied to the waterfront and citywide.

## NEXT STEPS

The GPU Team provided a brief preview of near-term project activities. See presentation slide 31.