

**STEERING COMMITTEE GUIDANCE DOCUMENT:  
CITY OF PALM SPRINGS GENERAL PLAN LIMITED UPDATE**

CITY STAFF LIAISON:

DAVID NEWELL, PRINCIPAL PLANNER

760-323-8245 | [David.Newell@palmspringsca.gov](mailto:David.Newell@palmspringsca.gov)

PREPARED BY: CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

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## 1. Purpose of this Document

The General Plan limited update is a major community-wide effort that involves a number of diverse participants. The purpose of this guidance document is to summarize to community members the roles and responsibilities of those participants so their involvement in the General Plan process is clearly defined and understood. In addition, the paper provides a set of rules and procedures for the General Plan Steering Committee, which will act as the committee's by-laws. For more information, please visit <https://www.palmspringsca.gov/government/departments/planning/general-plan> or contact the city staff liaison.

## 2. What is the General Plan Steering Committee?

The General Plan Steering Committee (GPSC) is an ad hoc committee established by the City of Palm Springs to serve as one of the primary channels for the community to participate in the update of the General Plan. The purpose of the GPSC is to provide input recommendations to city staff, the consultant team, the Planning Commission, and ultimately the City Council on key components, such as the vision, opportunity areas, and land use plan. Another crucial function of the GPSC is to assist in the refinement of the long-term goals and policies and implementation actions in the General Plan that guide the City's decision-making process over the next 20+ years. What do people say they want in Palm Springs and how can this be translated into an appropriate blend of pragmatic and ambitious goals and policies?

Below is some additional direction on what the Palm Springs GPSC is, including its roles and responsibilities, as well as how it functions. Following that is a description of what the Palm Springs GPSC is not.

### What the GPSC does and how it functions:

- **Conveys the community's perspective.** The GPSC ensures city staff and the consultant team is aware of and understands community concerns, values, interests, and expectations. The GPSC is also a vehicle for obtaining a sampling of community opinions and attitudes.
- **Identifies critical issues and relevant information.** The GPSC assists the Planning Commission, city staff and the consultant team in identifying critical issues that must be addressed in the planning process. The GPSC also provides information that is valuable to the process or issues/opinions that should be taken into consideration.
- **Identifies and suggests resolutions to potential conflicts.** Identifies areas of existing or potential conflicts and finds ways to constructively resolve them.
- **Expands public awareness and participation.** GPSC members expand public awareness and knowledge about the General Plan and related material. GPSC members also keep community organizations and interested citizens informed about the status of the planning process and encourage additional public participation.
- **Considers ideas and reviews material.** The GPSC serves as a sounding board for ideas, items, and draft products presented by city staff and its consultants.
- **Suggests policy consistent with the Vision.** The GPSC helps craft, stays familiar with, and seeks policy direction consistent with the City's Vision during General Plan policy deliberations.
- **Seeks community benefit.** The GPSC is a group of individuals who, irrespective of their own perspectives or preferences, seeks the benefit of the entire community in their recommendations.
- **Makes recommendations for decision makers.** The GPSC provides advisory recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council on key General Plan components, such as the proposed vision and priorities, goals and policies, areas requiring attention (physical and policy), and updates to the land use plan.
- **Provides a public forum for other members of the public.** The GPSC meetings will be subject to the Brown Act, California's Open Meeting Law, and will hold regular, noticed and agendaized public meetings. There will be specific time for public comments, both on agenda items and items not on the agenda.

### What the GPSC is NOT:

- A replacement for either the Planning Commission or the City Council.
- A decision-making body, except as it may offer advice and recommendations to city staff and the consultant team regarding the General Plan.
- A place to discuss projects currently under consideration, except as they may relate in broad strokes to future general plan land use direction and policy.
- A forum for political position taking.

- A substitute for the public hearing process required by law.

### 3. GPSC Membership

The following table provides a list of GPSC members appointed by the Planning Commission. Participation by members appointed to the GPSC is temporary. The GPSC-related roles and responsibilities of its members will terminate with City Council adoption of the General Plan, which is estimated to occur sometime in 2021.

One master copy of this document shall be retained by the City that includes signatures from all GPSC members in the table below. The signature of each individual confirms their agreement with and commitment to the roles, responsibilities, rules, and procedures as outlined in this document.

**Table 1. List of GPSC Members**

| Name & Representation                                   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1. <b>Kathy Weremiuk (Chair)</b><br>Planning Commission | 2. Dixie Miller<br>District 1   | 3. Grant Wilson<br>District 2                |
| _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only)            | _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only)                          | _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only) |
| 4. David Powell<br>District 3                           | 5. Lyn Calerdine<br>District 4  | 6. Curt Watts<br>District 5                  |
| _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only)            | _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only)                          | _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only) |
| 7. Kathy Cohn<br>ONE-PS                                 | 8. Margaret Park<br>Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla<br>Indians (ACBCI) | 9. John Goins<br>Sustainability Commission   |
| _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only)            | _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only)                          | _____<br>Signature & Date (master copy only) |

### 4. Meeting Topics and Dates

The GPSC is expected to meet at least eight times during the General Plan update process, with meetings held periodically through Spring 2021. Meetings will begin at 5:30 PM and are expected to last approximately 2 hours. Meetings will take place at either City Hall or another location depending on the format and activities of the GPSC meeting. The specific meeting location will be provided in advance and published in the agendas at least 72 hours before each meeting.

The following table provides a tentative schedule for each meeting along with preliminary topics to be covered at each meeting. Note that the dates identified for the first GPSC meeting is confirmed, but the remaining meeting dates are shown only with an estimated target month. The dates and topics are subject to change based on adjustments made by the City to the project scope, schedule, or other circumstances beyond the City’s control. To the degree possible, GPSC meetings will be conducted on the fourth Monday of the month. Please identify any scheduling conflicts as soon as possible, ideally with substantial lead time (e.g., a planned 2-week trip or busy period at your place of business).

**Table 2. GPSC Tentative Schedule and Proposed Topics**

| Meeting                          | Date / Location             | Topics / Activities  |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>GPSC Meeting 1</b>            | Jan. 27, 2020               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction of the GPSC (role, rules, responsibilities)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>General Plan Introduction</b> | City Hall, Council Chambers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overview of the General Plan effort</li> <li>▪ Review of community considerations: What has changed and what conditions remain the same in comparison to the 2007 General Plan?</li> <li>▪ Connecting with the Community: confirm survey content</li> </ul> |

**Table 2. GPSC Tentative Schedule and Proposed Topics**

| <b>Meeting</b>  | <b>Date / Location</b>  | <b>Topics / Activities</b>  |
|---|-------------------------|---|
| <b>GPSC Meeting 2</b><br><b>Values and Priorities</b>                                   | Feb. 2020<br><i>TBD</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exploration of values, issues, and opportunities facing Palm Springs</li> <li>▪ Review of feedback received in Public Survey and Workshop 1</li> <li>▪ Revise vision statement using input from Community Workshop 1.</li> </ul> |
| <b>GPSC Meeting 3</b><br><b>GP Goals &amp; Policies and Housing</b>                     | Mar. 2020<br><i>TBD</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Select preferred vision statement to be forwarded to City Council for approval</li> <li>▪ Review General Plan Goals and Policies</li> <li>▪ Housing Element 101 and Housing Inventory Overview</li> </ul>                        |
| <b>GPSC Meeting 4</b><br><b>Draft Land Use Plan and Land Use Goals &amp; Policies</b>   | Apr. 2020<br><i>TBD</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review draft Land Use Plan and provide feedback</li> <li>▪ Review evaluation of Land Use Goals &amp; Policies and provide feedback</li> </ul>  |
| <b>GPSC Meeting 5</b><br><b>Confirm Land Use Plan and Land Use Goals &amp; Policies</b> | May 2020<br><i>TBD</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirm Land Use Plan</li> <li>▪ Confirm updates to Land Use Goals &amp; Policies</li> </ul>   |
| <b>GPSC Meeting 6</b><br><b>Circulation Element</b>                                     | Jun. 2020<br><i>TBD</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review evaluation of Circulation Element Goals &amp; Policies and provide feedback</li> </ul>  |
| <b>GPSC Meeting 7</b><br><b>Other Element Changes and Implementation Actions</b>        | Jul. 2020<br><i>TBD</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review draft recommendations for updates to other GP elements and provide feedback</li> <li>▪ Review draft updates to GP Implementation Actions</li> </ul>   |
| <b>GPSC Meeting 8</b><br><b>Final Review of GP Update</b>                               | Jan. 2021<br><i>TBD</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Discuss and provide final direction (if needed) on remaining issues in the final draft General Plan and EIR documents prior to Community Workshop 3, Planning Commission, City Council</li> </ul>                                |

## 5. Participation in the General Plan Steering Committee

The following is a summary of important considerations to keep in mind as you undertake your commitment to the City of Palm Springs and its General Plan update.

### Representing the GPSC

Individual GPSC members must be careful not to represent their own views or recommendations as those of the entire GPSC body unless the majority has officially voted on the issue. Public statements should contain no promises binding the Committee or the City Council.

### Maintaining Community-wide Perspective

Although GPSC members may be selected in part on the basis of representing clearly defined groups or neighborhoods to assure that all interests are voiced and considered, each member should represent the overall public and not that of an exclusive group or interest. Ultimately, GPSC members are representatives of the community and their feedback should represent the sentiments of the larger population, not solely their own. To properly represent the community, members must be accessible to the public to receive input on the sentiment/opinions of fellow residents.

### **Promoting Public Participation**

GPSC members will be asked to promote community attendance at workshops and meetings to provide input at various milestones in the General Plan Update process. GPSC members are encouraged to attend the community workshops as well, as their presence will encourage the stakeholder groups they are most closely tied to to participate in the process. GPSC members will be asked to help promote events through their social media outlets and personal connections to the community at large, and the City will provide GPSC members with materials or draft language that they can use to help market the event (including materials provided on the City's General Plan website).

### **Establishing a Good Relationship with Other Members**

On many occasions, the success or failure of a GPSC will depend upon the degree of cooperation among the individual members. In order to build a consensus around common goals and objectives, members will often first have to reconcile contradictory viewpoints and show a willingness to objectively consider the issues.

Another way of developing this cooperation is for each member to do their part to ensure that meetings proceed in an orderly manner. The Chairperson is primarily responsible for seeing that meetings are conducted in an expeditious and thorough fashion. However, each member can help by becoming familiar with the basic rules of parliamentary procedure and by adequately preparing for meetings.

### **Be Conscious of your Relationship to Elected and Appointed Officials and City Staff**

Good relations with elected and appointed officials and city staff are necessary for the successful operation of any Committee. It is important that each member respect the authority of those who, in the end, will be charged with the final responsibility for action taken by the City.

To avoid placing the city staff in a compromising position and to facilitate effective communication, your actions as a member should be done with the approval of the body. Any communication intended for city or consultant staff on business matters should be sent only through the City's Planning Director or designee, who is the staff liaison appointed to this advisory group.

### **Other Important Points to Consider**

GPSC participants shall always show respect for other individuals' viewpoints and shall allow other members adequate time to present their views before making comments. It is essential to be open and honest at all times, welcome new members and see that they become acquainted with their duties, and strive to minimize political action among members.

Be aware that, in the public's eye, GPSC members represent the City they serve. Comments and actions of the GPSC, therefore, should express sensitivity to the diverse viewpoints held within the City. Membership on the GPSC does not entitle participants to exercise undue influence upon individuals in the community.

## **6. Rules and Procedures**

1. **Brown Act.** All meetings of the General Plan Steering Committee will be open to the public pursuant to the Ralph M. Brown Act enacted in 1953. The intent of the Act is to ensure that "actions be taken openly and that deliberations be conducted openly." Once selected, the time, place and date for regularly scheduled GPSC meetings shall be publicly posted or announced.
2. **Chair/Vice Chair.** The GPSC may elect a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson to serve as the representatives for the GPSC. If one is selected, the Chairperson would be responsible for managing the meeting, facilitating discussion, and gaining consensus from the GPSC on various components of the General Plan. Should the Chairperson leave his or her position on the GPSC for any reason, the Vice Chair should assume the role of Chairperson and a new Vice Chair would be selected by a majority vote of the GPSC. The GPSC Chair and Vice Chair would also serve as the official representatives of the GPSC and shall attend meetings with other committees, the Planning Commission or City Council if requested. However, all GPSC members act as "ambassadors" of the General Plan to the community and are encouraged to share their knowledge about the process to ensure the community's exposure to the process is as far-reaching as possible.
3. **Provision and review of materials.** Meeting materials will be distributed to GPSC members approximately three days prior to scheduled meetings. Prior to each meeting, members are expected to review the provided materials (50-100 pages) and be ready to discuss key issues and opportunities with the group. Some meetings may require more or less preparation. In some cases, a limited amount of material may be provided as late as the day of the GPSC. Materials will be provided electronically for all GPSC meetings and will be printed for the first GPSC meeting. Should the GPSC prefer,

printed materials will be provided for all GPSC meetings (exceptions may be made for particularly large documents, such as technical appendices).

4. **Timeliness.** The General Plan preparation is subject to a constrained time schedule. GPSC members need to have read provided materials in advance of each meeting and be prepared to make recommendations and decisions in a timely manner that allows the process to move forward according to the adopted schedule. Committee meetings should be conducted formally with care to avoid long conversations on non-critical tangents, resulting in delayed action.
5. **Limitations on directing the City.** GPSC members are encouraged to review and comment on relevant department programs as they pertain to the implementation of the General Plan. However, while operating in the capacity of the GPSC, members must not become involved in the administration or operation of City departments, and should not direct the administrative staff or its consultants to initiate programs, conduct studies, or establish official policy without approval of the City Council and/or the City Manager.
6. **Community input and requests.** Community input is a very important component of the General Plan process. GPSC members will need to carefully consider input from a wide range of stakeholders. GPSC members should bring other stakeholder comments to the table, as appropriate. GPSC members that receive requests from the community for information or presentations about the General Plan should advise the Planning Director prior to any commitment to providing information or presentations.
7. **Simple majority voting.** Where consensus cannot be reached on major decisions by the full committee, the GPSC shall form its recommendations based on the affirmative vote of a simple majority of the GPSC membership in attendance, provided there is a quorum. On decisions regarding recommendations to city staff, dissenting members may submit a separate report to ensure both sides are represented for City Council consideration. It is important to reiterate that the GPSC will not be a policy-setting body. Rather, the GPSC is an advisory committee, providing recommendations to city staff for their consideration.
8. **Implied agreement.** It is hoped that agreement can be reached by the full GPSC for as many issues as possible. Where a committee member does not agree with the direction being taken by the committee, they are expected to offer a constructive alternative approach(es). Concerns and issues should be brought up early in the process so that they can be addressed to the extent possible. Lack of comment will be considered agreement with the majority opinion.
9. **Conflict of interest.** The Political Reform Act is intended to prevent conflict of interest by requiring designated public officials to disclose financial interests which could potentially cause conflicts. You may be required to disqualify yourself from making, participating in, or attempting to influence any governmental decision which will affect your financial interests, including those required to be reported on a statement of economic interest where appropriate. The [Fair Political Practices Commission](#) explains what a conflict is and when disqualification is required by law. If in doubt, the city staff liaison will assist in acquiring legal clarification.
10. **Attendance and absence.** In accepting appointment to the GPSC, each member accepts responsibility for devoting sufficient time to the project to effectively represent the views of the community. Attendance is required at every GPSC meeting, approximately eight meetings are scheduled over the duration of the process. Members shall notify city staff prior to a scheduled meeting if they are unable to attend and request an excused absence. Two unexcused absences may constitute grounds for dismissal from the GPSC, subject to approval by the Planning Commission.
11. **Questions or concerns.** If members have questions or are concerned with particular issues, the Planning Director or City Manager should be contacted to review the matter.

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities of Other Entities

While the GPSC is one of the primary channels for the community to participate in the General Plan update, five other entities also play a role in the preparation and adoption of the General Plan: City Council, Planning Commission, city staff, consultants, and other members of the general public. Below is a list of roles and responsibilities for each entity or group.

## **CITY COUNCIL**

### **Legislative body directing the affairs of the City**

- Authorized the preparation of the General Plan limited update and approved the budget.
- Provides overall policy direction for the General Plan.
- Resolves policy issues and major budget/scope adjustments as necessary throughout the project.
- Adopts the updated General Plan as recommended by the Planning Commission or as modified by the City Council.
- Certifies the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that accompanies the General Plan.
- Conducts public study sessions and/or hearings on the General Plan and EIR.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

### **Chief advisory body on community planning and development matters**

- Advises the City Council on recommendations for approval, modification, or deletion of goals, policies or implementation proposed through the General Plan update.
- Conducts public study sessions and public hearings on the General Plan and EIR.
- Receives a monthly report from the GPSC and provides direction to staff.

## **CITY STAFF**

### **Key city resources facilitating the preparation of the General Plan and providing technical and logistical support**

- Provides input regarding professional, technical, administrative, and policy insights and implications on topics discussed.
- Manages consultant team's work program and products.
- Oversees schedule modifications and compliance.
- Reviews and modifies consultant products as necessary to insure consistency with city policy and practice.
- Arranges for logistics and support of each GPSC meeting.
- Distributes materials for the GPSC approximately three days prior to scheduled meetings (note that some material may be provided or presented at various times up until and including the day of the GPSC).
- Prepares and presents staff reports as appropriate.
- Helps coordinate and lead public outreach efforts as well as communication and coordination with other stakeholders, organizations, and agencies.
- Keeps consultant team informed of current City activities and issues that relate to the General Plan.

## **CONSULTANT TEAM**

### **Advisors hired by the City to provide technical support and serve as an extension of city staff during the duration of the General Plan update process**

- Complies with the adopted scope of work.
- Submits draft documents identified in the scope of work to city staff for review, revision and distribution as required.
- Prepares technical reports as specified in the scope of work.
- Provides input regarding professional, technical, and policy insights.
- Assists in clarifying issues, providing options and evaluating the implications of topics being discussed.
- Recommends methods to resolve policy issues when conflict arises.
- Advises on schedule or procedural matters.
- Presents consultant-prepared work products to decision-makers, city staff, and the public.
- Documents meeting deliberations in the form of summary notes on key outcomes and decisions (note that neither city staff nor the consultant will provide detailed minutes, recordings, or transcripts).
- Helps coordinate, lead, and summarize results from public outreach efforts.
- Coordinates with agencies and other organizations outside of City Hall in the preparation of work products.

## **OTHER MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**Those members of the public that are not already represented on the GPSC, including local residents, property owners, business owners, employees of Palm Springs businesses, service providers, governmental agencies, and nongovernmental organizations**

- Provide input—through public outreach events, venues, tools hosted or distributed by the city—on how they want the City of Palm Springs to be maintained and improved over the next 20+ years.
- Provide feedback on draft products distributed for public review; e.g., the Vision, Land Use Plan, General Plan, and EIR.
- Encourage participation from and attendance by others in the General Plan update process.