





Chapter 3

Process and Community Engagement

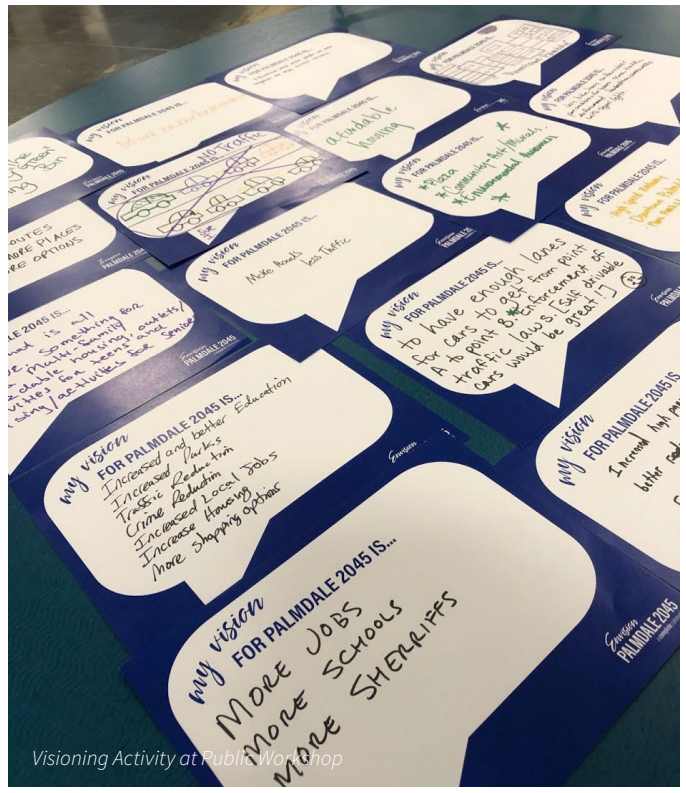
This chapter provides an overview of the Palmdale 2045 General Plan Update process and descriptions of the extensive community engagement that took place between 2019 and 2022.

General Plan Update Process

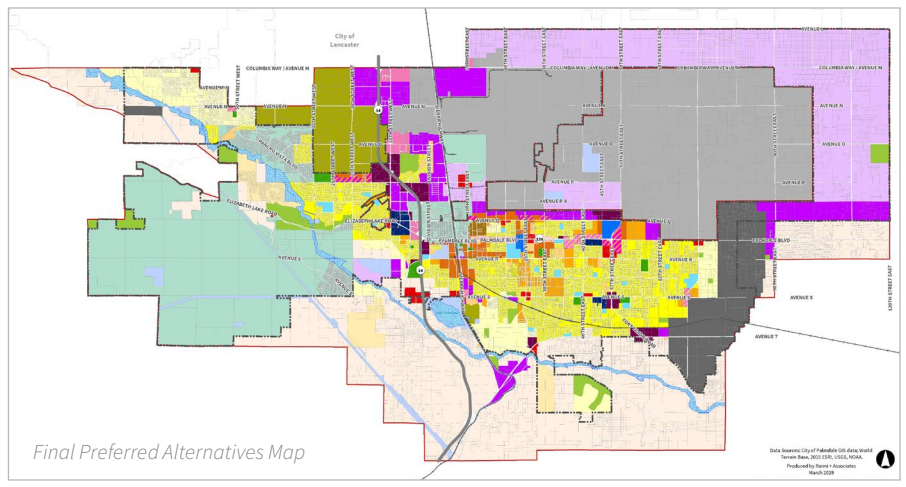
The General Plan update occurred over a four-year effort between early 2019 and late 2022. The General Plan update process included six major phases, as illustrated in Figure 3.1: 1) Discovery; 2) Visioning; 3) Alternatives; 4) Preferred Alternative and Policy Development; 5) Plan Development; and 6) Review and Adoption. Each phase of the process included community engagement activities, which are described below.

The following is a summary of the phases:

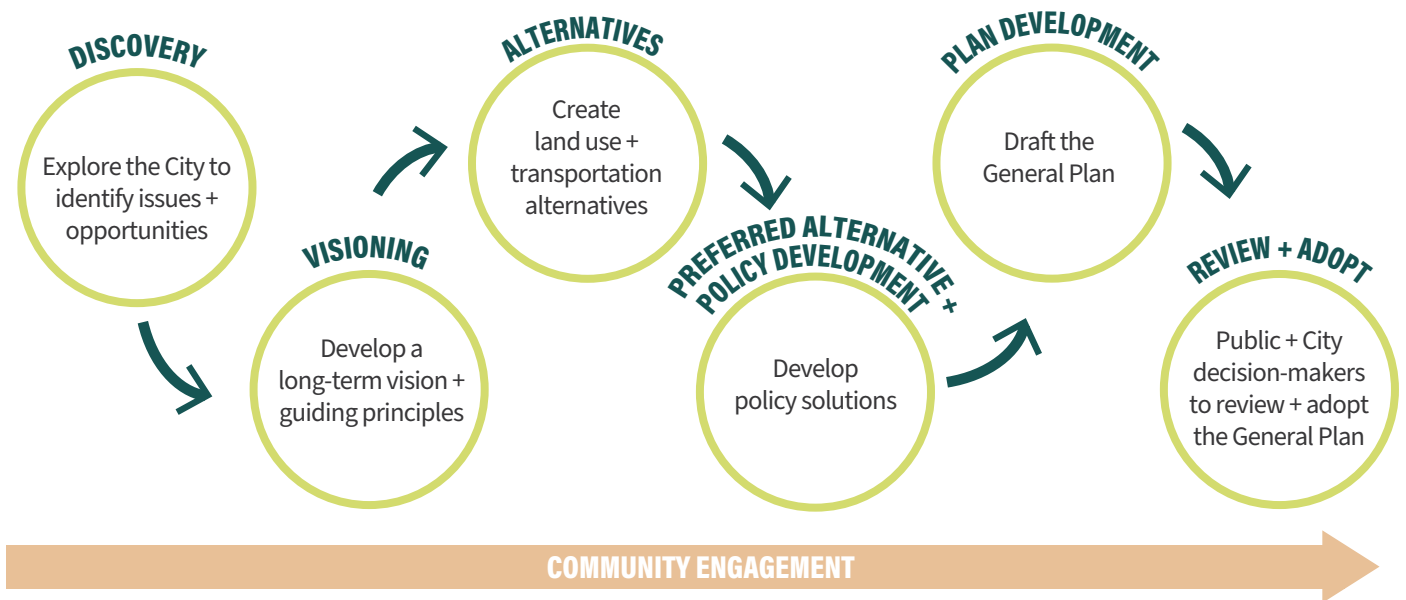
1. **Discovery.** During this phase, the General Plan Team conducted extensive analysis of existing conditions in the City. This resulted in a series of technical background reports on various topics including land use and urban form, housing conditions and needs, public health and equity, transportation and mobility, natural and manmade hazards, and military readiness and aviation, among others.
2. **Visioning.** This phase of the project involved extensive community engagement. The purpose was to confirm the issues and opportunities facing the City now and, in the future, and to identify opportunities for positive change. The result was a concise list of “vision themes” and guiding principles to achieve the vision for the future.
3. **Alternatives.** This phase began the process of comprehensively updating the City’s land use map, which identifies future intended land uses for every parcel of land across the City. Since the land use map had not been comprehensively examined in several years, and the City spans just over 106 square miles, this phase took a significant amount of time. It began with an iterative design charrette among the General Plan Team and led to three alternatives--or options--for the community to review and provide feedback.



Visioning Activity at Public Workshop



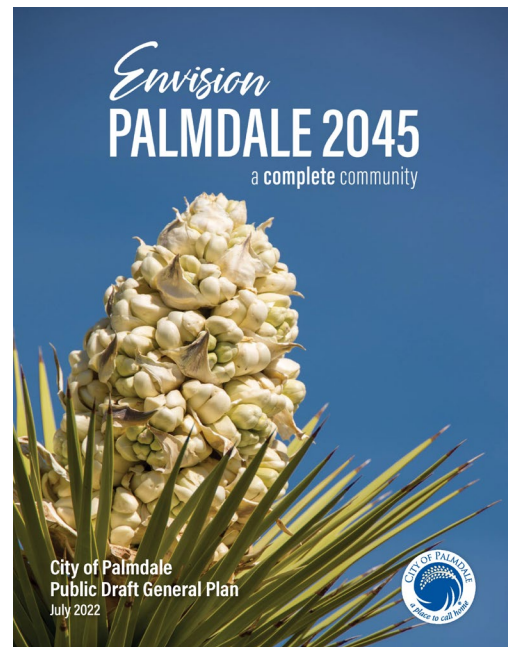
Final Preferred Alternatives Map

Figure 3.1**General Plan Process****4. Preferred Alternative and Policy Development.**

This critical phase involved two separate components. The first was to create a preferred land use map depicting the future of Palmdale based on community and decisionmaker feedback in phase three. The second part of this phase was the development of the General Plan policies. This phase included six topic-specific meetings with the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC; see information on the following pages) and the public on important General Plan topics. The result of this effort was a preferred land use designation map and policy frameworks that were used to help craft the updated General Plan.

5. Plan Development. During this phase, the General Plan Team prepared the various chapters of the General Plan. This phase involved many meetings between various City departments and the consultant team. The final product was the Draft General Plan for public review. This phase also involved the preparation of the Public Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR), completed pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Both documents—the Draft General Plan and the Draft PEIR—were released for public review and comment.

6. Review and Adoption. The final phase of work was the review and adoption of the General Plan. This phase involved community workshops on the Draft General Plan and Draft PEIR, and public hearings. The final product is the Final General Plan and the Final PEIR.



Community Engagement

Central to the updated Palmdale General Plan (Palmdale 2045) was an extensive community engagement process. The sections below outline the engagement process and activities that took place between 2019 and 2022. A detailed report is included in Appendix A

Engagement Objectives

At the beginning of the General Plan update process, the General Plan Team developed a Public Participation Plan, which outlined the types and timing of engagement activities. The Plan also identified the overall objective of the engagement program. These objectives are listed adjacently.

INFORM AND EDUCATE THE COMMUNITY ABOUT THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS.

ACHIEVE HIGH LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION FROM THE PALMDALE COMMUNITY.

ENGAGE RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES FOR THE LONG TERM.

ENGAGE A DIVERSE CROSS SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY.

Summary of Engagement Activities

Palmdale 2045’s vision was developed through community engagement. In-person interactions at traditional and pop-up workshop events, newsletters, and a variety of online activities, took place over the course of the four-year Plan update process. The diversity of activities was based on the recognition that each person might want to participate in the process in a different way.

It is important to note that the COVID-19 Pandemic occurred during the update process. From 2019 through March 2020, all General Plan activities were held both in-person and online. In response to State and local public health guidance regarding the COVID-19 virus, all engagement activities were held virtually from March 2020 through August 2021. While final community engagement activities were held in-person from July-September 2022.

These activities are described on the following page. A detailed overview of all engagement activities can be found in Appendix A.

Engaging with the Spanish-Speaking Community
An important component of the engagement process was to seek participation from Spanish-speaking populations in Palmdale and those under-represented in local government. As detailed in Appendix A, all meetings welcomed translation requests (made in advance to the City), all surveys were provided in hard copy format and in Spanish, and separate discussions with Spanish speakers, seniors, and others without internet access took place throughout the Plan update process. Additionally, all surveys and meeting outreach materials were available in both English and Spanish



Outreach Activities

At the onset of the process, the City spent considerable time and effort informing residents in Palmdale about the General Plan Update. As the list below indicates, every resident received notification about the General Plan, and information about the project was distributed widely through multiple channels throughout the entire process. Announcements were publicized in bilingual (Spanish/ English) format.

A summary of the methods used to inform the public about the process is below:

- A project website (www.Palmdale2045.org) that was updated regularly to provide information on the project throughout the process.
- Beginning March 2020, virtual meetings recorded and available for viewing on Palmdale 2045 YouTube channel.
- An email database created for the Plan update that had over 1,500 subscribers. Email blasts were sent regularly during the process to inform the community about upcoming engagement activities. These emails were also sent to many other distribution lists through homeowners' associations (HOAs), religious organizations, and school district offices, among others.
- Posting on the City's existing social media platforms.
- Palmdale Minute weekly video segments in English and Spanish.

- Announcements and interviews on Spanish radio.
- Digital Press releases in the Antelope Valley Press, Antelope Valley Times, and the Antelope Valley Daily News.
- Auto Mall electronic billboards.
- Print advertisements in Palmdale Connections Magazine (multiple times throughout the General Plan Update process)
- Flyers were posted at City Hall and banners were displayed throughout town.
- Paper copies of all surveys were circulated at public facilities and provided at key locations like SAVES and the Palmdale Transportation Center, among others.

Project Website

The project website (www.palmdale2045.org) was the primary forum to provide project updates, links to online meetings and surveys, meeting results, and documents to the public. The website also included a sign-up for a community database. The database was used to inform interested residents, businesses, and other stakeholders, providing information about General Plan Update activities, including upcoming meetings, availability of materials for review, and other information.



Palmdale2045.org

Community Workshops

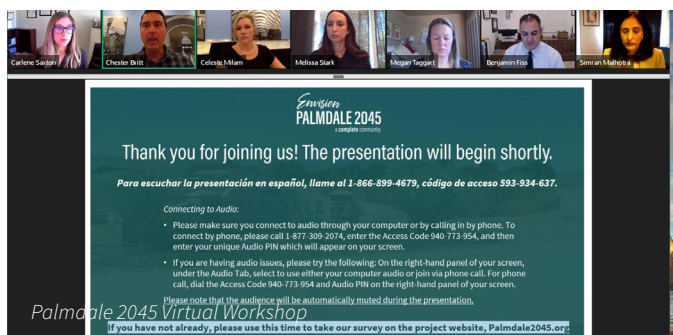
Community workshops were held at four key points in the process. These are described below:



Palmdale 2045 Visioning Workshop

Workshop #1.

On Saturday, August 24, 2019, and Tuesday, August 27, 2019, the City of Palmdale hosted the first series of community workshops for the General Plan Update. This workshop focused on identifying what makes Palmdale unique, developing a shared vision for the General Plan Update, and reviewing issues and opportunities. The same materials were presented at both in-person meetings and available in Spanish with live simultaneous translation.



Workshop #2.

On Saturday, August 8, 2020, from 9:30-11:30 am the General Plan Team presented a detailed overview of the three land use alternatives put forth in the virtual workshop + survey. The presentation included live polls and discussion between members of the community and the General Plan Team. The virtual workshop + survey was available between July 15 - August 23, 2020, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week and featured similar resources as those offered at an in-person meeting. The online platform invited feedback on three proposed concepts for future land use regulations in the City. Public comments received helped establish the location of land uses in the future of Palmdale. In addition, a YouTube recording of the virtual workshop was available for public view on the Palmdale 2045 YouTube channel following the live meeting on August 8, 2020.

Workshop #3.

On Thursday, February 4, 2021, from 5:00-7:00 pm the General Plan Team presented a detailed overview of the preferred land use alternative described in the online Briefing Book and survey. The presentation included live polls and discussions between the General Plan Team and community. Between January 13-February 17, 2021, an online survey with an accompanying Briefing Book that detailed the preferred land use alternative for the City’s General Plan update was available for public review and completion. The online platform invited feedback on the preferred land use alternative which ultimately became the City’s updated General Plan Land Use Map. The survey and briefing book were available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. Paper copies were also distributed throughout the City. In addition, a YouTube recording of the virtual workshop was available for public view on the Palmdale 2045 YouTube channel following the live meeting on February 4, 2021.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) Scoping Meeting.

The City of Palmdale held an EIR Scoping Meeting on June 30, 2021, from 5:30 to 6:30pm to provide an additional opportunity for input on the scope and content of the EIR. The EIR Notice of Preparation (NOP) was open for public comment through July 23, 2021, on the project website and on CEQAnet. In addition, a YouTube recording of the virtual scoping meeting was available for public view on the Palmdale 2045 YouTube channel following the live meeting.

Workshop #4.

On Wednesday, August 10, 2022, the City of Palmdale hosted the final workshop and open house to present the community with the Public Draft General Plan document - Palmdale 2045. The open house included interactive stations covering various elements of the General Plan, an overview presentation, and printed copies of the draft document for attendees to review. Approximately 35 community members—in addition to City staff and policy makers—attended the event. Spanish interpretation was provided. The meeting formally began with an introduction by City Staff, followed by a presentation by the General Plan Consultant Team. The presentation provided an overview of the key components of the General Plan including contents of each of the required elements.

Pop-up workshops

Pop-up workshops are held at popular events, utilizing similar materials to those from Community Workshops, and provided an opportunity to spread awareness for the General Plan update and engage even more residents in the General Plan Update.



Pop-up Workshop Series #1:

Between September and November 2019, the City of Palmdale held five pop-up workshops that included activities to identify what makes Palmdale unique, develop a shared vision for the General Plan Update, and review issues and opportunities. Across all events, approximately 500 people visited the City's General Plan booth.



Pop-up Workshop Series #2:

Between July and August 2020, City of Palmdale Staff conducted nine pop-up workshops at popular destinations around the City to spread awareness of the General Plan Update and to receive feedback on the land use alternatives. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and health crisis, the pop-up workshops did not include an interactive activity, and were focused on spreading awareness for the virtual engagement activities.



Community Surveys

Community Survey (Survey #1).

The City of Palmdale hosted an online “icebreaker” survey to inform residents of the ongoing General Plan Update, collect feedback related to daily life in Palmdale, and demographics information. The survey was available in English and Spanish on the Palmdale General Plan Update website (www.Palmdale2045.org) from April 2019 to August 2019. The survey had a total of 762 responses (nearly all in English).

Land Use Alternatives Survey (Survey #2).

Survey #2 was in conjunction with the second workshop, which described three land use alternatives and sought direction from the community. The survey was developed using StoryMap, an online survey software. The survey was available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week from July 15 – August 13, 2020, in both English and Spanish. A total of 418 surveys were collected (409 English and 9 Spanish), an average of 76 surveys submitted per week.

Preferred Land Use Alternative Survey (Survey #3).

Between January 13 and February 17, 2021, the City of Palmdale hosted a third online survey with an accompanying Briefing Book that detailed the preferred land use alternative for the City’s General Plan update. The online survey invited feedback on the preferred land use alternative, which ultimately became the City’s updated General Plan Land Use Map. The survey and accompanying briefing book were available 24-hours a day, 7-days a week. A total of 207 surveys were collected (201 English and 6 Spanish), with an average of approximately 41 surveys submitted per week.

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

Throughout the General Plan Update process, the team met with a 13-member advisory committee appointed by Palmdale City Council. The committee was comprised of residents who met to collaborate and provide community insight throughout the General Plan Update process. Virtual GPAC Meetings were live streamed to YouTube and included links to provide feedback and public comment.

- GPAC #1: June 5, 2019 | Introduction
- GPAC #2: September 11, 2019 | Existing conditions and community priorities
- GPAC #3: November 13, 2019 | Planning overview and guiding principles
- GPAC #4: December 11, 2019 | Housing existing conditions
- GPAC #5: January 15, 2020 | Land use alternatives existing conditions
- GPAC #5 Part 2: February 19, 2020 | Prepare draft land use alternatives
- GPAC #6: May 20, 2020 | Economic development existing conditions
- GPAC #7: July 29, 2020 | Three land use alternatives review
- GPAC #8: September 23, 2020 | Parks, open space, and conservation existing conditions
- GPAC #9: October 28, 2020 | Health and equity existing conditions
- GPAC #10: January 13, 2021 | Preferred land use alternative review
- GPAC #11: February 24, 2021 | Transportation existing conditions
- GPAC #12 Joint Workshop: June 17, 2021 | Safety policy framework review
- GPAC #13 Joint Workshop: June 30, 2021 | Climate, sustainability, and resilience policy framework review
- GPAC #14: Joint Workshop: July 15, 2021 | Land use and housing policy framework review
- GPAC #15 Joint Workshop: July 28, 2021 | Mobility policy framework review
- GPAC #16 Joint Workshop: August 5, 2021 | Military readiness and economic development policy framework review
- GPAC #17 Joint Workshop: August 11, 2021 | Health, equity, parks, and open space policy framework review
- GPAC #18 July 28, 2022 | Public Draft General Plan



Palmdale 2045 GPAC Meeting

Small Group Input

Throughout the General Plan Update process, the team met with small groups of stakeholders including business owners, local employees and residents, non-profit organization representatives, and religious organization representatives, among others. Below are brief descriptions of the input sought at these meetings.

Stakeholder Focus Group Series #1.

On March 6th and 7th 2019, the General Plan Team conducted five stakeholder group meetings with Palmdale industry leaders, educational entities, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations about issues and opportunities for the Palmdale General Plan Update. The General Plan Team also separately met with elected officials.

Economic Development Focus Group.

The General Plan Team conducted a similar focus group meeting on March 6, 2019, regarding economic development in Palmdale.

Stakeholder Focus Group Series #2.

In July 2020, the General Plan Team conducted nine stakeholder group meetings with Palmdale industry leaders, educational entities, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations to receive input on the three Palmdale General Plan Update land use alternatives.

Stakeholder Focus Group Series #3.

On February 8, 2021, the General Plan Team conducted three stakeholder focus group meetings with Palmdale industry leaders, educational entities, faith-based organizations, and community-based organizations to receive input on the Palmdale General Plan Update preferred land use alternative.

Decision Maker Updates

Throughout the General Plan Update process several meetings took place to update decision makers and receive input and direction. Separate meetings were held for review and consideration of the Housing Element, which are detailed in the Housing Element.

Phase One | December 2019.

The phase one briefing to City Council and Planning Commission included an overview of the project status, existing conditions, community engagement, and the draft vision and guiding principles.

- **Planning Commission presentation:** December 12, 2019
- **City Council presentation:** December 17, 2019

Phase Two | September 2020.

The results from a series of community engagement events on three land use alternatives was presented to City Council and Planning Commission in September 2020. Following direction from both decision-making bodies, the General Plan Team revised the three concepts into one preferred map, referred to as the “preferred land use alternative.”

- **Planning Commission presentation:** September 10, 2020
- **City Council presentation:** September 15, 2020

Phase Three | March 2021.

The preferred alternative received community feedback and direction, which was presented to City Council and Planning Commission in March 2021. Decision-makers provided additional direction and endorsed the preferred land use map.

- **Planning Commission presentation:** March 11, 2021
- **City Council presentation:** March 16, 2021

Phase Four | August 2021.

The phase four briefing to decision makers included an overview of the draft General Plan policy direction and a progress report since the last update.

- **Planning Commission presentation:** August 12, 2021
- **City Council presentation:** August 17, 2021