

# General Plan Advisory Committee Guidelines

## Purpose and Role of the GPAC

There are three main partners in the Hercules General Plan Update (GPU) project: first, the community, whose values and vision are the plan driver; next, City staff, who provide local knowledge and experience; and finally, the consultant team, which brings independent subject matter expertise. City staff and the consultant team work closely together as the “GPU Team.”

Input from across the community is important throughout the planning process. But it is impractical for the GPU Team to regularly collaborate with the community at large, so it’s helpful to have a smaller, representative group to work with. That’s where the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) comes in.

The GPAC has two primary roles:

- **Ambassadors:** GPAC members will advise on project outreach and engagement, provide added “eyes and ears” in the community, and act as ambassadors to facilitate broad participation in the General Plan update process.
- **Sounding Board:** The GPU Team will discuss key issues, focus areas, development options, and policy direction with GPAC members, who will help ensure that updates to the General Plan are aligned with community priorities.

The GPAC is purely advisory and is not a decision-making body; as such, it is not subject to the Brown Act. In contrast, the Planning Commission and City Council have important related roles. The Planning Commission will make recommendations related to the GPU to the City Council, and the City Council will provide direction at key points in the process and ultimately adopt the updated General Plan. Both the Planning Commission and City Council will rely heavily on GPAC input.

## GPAC Basics

- There will be approximately ten GPAC meetings, typically on the fourth Wednesday of the month, from 6:30 to 8:30pm. Meetings will be held every two to three months, though meetings may occur more or less frequently depending on the project phase.
- GPAC meetings will be in-person and open to the public.
- GPAC members have equal standing; there will not be a chair or a vice-chair.
- Members of the GPU Team will prepare meeting materials and facilitate GPAC meetings.
- Homework may be necessary. When the GPU Team shares materials in advance of a meeting, it is important for GPAC members to review them before the meeting.
- GPAC members are strongly encouraged to assist with community engagement activities, including spreading the word about, assisting at, and attending events.

- When speaking with the media, other community members, or organizations, GPAC members should only express their own ideas and opinions and not characterize the position of any other committee member, the GPAC, or the City.

## **GPAC Ground Rules**

### **Be a good listener:**

- Share the floor and allow everyone the opportunity to speak and share their ideas
- Be an attentive, active listener, and build on each other's ideas
- Seek to understand diverse viewpoints
- Do not interrupt one another
- Refrain from side conversations while others are speaking

### **Participate in good faith:**

- Recognize all/various forms of knowledge
- Allow space for differences of opinion
- Ask questions for clarification and mutual understanding
- Be curious, keep an open mind, and allow your perspective to evolve based on others' ideas and opinions

### **Be professional and respectful:**

- Build and maintain safety for everyone
- Disagree without being disrespectful
- Keep interactions positive and encouraging

## **Conflicts of Interest**

GPAC members should disclose potential conflicts of interest to the City's Community Development Director.