



## **GENERAL PLAN UPDATE**

## **OUTREACH SUMMARY REPORT**

**May 17, 2010**

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

**PASADENA**

Guiding Our Community's Future

**OUTREACH SUMMARY REPORT**

**CITY OF PASADENA**

**LAND USE, MOBILITY,  
OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION  
GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS UPDATE**

**MAY 17, 2010**

# OUTREACH SUMMARY REPORT

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Through nine months of community outreach, 3,000 Pasadena residents, business owners and community leaders provided thousands of comments on issues related to land use, mobility, open space and conservation. This Outreach Summary Report organizes these comments into main topic areas, or themes. Moving forward, this report will provide input, direction and a framework for updating the City's General Plan. The General Plan update process will begin by comparing the current General Plan elements with this outreach report to identify topics out of alignment, in conflict or not addressed. The community will then re-engage to consider land use and mobility alternatives that attempt to reflect community comments, recent environmental mandates, and other government requirements.

In 2009, the City began the process of updating four elements of the General Plan – Land Use, Mobility, and Open Space and Conservation. This marks the first significant update of the Land Use and Mobility Elements since the controversial growth management initiative and resulting landmark General Plan update of 1994. Facing many of the same questions about growth and density, public participation was set forth as the first priority of the update.

In the spring of 2009, the City Council appointed the General Plan Update Advisory Committee (GPUAC) to guide community outreach and participation in the update process. Staff and the GPUAC are working closely with the Planning Commission and Transportation Advisory Commission to address the comments received by the community.

With a goal of reaching as many people as possible, and specifically to reach segments of the community that generally do not participate, a nine-month outreach program was designed to last through November 2009. The program included numerous opportunities for staff and GPUAC members to hear firsthand from the public about their visions and concerns for Pasadena. By the end of the program, more than 3,000 people had participated in outreach activities and thousands of comments had been documented. These comments represent a broad range of ideas, concerns and interests.

Many participants did not have difficulty describing what they loved about the City: beautiful neighborhoods, historic architecture, great people, cultural and entertainment amenities, and the notion that, despite the fact that the City has a small-town feel, they can still find everything they need right here. This love for the City also leads to concern about change and loss of the character they cherish. People expressed worry that future high-density development, traffic and poor design of new buildings could cause a decline in the City's quality of life. They also noted challenges to the City's future, such as the quality of the public school system, geographic and economic disparities and the economy.

Comments related to density, design and traffic presented some of the more significant tensions. While people were very concerned about overdevelopment, many expressed an understanding that growth is needed to maintain economic vitality. People felt strongly that newer buildings should better reflect the City's historic character. However, some argued Pasadena needs a balance of modern and traditional architectural styles. Finally, an

overwhelming number of participants identified traffic as a major issue. At the same time, some expressed that traffic was not a significant issue and is necessary for business growth.

This Outreach Summary Report attempts to organize these comments into a manageable format that accurately reflects the thoughts of those who participated, including the agreements and disagreements among different perspectives. Part I of the report outlines the community outreach process. Parts II and III outline the most frequently heard and other frequently heard themes. Part IV outlines other recurring issues and concerns raised by the community that do not necessarily fit within the scope of the General Plan update. The appendix to the Outreach Summary Report includes documentation of each outreach program and the comments recorded at each session (see [www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan)).

### **Most Frequently Heard Themes**

These themes were consistently heard more frequently and more passionately than others, surfacing at nearly every meeting and workshop throughout the City.

#### *Community Character*

Community members spoke at length and with great passion about the characteristics that make Pasadena a special place. This is one area where there was little disagreement. When asked to rank several characteristics in priority, most participants noted that it is a combination of inseparable factors that make Pasadena unique. The characteristics most cited include small-town feel; great neighborhoods; historic architecture and preservation; trees and the beautiful natural setting; the prevalence of arts, culture and entertainment; and the diversity of people, businesses and neighborhoods.

In regard to historic preservation, suggestions were made to strengthen the preservation policies in the General Plan and to reword the Guiding Principle related to historic preservation. Participants described trees and the urban forest as iconic attributes of Pasadena, providing a unique sense of place, enhanced pedestrian experience and superior quality of life. However, there was also a sense by some participants that trees are threatened and need to be protected from new development and poor care.

#### *Growth and Density*

One of the greatest concerns for the community is about growth and density of future development and the potential impacts it could have on existing community character. Opinions on how to approach the issue, however, were diverse. For purposes of summary, comments were divided into three camps: those supporting a decrease in density, those seeking limited future density that is appropriately managed and those generally supporting increased density. The largest number of comments expressed a desire for less density and growth in the future.

#### *Design and Architecture*

The design and architecture of the City is a highly valued characteristic and another significant source of concern for the future. The vast majority of comments in this category were concerns about how new commercial, mixed-use and multi-family buildings fit within

the existing architectural context. Some expressed concern that the City lacks a common design vision and that some projects lacked imagination.

#### *Traffic*

Traffic congestion was identified as one of the most challenging issues facing the city. Although some pointed out that local traffic was not nearly as bad as other areas in the region and that a reasonable level of traffic volume in the City's business districts is necessary for economic success, many participants expressed frustration with an increase in traffic congestion. Higher density residential and office developments in the City's Central District were repeatedly cited as a main cause for the increased traffic congestion experienced throughout town. Pass-through trips (i.e. commutes that do not begin or end in Pasadena) were also identified as a significant cause of traffic congestion.

#### *Transit*

Participants recognized that the need for public transportation will intensify in the future and that the challenge to meet this need will deepen. There was a consensus that transit needs to be improved, expanded, better coordinated and made more accessible and affordable. Comments on transportation included focus on local efforts such as the ARTS Bus system and Dial-a-Ride, as well as support for regional efforts, such as the Gold Line Foothill Extension.

#### *Open Space and Parks*

Pasadena's parks and natural open spaces are loved and appreciated – participants said they wanted more of both. Community members from all neighborhoods identified parks as a major contributor to the quality of life in Pasadena. They appreciated the uniqueness of Pasadena's natural environment and the proximity to wild areas in the foothills and mountains. Some were concerned that open space may be lost to new development and that parks are needed in the Central District, where most of the new growth has occurred.

#### *Economic Development*

The economy was on many participants' minds during the outreach program. In general, participants thought that Pasadena has a healthy economy and a secure position as a business and retail center for the region. Nonetheless, concerns were raised about an increase in empty storefronts in commercial districts and about a possible imbalance between new multi-family housing and commercial development.

### **Other Frequently Heard Themes**

These themes were also heard throughout the outreach process, although not as frequently or at the same level of intensity as those previously identified.

#### *Environmental Sustainability*

Environmental sustainability, water and energy conservation and solid waste reduction were all identified as concerns during the outreach process. Participants supported Pasadena's current efforts in environmental sustainability and felt the City should make stronger efforts toward that goal. People wanted Pasadena to play a leadership role in sustainability, providing comments such as, "We will be a model of a sustainable city."

### *Parking*

Three major challenges were highlighted regarding the City's current parking conditions: the shortage of parking, the high cost of parking and the difficulty in locating structures and surface lots. Community outreach participants acknowledged that the combination of the three challenges affects the vitality of Pasadena's businesses, as it deters visitors and residents from shopping in certain parts of the City.

### *Walking and Biking*

In addition to transit, walking and biking are important alternative methods of transportation that are valued by the community. Participants referenced the proximity of businesses, tree-lined streets, historic architecture, and storefronts and cafes lining the sidewalk as things that make walking inviting. Other people remarked that they were deterred from walking when parking lots were located at the street, when architecture was poorly done, when street trees were lacking, when crossing the freeway and when traffic moved fast. Seniors and people with disabilities expressed concern about the poor condition of some sidewalks.

A handful of people said that the City was bike friendly and a safe place to cycle. However, those comments were overwhelmingly contradicted by others who believed the City is not safe for bicyclists and that Pasadena could do much more to make cycling safer and more enjoyable.

### *Affordable Housing*

Comments related to affordable housing focused on three main areas: the lack of affordable housing, location of affordable housing and the need for affordable housing to incorporate quality design. While there was strong support for more affordable housing, people also raised concerns over its impacts, the expense of building affordable housing, what it looks like and where it is located.

### *Disparities*

In the community character category, people praised Pasadena for its diversity of people, neighborhoods, housing types and income levels. However, there were a number of comments that described Pasadena as having disparities along geographic, economic, racial and ethnic lines. Some believe the City is fragmented by the 210 freeway and that there are disparities in the allocation of City resources and attention from the City Council.

### *Places for Youth*

Youth and other outreach participants expressed a need for more places for youth activities including safe locations for recreation, shopping and social interaction. Although Pasadena and its youth organizations provide numerous services within community centers and parks, people believe that more can and should be accomplished. Young people expressed a desire for more youth-oriented shopping opportunities and youth activities and venues, as well as less-expensive transit opportunities.

### **Other Recurring Issues and Concerns**

Some important concerns that were raised during the outreach process cannot be adequately addressed through the land use, mobility, and open space and conservation elements. While these topics overlap with the elements being updated, this General Plan update is not necessarily the appropriate vehicle to address these concerns. These topics are included in Part IV of this report as a means to relay concerns to the City Council to ensure that they are heard and addressed through other appropriate channels.

#### *Government Responsiveness*

The community shared both praise and criticism regarding accessibility and responsiveness of public officials and government in general.

#### *Education and Schools*

Prevailing public opinion points to the need to improve public schools, coupled with the recognition that good public schools are key to the livability and vitality of the City.

#### *Programming for Youth*

Youth and other outreach participants expressed a need for more youth activities.

#### *City Services*

Many people had positive comments about the services the City provides. Nonetheless, some believed there could be further improvement to a range of city services, from police and fire, to street maintenance, water, power, parks, library and planning.

#### *Financial Support for Arts and Culture*

While most comments celebrated the arts and culture in Pasadena, some noted that more could be done to financially support arts and culture.

#### *Homeless Services*

Concerning homelessness, people noted that Pasadena and its non-profit organizations offered better services than other cities, but expressed a desire for more services. Most of this topic would be addressed in the Housing Element of the General Plan.



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## INTRODUCTION

The City of Pasadena is currently updating four elements of its General Plan – Land Use, Mobility, Open Space and Conservation. A General Plan is the blueprint, or “road map,” to guide a city’s future for the next ten years and beyond.

The update process began with an extensive outreach program beginning in spring 2009. This is consistent with one of the seven guiding principles of Pasadena’s General Plan, which is to make community participation a permanent part of achieving a greater city. As part of the update, the City Council appointed a 22-member citizen’s committee with 11 primary members and 11 alternate members called the General Plan Update Advisory Committee, or GPUAC, to oversee the outreach process and the update of the elements. The GPUAC represents a host of community interests and ideals, made up of four mayoral representatives and two representatives from each council district, the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce and Pasadena Unified School District.

The GPUAC worked with staff and a consultant team to create a multi-faceted outreach process. The goal was to reach as many people as possible and specifically to reach segments of the population that do not generally engage in civic dialogue. Participants included people of many backgrounds, ages and interests.

Outreach efforts included staff and GPUAC participation at over 100 different meetings, workshops, special events, interviews, presentations and programs within the community. At the same time, the GPUAC held more than two dozen regular and special committee meetings, and created several subcommittees to meet on specific topics. Specific outreach activities included dozens of community meetings and workshops, interactive *Move>About* tours, a speaker series, a special youth outreach program and a community open house. By the end of the first community outreach phase, more than 3,000 people had participated and thousands of comments had been documented. All of the comments collected are summarized in this Outreach Summary Report.

The Open Space and Conservation Element update has a separate City Council-appointed advisory committee. That committee, along with staff, completed its own outreach program, in addition to participating in this outreach program.

The appendix of this report includes all of the comments collected, translated into one format and organized by source. To make sense of the thousands of comments, they were divided into most frequently heard themes and other heard themes, with a summary of each category. In reviewing and summarizing the multitude of comments, tensions and links were flagged. The report also outlines concerns raised by the community that do not fit within the context of the General Plan update.

The GPUAC and staff will use this Outreach Summary Report to identify the shared values and concerns of those who participated in the process, to establish a framework for a vision and then to create goals, objectives and policies for the updated General Plan elements. The process will begin with a comparison of the current General Plan elements with the input

provided during the first outreach process to identify areas of alignment, areas of conflict and areas that are not currently addressed.

Staff will work with the GPUAC to develop and refine alternatives for the areas of major conflict, complete a technical analysis of each alternative, and develop outreach programs that will describe the pros and cons of the proposed alternatives. The outreach report will provide direction throughout the update process, but must also be balanced by new environmental regulations (e.g. State Senate Bill 375), existing state requirements and consideration of economic and fiscal impacts. The proposed alternatives will also be checked for consistency with the other General Plan Elements (e.g. the Housing Element, and the Open Space and Conservation Element).

After weighing the tradeoffs of the proposed alternatives, preferred alternatives will be translated into specific policies and strategies to be incorporated into a draft updated General Plan. A new draft General Plan will be circulated widely to the City's advisory commissions –and throughout the community – before it is presented to the City Council.

#### *Pasadena's General Plan*

The State of California requires all cities to have a General Plan, with seven required “elements,” or chapters. Pasadena's General Plan is made up of the following 15 elements (including the year they were last updated):

- Required Elements:
  - Land Use (1994, updated in 2004)
  - Mobility (2004)
  - Noise (2002)
  - Safety (2002)
  - Housing (2002, currently being updated separately)
  - Open Space (1976, currently being updated separately)
  - Conservation (1976, currently being updated separately)
  
- Other Elements:
  - Public Facilities (1975)
  - Green Space, Recreation and Parks (2007)
  - Scenic Highways (1975)
  - Economic Development and Employment (1984)
  - Social Development (1976)
  - Historic and Cultural (1975)
  - Cultural and Recreational (1983)
  - Energy (1983)

As previously stated, four elements are being updated: Land Use, Mobility, Open Space and Conservation. The Land Use Element is a set of objectives and policies that guide the future of Pasadena. It specifies how much and where various types of development will be allowed, as well as standards for building intensity and population density. This element was updated in 1994, with minor changes in 2004.

Seven guiding principles were included as part of the 1994 Land Use update, and reaffirmed in 2004. These principles have served as the City's vision for achieving a greater city:

1. Growth will be targeted to serve community needs and enhance the quality of life;
2. Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena's historic character and environment;
3. Economic vitality will be promoted to provide jobs, services, revenues and opportunities;
4. Pasadena will be promoted as a healthy family community;
5. Pasadena will be a city where people can circulate without cars;
6. Pasadena will be promoted as a cultural, scientific, corporate, entertainment, and educational center for the region; and
7. Community participation will be a permanent part of achieving a greater city.

Pasadena's Mobility Element contains specific strategies for promoting safe, accessible and convenient transportation options for everyone living and working in the city. This element also includes strategies to protect neighborhoods from traffic, and for public transit, parking, bicycles and pedestrians. This element was adopted in 2004.

The Open Space and Conservation elements are being combined as one element. It will set goals and priorities for preserving and enhancing Pasadena's open space and for conserving energy, water, our urban forest and other natural resources. The elements were last updated in 1977. This update will complement the new Green Space, Recreation and Parks Element, which was adopted in 2007.

Although the Open Space and Conservation Element update has a separate advisory committee with focused outreach activities, the group also participated in many of the outreach activities outlined in this report. All open space and conservation comments in this report will be forwarded to that committee for consideration and inclusion in that element.

The Housing Element is being updated separately, and is currently in the draft stage. It is expected to be adopted by the City Council in 2010. The Housing Element included a separate outreach program mostly completed in 2008, with an additional outreach meeting scheduled for the summer of 2010. Other elements, such as Scenic Highways, Noise, Safety and Economic Development are not being updated at this time.

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## **PART I: OUTREACH PROCESS**

Staff worked with the GPUAC and the consultant firms of Gensler and Hogle-Ireland to create a multi-faceted outreach process. The goal was to reach as many people as possible and specifically to reach segments of the population that do not generally engage in civic dialogue.

Participants included Pasadena residents, business people, property owners, non-profits, civic leaders, students and others representing a variety of backgrounds, ages and interests. Meetings and activities were held at numerous locations throughout the community. Spanish translation was provided at many of the meetings and in some of the printed materials. Child-care services were also provided at several events.

The format of activities and the way information was gathered was modified during the process, benefiting from experience as the process developed. The first step of the outreach process consisted of interviews with individual people to get an initial sense of the major issues in the community. At the community organization meetings, staff and the GPUAC used similar versions of a comment form which included more specific questions on Pasadena's issues and the existing General Plan's guiding principles.

During the community-wide and district workshops, comments were gathered using open ended questions with facilitators asking for examples and seeking specific details, definitions and explanations. Such discussions focused on the factors that make Pasadena unique and the challenges and issues facing the City. The community's thoughts and concerns regarding the future will be addressed in the next phase of the update process.

Staff and the GPUAC focused on open-ended questions for a majority of the outreach process because this type of question would generate a wider range of opinions and comments. The GPUAC recognized a downside of this approach, which is that it does not allow for statistical analysis. However, the GPUAC determined that it was more important to engage in a broader conversation with the community

At the Open House, a combination of focused questions and open-ended discussions were used. Interactive exhibits asked participants to mark which guiding principle means the most to them and whether new principles should be added. Some preliminary findings from the outreach activities completed to date were also shared. Throughout the outreach process, the public was also given an opportunity to share their own thoughts in writing through the website or regular mail.

GPUAC members participated in every community meeting as group facilitators and scribes. The variety of tools used resulted in comments that reflect the breadth of land use, mobility and open space and conservation concerns in Pasadena.

Outreach activities in 2009 included the following:

- Stakeholder Interviews – During the spring, staff and a consultant interviewed more than 75 stakeholders, representing a cross section of the City to gain a broad understanding of how people view Pasadena. Those interviewed represented various groups, including:
  - Affordable housing providers
  - Arts groups
  - Association of Realtors
  - Business and commercial property owners
  - Civil and service organizations
  - Developers, architects and construction industry firms
  - Central District residents
  - Educational institutions
  - Ethnic, racial and cultural groups
  - GPUAC members
  - Historic preservation groups
  - Large and medium employers
  - Neighborhood associations
  - Recreation groups
  - Religious institutions
  - Seniors
  - Social service providers
  - Transportation groups
  - Youth and young adults
  
- Community Organizations – During July and August, staff and GPUAC members met with more than three dozen neighborhood associations, business groups and non-profit organizations to discuss priorities and concerns. Approximately 450 people attended these meetings, with participation from resident associations, business groups and non-profit organizations. Below is a list of the community organizations visited:
  - Neighborhood Associations:
    - 99 N. Raymond (condominium complex)
    - Asociación de Vecinos Unidos
    - Banbury Oaks Neighborhood Association
    - Bridgen-Ranch Neighborhood Association
    - Bungalow Heaven Neighborhood Association
    - Central District residents
    - Coalition for a Common Vision
    - Cypress-Lincoln Village Neighborhood Association
    - East Orange Grove Neighborhood Association
    - Eaton Blanche Park Neighborhood Association
    - Garfield Heights Neighborhood Association
    - Granada Court (condominium complex)

- Historic Highlands Neighborhood Association
  - Holly Street Village (apartment complex)
  - Hudson Condominiums
  - Linda Vista/Annandale Association (LVAA)
  - Lower Hastings Ranch Association
  - Madison Heights Neighborhood Association
  - Oak Knoll Neighborhood Association
  - Orange Heights Neighborhood Association
  - Pasadena Place (condominium complex)
  - Sierra Madre Villa Neighborhood Association
  - South Allen Neighborhood Association
  - Upper Hastings Ranch Association
  - Washington Square Neighborhood Association
  - West Pasadena Residents' Association (WPRA)
- Business Groups:
    - East Washington business group
    - Foothill Pasadena American Institute of Architects (AIA)
    - Hastings Ranch and East Pasadena business and property owners group
    - North Lake Village Business Association
    - Old Pasadena Management District
    - Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Board
    - Pasadena-Foothills Association of Realtors
    - Playhouse District Association Board
    - South Lake Avenue Business Association Board
  - Non-Profit Organizations:
    - Cultural Leaders Group
    - Pasadena Affordable Housing Group
    - Executive Roundtable of Non-Profit Executive Directors
    - Pasadena Heritage
- Do-It-Yourself Workshops – During August and September, staff provided training for local groups to conduct their own General Plan meetings to discuss priorities and concerns. A total of four workshops were conducted, with most of them organized by residents of multi-family developments. These workshops provided another unique way to gather information.
  - *Move>About* Tours – In September and October, Pasadenans turned out by car, bus, bike, the Gold Line and on foot for six *Move>About* tours across the City. The self-guided tours included a booklet where participants wrote their comments on a variety of topics including design, transit, bicycling and open space. Over a dozen local businesses and a non-profit organization participated as tour stops. Sixty-six people returned their booklets, completing approximately 135 individual tours.



- Community-Wide Workshops – In September, residents were invited to five community-wide workshops to discuss Pasadena’s unique characteristics and challenges. Meetings were held on weeknights in the Northwest, Southwest, East and Northeast. In addition, a meeting was held on a Saturday afternoon in the Central District. Spanish translation and child-care services were provided at all of the workshops. These workshops were not highly attended, with only 50 people participating.
- Council District Workshops – In September and October, each City Council member hosted a General Plan workshop to discuss with their constituents the unique qualities and challenges that face Pasadena and their districts. These workshops were very well attended, with a total of 300 people participating. Each meeting began with an introduction by the respective council member. Then staff and the GPUAC led group discussions on the qualities that make Pasadena special and the challenges facing the City. At the end of the workshop, groups shared their comments with each other. Spanish and Mandarin translation and child-care services were provided at some of the workshops.
- Commissioners Workshop – In October, a special workshop was held for all City commissioners and committee members. Nearly 40 commission members representing over a dozen commissions participated.
- Speaker Series – From September to November, more than a dozen local professionals sparked conversations on key land use and mobility issues through an informative speaker series program. Topics included housing and density, design, traffic, water resources and economic development. A total of 200 people attended the speaker series. The series was also videotaped and shown on the local cable station 55-KPAS, and placed on the City’s website.
- Youth Outreach – Throughout the summer and fall, staff and the GPUAC met with the City’s Youth Council and youth participants from public schools, private schools, youth service groups and religious institutions citywide. A total of 300 youth participated in activities which included an art exhibit, a customized *Move>About* tour on the Gold Line and city model building. Staff also visited several schools and youth groups and facilitated discussions where the students created binders, or “slam books,” to express their ideas on Pasadena’s future. Many of the activities were special events with participation from youth throughout the community. Below is a list of specific community youth organizations and schools visited:
  - Pasadena Youth Council
  - Day One
  - El Centro
  - Marshall High School
  - Blair High School
  - Muir High School

- **Open House Extravaganza** – On November 14, the community celebrated the completion of the outreach phase with a community open house held in the South Lake business district. The event provided visitors an opportunity to hear some of the community feedback gathered to date, learn about the issues and share additional thoughts. Over 700 people attended the Open House, which included interactive exhibits on land use, mobility and open space, mini-speaker sessions, a youth exhibit, food vendors, a city model-building exercise, children’s activities, a community mural project and live entertainment. Child-care services were provided.
- **Other Community Outreach** – A variety of other opportunities were taken to get the word out about the General Plan update. Staff and the GPUAC attended community events, including National Night Out, Art Night, the Latino Heritage Festival, the Green Fair, back-to-school nights and many others.

Significant attempts were made to reach as much of the community as possible. The GPUAC acknowledges that the outreach methods employed are not “scientific,” but instead collect “snapshots” of the community. In addition, this report may not fully capture the passions expressed by the community when participants described their likes and dislikes.

Not all segments of the community participated equally, and it is unclear whether or not participation fully represents the community. Furthermore, some participants represented more than one group, such as business people who are also Pasadena residents. The GPUAC will continue to outreach aggressively as the General Plan update process continues.

*Outreach Communications*

Many traditional and new forms of media were used to publicize the outreach events. Posters, flyers, handouts and postcards were distributed to residents, businesses and students. The campaign included press releases and articles in local newspapers and City newsletters, online advertisements, and public service announcements and programming on the local cable station 55-KPAS.

An update article was featured in seven issues of the City’s newsletter “Pasadena In Focus” from March 2009 to March/April 2010, which is mailed to 54,000 households. A special issue dedicated to the General Plan was distributed in August. Staff also distributed weekly email blasts to a list of more than 700 subscribers (both individuals and groups) and multiple letters to faith-based and non-profit organizations to publicize events. Emails and articles were distributed through other groups and organizations, such as the City’s Neighborhood Connections program, the West Pasadena Residents’ Association newsletter and the South Lake Avenue Business Association website. Banners were also placed on ARTS buses and displayed at community centers.

Significant outreach efforts were made to reach the students and their parents at area schools. Over 20,000 flyers highlighting outreach activities were distributed to every student of the Pasadena Unified School District. Flyers were also distributed to many private schools. In addition, City staff participated at back-to-school nights for eight middle and high schools.

The program also incorporated an interactive website at [www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan](http://www.cityofpasadena.net/generalplan) and a Facebook page at [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) (type Pasadena General Plan).

#### *Circulation of Draft Report*

The draft Outreach Summary Report was completed in March 2010 and was circulated to the City Council, all City commissions and the public for a 45-day review period. People were asked to comment on the report and to assess whether it accurately summarized what they heard during the community outreach phase. The draft report and appendix were available for viewing at the Pasadena Permit Center, all city libraries and community centers and online on the General Plan website.

During the review period, staff and the GPUAC presented the draft report to the City Council and the following commissions and committees:

- Accessibility and Disability Commission
- Commission on the Status of Women
- Community Development Commission
- Design Commission
- Environmental Advisory Commission
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Human Relations Commission
- Human Services Commission
- Northwest Commission
- Open Space and Conservation Element Committee
- Planning Commission
- Recreation and Parks Commission
- Transportation Advisory Commission
- Senior Commission
- Youth Council

Commissioners were asked to comment on the overall report, whether it was consistent with what they hear from the community and whether it was consistent with the specific issues their commission regularly addresses. In addition, the public was invited to a special hearing with the GPUAC to comment on the draft report.

Numerous comments were received on the draft, including verbal comments at the public hearing, letters, emails and messages on the General Plan website. Several City commissions and the Pasadena Chamber of Commerce submitted formal comments. However, the majority of the comments were submitted by individuals. Staff and the GPUAC carefully reviewed and discussed the comments received. All of the comments on the draft report are included in the appendix.

Overall, the comments received were favorable towards the draft report with most people stating it accurately reflected what they have heard from the community. For the most part, comments fell into four categories: modifications to the topics, the tone of the report, the outreach process, and the future use of the report.

The largest number of comments received on the draft report focused on development density and parks and open space. The comments related to density echoed those heard during the outreach completed in 2009 – with a majority of the new comments on development density expressing dissatisfaction with the design and scale of many of the recent projects completed in the Central District. Other commenters reiterated a need for additional parks and open space areas, specifically requesting Arlington Gardens be designated as an open space site.

Other comments related to modifying the topics, suggesting that accessibility needs for people with disabilities should be included in the report, historic preservation should be a dominant or frequently heard theme, trees should be a dominant or frequently heard theme, smaller multi-family residential projects should be preserved, the importance of arts and culture with regards to the economy should be added, a building's architecture should focus on the quality of materials and the context of its surroundings, the importance of natural open space should be highlighted and that Northwest Pasadena should be given more focus.

Many of the comments noted above have been incorporated into this final report. Changes were made when a significant number of new comments were received on the item, or when it was deemed necessary to add after reviewing the comments from the outreach completed in 2009. The GPUAC reviewed the additional comments and modified the report appropriately.

Some people expressed concern that the report included too many generalizations and did not provide enough specific examples. Others supported the use of open-ended questions used during the outreach process because it encouraged a broad discussion of issues with the community. The Pasadena Chamber of Commerce Board was concerned that the report appeared to be dominated by residential groups and did not adequately balance economic needs or fairly represent the concerns expressed by business representatives.

Finally, there was strong agreement that the final report should set the framework for the General Plan update as it moves forward. Other comments focused on suggestions and ideas that can be incorporated in future phases of the update.

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## **PART II: MOST FREQUENTLY HEARD THEMES**

These themes were consistently heard more frequently and more passionately than others. These items came up at nearly every meeting and workshop throughout the City.

### **Community Character**

Community members spoke at length and with great passion about the characteristics that make Pasadena a special place. This is one area where there was little disagreement. When asked to rank several characteristics in priority, most participants agreed that it is a combination of inseparable factors that make Pasadena unique. At the same time, it was expressed that these same factors should be maintained, and future changes in the community should not threaten Pasadena's high quality of life.

The characteristics most cited as the contributing factors include Pasadena's small-town feel; great neighborhoods; historic architecture and preservation; trees and the beautiful natural setting; the prevalence of arts, culture and entertainment; and the diversity of people, businesses and neighborhoods.

#### *Small-Town Feel*

The phrase "small-town feel" may have been the single most prevalent comment heard throughout the outreach process. When asked to explain this sentiment, participants described Pasadena as accessible, neighborly, manageable, having a strong sense of place, having a strong community spirit, family-oriented, and interactive. Other definitions included the importance of having businesses, services and other amenities close to each other and close to home.

#### *Great Neighborhoods*

Community members commented about the strong presence and preservation of single-family housing and neighborhoods; yet, an appreciation for the variety of multi-family housing types available within the City was also expressed. Great neighborhoods were defined as "walkable," with libraries, trees and gardens. Specifically, "Neighborhoods are identifiable" and "Everyone has a porch." Great neighborhoods were further described as being protected from the impacts of industry and commerce (such as traffic and noise), yet having connectivity to the broader community.

#### *Historic Architecture and Preservation*

Historic architecture is a prominent part of Pasadena's character. Participants expressed appreciation for preservation of historic buildings both because they value the City's heritage and because of the architectural quality they bring to the City. Specifically mentioned were buildings by the architects Greene & Greene, the Rose Bowl, City Hall, Central Library, the Civic Auditorium and the Colorado Street Bridge.

In addition, the need for new development to be more respectful of historic architecture is discussed extensively in the design and architecture section. However, many community members felt that there could be more emphasis on historic preservation to continue to protect and maintain the character, heritage, and "feeling of living in Pasadena."

Suggestions included strengthening preservation policies in the General Plan, providing stronger regulations for remodeling, protecting the interiors of historic buildings and the City investing more in landmarks and landmark districts. Others advocated more detailed citywide surveys to better identify historic structures. Specifically, a petition with over 50 names was submitted requesting the second Guiding Principle be reworded from “Change will be harmonized to preserve Pasadena’s historic character and environment,” to “Pasadena’s historic resources will be preserved, and change will be harmonized to enhance Pasadena’s historic character and environment.”

#### *Trees and the Natural Setting*

In addition to the built environment, participants also expressed appreciation for preservation of the natural environment. Participants described trees and the urban forest as iconic attributes of Pasadena, providing a unique sense of place, enhanced pedestrian experience and superior quality of life.

Tree-lined streets and open space within the urban environment were deemed important, as were specific settings such as Eaton Canyon, the Arroyo Seco and views of the San Gabriel Mountains’ ridgeline. Green space and nature are highly valued by the community. However, there was also a sense that trees are threatened and need better care and protection from new development.

The majority of comments suggested that more trees should be planted throughout Pasadena to further build upon the sense of “green” that is recognized and valued by residents. Trees were also identified as necessary to strike a balance “between [the] urban and green environment,” shading sidewalks and cooling the City.

There was also concern that the City does not manage the urban forest with the best of care. Comments cited a lack of general maintenance of street trees and premature removal. Other comments described a preference for maintaining large shade trees, such as the Ficus trees on Green Street, over new streetscape projects utilizing Ginkgo and Palm trees on Colorado Boulevard. There was a small number of people that were concerned that large trees can uplift sidewalks and create safety concerns. In addition, overgrown trees can block light from streetlights, creating safety issues at nighttime.

#### *The Prevalence of Arts, Culture, and Entertainment*

The fact that Pasadena has a broad variety of shopping, dining, arts, culture and entertainment options was also important in defining the City’s character. Community members appreciated that a great variety of “big city” amenities were available within Pasadena. They highlighted the City’s location as the hub of the San Gabriel Valley, and many enjoyed the fact that they rarely have to leave the City because so much is available here. Comments included “There are excellent shopping opportunities and variety,” “There is so much to do here,” and “The City has all the amenities most cities wished they had - having it all here is a convenience for its residents.” Pasadena was also highlighted for the civic auditorium, various museums and the public library system as excellent public amenities. The Rose Bowl and Tournament of Roses’ Parade were identified as important contributors to Pasadena’s character and history.

### *Diversity of People, Businesses and Neighborhoods*

Participants continuously referred to the diversity of the City as a positive and special characteristic. Diversity was defined in many ways, including cultural, ethnic, racial, age and economic. Essentially, commenters value a diversity of people, businesses and neighborhoods. Comments included appreciation for the great range of people in the City and a need to support job opportunities and diverse housing – multi-family, single-family, affordable, etc. – throughout the City and job opportunities to maintain ongoing diversity in the future.

Members of business groups also highly valued the City’s positive community character. It was important to these groups that commercial districts maintain variety, uniqueness and “mom and pop” businesses.

### *Preservation of Community Character*

Because the characteristics described above are seen by the community as defining Pasadena, community members expressed concern regarding the potential loss of any of them. Many suggestions were offered to preserve and enhance the City’s character, such as programs to maintain single-family neighborhoods, support local business districts and beautify landscaping along major transportation corridors. The preservation and enhancement of existing community character is paramount in plans for the future.

### *Related Topics*

Many of the factors within the definition of community character overlap with other categories more fully discussed in other areas of this report. The focus on history, iconic buildings that have stood the test of time and treasured single-family neighborhoods overlaps with comments about historic preservation and architecture of new buildings. The sub-topic of historic preservation is closely connected to design and architecture, since new buildings often have an important impact on historic structures.

Concerns about negative impacts on existing neighborhoods are related to questions about the potential impacts of additional density and growth. Underpinning the stability of the community as a whole are concerns with economic development and support for business and the arts. Finally, while diversity is valued many also believe that diversity is also linked with disparities within the City.

## **Growth and Density**

Clearly, one of the greatest concerns for the community is centered around growth and density of future development and the potential impacts it could have on existing community character. Opinions on how to approach the issue, however, were diverse. For purposes of summary, comments were divided in three areas: (a) those that want to see density decreased; (b) those that want to see limited future density that is appropriately managed; and (c) those that generally support increased density. Comments related to development density were primarily focused on high-density multi-family and mixed-use residential projects. However, some comments were heard on commercial projects and larger office developments in general.