

# Workshop 1: Natural Resources and Recreation

## SUMMARY

The following goals reflect priorities of the General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) and General Plan Update Steering Committee (GPUSC), previous engagement and outreach feedback from community members, as well as certain State General Plan and other natural resources and recreation related requirements. As this workshop is focused on natural resources and recreation, these goals address environmental protection, ecosystem restoration and rewilding, water quality, energy, outdoor open space for recreation purposes, and recreation programs and facilities. The paragraph below each goal provides context into the importance of that goal. Topics and actions, listed below their associated goal, encompass a range of possible opportunities and strategies that may be taken to achieve these goals. Input received under each goal will be used to both refine the goals and develop draft policies for the General Plan Update.

## DRAFT GOALS AND POLICY TOPICS

### *Natural Resources*

#### **Goal 1: Ecosystems that are connected and expansive**

Ecosystems provide important services, such as filtering and storing water, storing carbon in vegetation and soil, purifying the air, providing habitat for wildlife, and creating visually appealing and enjoyable places for people. Well-functioning ecosystems include diverse native and naturalized non-invasive species which support complex food webs, a mix of habitats, and nutrient cycling. Creating and promoting native and climate adapted species across

public and private land will create large and resilient ecosystems that support each other.

- Native vegetation in parks and public spaces
- Removal of invasive species on public lands to protect native habitats
- Residential landscaping that contributes to ecosystems and wildlife habitat

### **Goal 2: Ecosystems that are conserved and restored**

Ecosystem restoration and conservation are vital for maintaining unique grassland, woodland, marsh, dune, and other habitats. Large ecological reserves can serve as nurseries for native and climate-adapted species that support smaller ecosystems across Newport Beach. Further ecosystem restoration could restore additional habitats for protecting endangered species, building resilience to coastal flooding and sea level rise, and encouraging community involvement in environmental efforts.

- Dune restoration to enhance coastal habitat and protect coastal development from flooding
- Restoration of kelp beds
- Education programming for community involvement in environmental protection

### **Goal 3: Clean water in Newport Bay and the coast**

Clean water is necessary for human health, recreation, and aquatic habitat and organisms. Improving water quality in Newport Bay and in coastal waters can ensure safe enjoyment of these irreplaceable natural resources for residents and visitors, while continuing to support the businesses and employers that rely on close proximity to the coast. Reducing stormwater runoff, restoring

floodplains, and preventing waste from entering waterbodies can improve water quality and realize the benefits of clean water.

- Safe recreation and fishing
- Green stormwater infrastructure to protect Newport Bay from runoff
- Reduce paved surfaces

#### **Goal 4: Water that is Conserved and used responsibly**

Clean water is a precious resource in Southern California. Reduced indoor and outdoor water use can play an important role in conserving water. By implementing best practices for landscaping and irrigation on public property and offering incentives for residents and commercial businesses to conserve water on their property, the City can do its part in sustaining long-term water supply.

- Drought tolerant landscapes and turf reduction
- Increase graywater systems for outdoor irrigation
- Rain gardens and rain barrels

#### **Goal 5: A city with clean air that prevents air pollution**

Poor air quality has numerous health consequences, especially for vulnerable populations, such as children, older adults, and people with asthma. Encouraging walking, biking, and transit and building more electric vehicle charging can help reduce air pollution caused by vehicles, and using landscape barriers along busy roadways or as a buffer between other potential pollutants can help clean the air before it reaches sensitive populations.

- Barriers between high-traffic highways and roads and sensitive uses such as residences and schools
- Increased electric vehicle charging infrastructure

- Infrastructure to encourage alternative modes of transportation

### **Goal 6: Viewpoints and corridors that are preserved**

Sweeping views of the beaches, harbor, and coast distinguish Newport Beach as a city with unparalleled natural beauty. Viewsheds often hold historic or scenic value and should be protected for current and future generations. Preserving viewpoints and corridors allows the public to appreciate the City's beauty and character.

- Standards to protect identified view sheds
- Increase public amenities for public view points such as observation decks or plazas, benches, markers and signage, telescopes, lighting, and landscape

### **Goal 7: A city that leverages alternative sources of energy**

Leveraging alternative and renewable energy sources can reduce emissions from vehicles and buildings to help meet California's greenhouse gas reduction targets. Facilitating a transition to electric vehicles, including watercraft, promoting electrification of buildings, and utilizing public facilities to generate renewable energy can help reduce local air pollution and overall reliance on fossil fuels, increasing energy security in the community.

- City vehicle fleet transition to electric and other alternative-fuel vehicles
- Public electric boat charging infrastructure
- Maintenance of public charging infrastructure

### **Goal 8: A city with minimal impacts from oil and gas drilling activities**

Phasing out oil production can help achieve the State objective of phasing out extraction of oil and gas by 2045. Although the City already prohibits new gas and oil drilling, plans for phasing out oil extraction can help the City prioritize investments in clean energy and restore ecosystems.

- A plan for phasing out extraction of oil and gas consistent with State goals
- Prohibit and oppose new drilling activities
- Support clean energy industry (i.e., electric vehicle infrastructure, clean City vehicle fleet, etc.)
- Identification and allocation of alternative funding sources for the Tidelands Fund

## *Recreation*

### **Goal 1: A community with high-quality recreation programs**

Recreation programs enrich community members' lives by building social connections and providing opportunities for learning and physical activity. Recreation programs that are of high-quality and tailored to the community's needs can foster an engaged and healthy community.

- High-quality events and programming for residents, prioritizing families with children and older adults
- Use of traditional and digital media to inform residents about upcoming events and programs
- Partnerships with local organizations to identify program opportunities

### **Goal 2: New parks and connections that increase resident access to recreation, parks, and open space opportunities**

Parks are a vital asset in any community, providing opportunities for refuge, recreation, and socialization, while offering physical and mental health benefits. Newport Beach's varying landscape provides a variety of unique recreational opportunities for the community. Increasing park access and

developing recreational opportunities throughout the community can ensure these benefits are available to all residents of all ages and needs.

- Increased connectivity to create a connected park and open space network
- A parks master plan to assess and plan for park needs across the city
- Build new parks in conjunction with new residential development
- Increase joint use park and facility agreements with schools

**Goal 3: Open space, park, and recreation facilities that are preserved, upgraded, and well-maintained**

The preservation and maintenance of open space and park facilities is essential to maintain community access to recreational opportunities. The maintenance and needed upgrades to these facilities can help protect City investments while ensuring that residents have continued access to high-quality recreational facilities that meet changing needs.

- Park improvements based on localized neighborhood needs, such as shade structures, dog parks, etc.
- Prioritization of areas with lower-than-average park access
- Prevention of any loss of parkland or open space

**Goal 4: A City with established and maintained relationships to facilitate interagency and interorganizational coordination**

Coordination with internal departments and outside agencies and organizations creates opportunities to share resources, promotes effective communication, and can help facilitate the successful implementation of General Plan goals and policies. Moreover, coordination can increase the quality of and access to parks and open space through integrated strategies and efficient use of resources.

- Continued collaboration with County and State agencies to maintain trails in public open space, such as Upper Newport Bay
- Additional/enhanced joint use agreements with schools to provide public access to play areas, pool facilities, gymnasiums, sports fields, and other facilities
- Interdepartmental coordination to identify recreational priorities

**Goal 5: Parks and recreation facilities that are adapted to meet a variety of needs for existing and future residents, including people with disabilities**

As the environment changes and the population shifts, it is important that open space continues to meet community needs and provides benefits to human health, well-being, and the environment. Adapting parks and recreation facilities to serve older adults and people with disabilities can help to serve all residents now and in the future. Furthermore, designing parks and recreation facilities to be resilient to extreme heat, flooding, and wildfire can ensure these amenities continue to function despite environmental changes.

- Recreation facility enhancements that increase accessibility for those with disabilities (ramps, railing, ADA parking)
- Design standards for parks as a place of refuge during extreme heat (shade, seating, water fountains, etc.)
- Flood management standards/incentives
- Identify resilience/cooling center needs for hot days

**Goal 6: A City that protects public beach access**

Beaches are one of the most important public open spaces for providing relief during hot summer days and access to the ocean. Maintaining physical access points and supportive facilities and services can help protect continued public beach access.

- Assessment of beach access points that may be at risk of flooding or erosion
- Beach access infrastructure and maintenance to be resilient to coastal hazards
- Maintaining high sand quality
- Regional coordination for sand nourishment

**Goal 7: Adequate support facilities in open space and recreation facilities**

Support facilities are an important aspect of providing parks and recreation spaces that are highly used and enjoyed by the community. Support facilities include but are not limited to, restrooms, showers, lifeguard towers, parking, and staffing. Providing and maintaining facilities needed to support varying recreational spaces in the City can help ensure parks and open spaces are enjoyed by the community and maintain a high-quality level of service.

- Support facilities and services in coastal areas and parks for residents and visitors
- Support facilities that are resilient to flooding, erosion, and other hazards
- Identification of support facilities and service needs
- Lifeguard pipeline program



**From:** Debbie Stevens <[dstevens@envaudit.com](mailto:dstevens@envaudit.com)>  
**Sent:** October 01, 2024 5:08 PM  
**To:** Zdeba, Benjamin <[bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov](mailto:bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov)>  
**Subject:** GPAC Meeting and Comments

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I've reviewed the GPAC Agenda Package and offer the following comments:

- Overall, I like the Visions statement and have one suggestion. Page 31 of the Vision Statement, last sentence of the 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph. Suggested wording change “. . . Newport will ~~have the potential to become~~ remain an exceptional city . . .”
- Natural Resources and Recreation Goals/Policies – there are other low/zero emission vehicles than electric (e.g., hydrogen) and we need to make sure that alternatives to electric vehicles are also considered. This is mentioned in some of the goals but not others.
- Coastal Resilience and Safety Policies – Goal 4 page 56, suggest that we also reevaluate bluff stability and erosion conditions following wet/rainy seasons to check for changes.
  - Goal 4, page 58 – Include Buck Gully which is adjacent to Corona del Mar, and wildlife fire hazards are not just limited to Newport Coast.
  - Page 59, goal 7, Provide resources for home repair/rebuilds in areas prone to geologic hazards. (add the word “Provide”)

Overall, I think the Vision Statement, and Draft Goals/Policies are a good place to start the public discussion. Thanks and sorry I'm missing the meeting.

Debbie Stevens

## October 2, 2024, GPAC Agenda Item IV.d Comments

The following comments on an item on the Newport Beach [General Plan Advisory Committee agenda](#) are submitted by: Jim Mosher ( [jimmosher@yahoo.com](mailto:jimmosher@yahoo.com) ), 2210 Private Road, Newport Beach 92660 (949-548-6229)

### ***Item IV.d. Upcoming Workshops: Draft General Plan Goal and Policy Topics***

The memo accompanying this item is somewhat at odds with agenda notice. The former says “*Refined draft goals and policies will return to the GPAC and its subcommittees for further review and discussion,*” but the latter appears to say the GPAC will be asked to choose between that option and having Dudek proceed with the workshops based solely on the suggestions received at this meeting. Is the memo trying to say that if GPAC authorizes Dudek to proceed, GPAC will see the goals and policies, again, after Dudek has refined them based on the workshops?

There are some other procedural ambiguities, such as: at what hour would these workshops be held? The Wednesday, December 4, 2024, workshop, for example, is scheduled on what would normally be the monthly GPAC meeting date. Will it be at the same hour?

How will the workshops be advertised, and what is the expected attendance?

It is additionally unclear what the workshop attendees will be told. For example, the existing General Plan contains twenty-four Natural Resources Element goals and nine Recreation Element goals. Is Dudek’s proposal to reduce those to eight Natural Resources and seven Recreation goals? Will they be told the GPAC has recommended this?

The meaning of the bullet points (the proposed actions?) under the suggested goals is not always self-evident. For example, under Natural Resources Goal 1, what does “*Native vegetation in parks and public spaces*” mean? From the context, the suggestion would apparently be to add rather than remove native plants, but would existing plants be replaced? Or natives added? Or just natives used in new parks? Or is it just a discussion topic?

Adding to the confusion, some of the bullet points are stated without a verb, as if they were intended as discussion topics (for example, “*Restoration of kelp beds*” or the above native vegetation in parks topic) and others with verbs, as if they are statements of proposed actions (for example, “*Reduce paved surfaces*”). Is this distinction intentional?

As a random comment, Natural Resources Goal 5 (“*A city with **clean air that prevents air pollution***”) is very confusingly stated. “*A city with clean air **and** that prevents air pollution*” or “*A city with clean air **and a city** that prevents air pollution*” would be better.

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**From:** Paul Watkins <[paul@lawfriend.com](mailto:paul@lawfriend.com)>

**Sent:** September 28, 2024 2:22 PM

**To:** Zdeba, Benjamin <[bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov](mailto:bzdeba@newportbeachca.gov)>

**Subject:** Comments on Recreation and Natural Resources Element Goals and Policies (Workshop 1: Natural Resources and Recreation)

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Hi Ben:

Looking forward to our GPAC meeting on Wednesday, October 2.

One of the handouts you kindly distributed for the meeting is a draft of the "Recreation and Natural Resources Element Goals and Policies" to presumably be discussed at "Workshop 1: Natural Resources and Recreation" (the "Natural Resources Draft"). As I understand it, the Natural Resources Draft was proposed by our consultants (Dudek and Kearns & West).

Attached for distribution to our GPAC members is an "interlineated" version of the Natural Resources Draft. The interlineations contain my suggested word changes and some comments on the Natural Resources Draft.

I am probably out of step with some of our GPAC members, but I was a little disappointed with certain aspects of the Natural Resources Draft.

My principal concern is that some of the language seems a little political, "Sacramento-ish", or, candidly, progressive. Some words may attract more attention than is desired. I have some concern

that unless changed, our Council may find some words a bit "charged" and the Council may be disinclined to support the particular Element's Goals and Policies unless the language is softened.

Here are some examples which have been modified in the attached "interlineated" version. "Rewilding", "expansion of ecosystems", "climate-adapted", "ecosystem restoration", "dune restoration", "green stormwater", the emphasis on "transition to electric vehicles" and "electric vehicle charging infrastructure", "alternative modes of transportation", "phasing out of [the City's] oil production", "prohibit and oppose new drilling activities", and "support clean energy industry".

As indicated by our suggested changes, perhaps some of the language can be "qualified" to still meet General Plan statutory requirements in Government Code Sections 65300, et seq but without the unwelcome attention which some of these words prompt.

I look forward to hearing input from other members of GPAC on Wednesday evening.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Paul

Paul K. Watkins for

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*Watkins Comments*

*9/28/2024*

## 1) Recreation and Natural Resources

# Workshop 1: Natural Resources and Recreation

## SUMMARY

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## DRAFT GOALS AND POLICY TOPICS

### Natural Resources

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<sup>Balanced</sup> Ecosystems provide important services, such as filtering and storing water, storing carbon in vegetation and soil, purifying the air, providing habitat for wildlife, and creating visually appealing and enjoyable places for people. Well-functioning ecosystems include diverse native and naturalized non-invasive species which support complex food webs, a mix of habitats, and nutrient cycling. Creating and promoting native and <sup>environmentally</sup> ~~climate~~ adapted species across

public and private land will create large and resilient ecosystems that support each other.

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- Removal of invasive species on public lands to protect native habitats
- Residential landscaping that contributes to ecosystems and wildlife habitat

### **Goal 2: Ecosystems that are conserved and restored**

Ecosystem <sup>sustainability</sup> restoration and conservation are vital for maintaining unique grassland, woodland, marsh, dune, and other habitats. Large ecological reserves can serve as nurseries for native and <sup>environmentally</sup> ~~climate-~~adapted species that support smaller ecosystems across Newport Beach. Further ecosystem <sup>sustainability</sup> restoration could restore additional habitats for protecting endangered species, building resilience to coastal flooding and sea level rise, and encouraging community involvement in environmental efforts.

- ~~Dune restoration to enhance coastal habitat and protect coastal development from flooding~~ *(visitors / property owners may not favor Dune restoration; visitors wish pristine beach experience / recreation; temporary berms can be presented to deter infrequent flooding.)*
- Restoration of kelp beds
- Education programming for community involvement in environmental protection

### **Goal 3: Clean water in Newport Bay and the coast**

Clean water is necessary for human health, recreation, and aquatic habitat and organisms. Improving water quality in Newport Bay and in coastal waters can ensure safe enjoyment of these irreplaceable natural resources for residents and visitors, while continuing to support the businesses and employers that rely on close proximity to the coast. Reducing stormwater runoff, restoring

floodplains, and preventing waste from entering waterbodies can improve water quality and realize the benefits of clean water.

- Safe recreation and fishing
- *Clean* ~~Green~~ stormwater infrastructure to protect Newport Bay from runoff
- Reduce paved surfaces *where traffic flow is not impeded*

#### **Goal 4: Water that is Conserved and used responsibly**

Clean water is a precious resource in Southern California. Reduced indoor and outdoor water use can play an important role in conserving water. By implementing best practices for landscaping and irrigation on public property and offering incentives for residents and commercial businesses to conserve water on their property, the City can do its part in sustaining long-term water supply.

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- Barriers between high-traffic highways and roads and sensitive uses such as residences and schools
- Increased *well designed* electric vehicle charging infrastructure *consistent with demand*



- Infrastructure to encourage <sup>additional</sup> alternative modes of transportation

### **Goal 6: Viewpoints and corridors that are preserved**

Sweeping views of the beaches, harbor, and coast distinguish Newport Beach as a city with unparalleled natural beauty. Viewsheds often hold historic or scenic value and should be protected for current and future generations. Preserving viewpoints and corridors allows the public to appreciate the City's beauty and character.

- Standards to protect identified view sheds
- Increase public amenities for public view points such as observation decks or plazas, benches, markers and signage, telescopes, lighting, and landscape

### **Goal 7: A city that leverages <sup>reasonable</sup> alternative sources of energy**

Leveraging <sup>reasonable</sup> alternative and renewable energy sources can reduce emissions from vehicles and buildings to help meet California's <sup>legal</sup> greenhouse gas reduction <sup>requirements</sup> targets. Facilitating a <sup>reasonable</sup> transition to electric vehicles, <sup>as demand requires</sup> including <sup>reasonable</sup> watercraft, promoting <sup>reasonable</sup> electrification of buildings, and utilizing public facilities to <sup>reasonably</sup> generate renewable energy can help reduce local air pollution and overall reliance on fossil fuels, increasing energy security in the community.

- <sup>Reasonable, cost-effective</sup> City vehicle fleet transition to electric and other alternative-fuel vehicles
- ~~Public electric boat charging infrastructure~~
- Maintenance of <sup>reasonable</sup> public charging infrastructure <sup>as demand requires</sup>

### **Goal 8: A city with minimal impacts from oil and gas drilling activities** <sup>Only as</sup>

<sup>required by law</sup> Phasing out oil production can help achieve the State objective of phasing out extraction of oil and gas by 2045. ~~Although the City already prohibits new gas and oil drilling, plans for phasing out oil extraction can help the City prioritize investments in clean energy and restore ecosystems.~~

- *Only as required by law,* A plan for phasing out extraction of oil and gas consistent with State goals
- ~~Prohibit and oppose new drilling activities~~
- Support *reasonable* clean energy industry *advances,* (i.e., *well designed* electric vehicle infrastructure, *as demand requires,* clean City vehicle fleet, etc.) *cost effective*
- Identification and allocation of alternative funding sources for the Tidelands Fund

## Recreation

### **Goal 1: A community with high-quality recreation programs**

Recreation programs enrich community members' lives by building social connections and providing opportunities for learning and physical activity. Recreation programs that are of high-quality and tailored to the community's needs can foster an engaged and healthy community.

- High-quality events and programming for residents, prioritizing families with children and older adults
- Use of traditional and digital media to inform residents about upcoming events and programs
- Partnerships with local organizations to identify program opportunities

### **Goal 2: New parks and connections that increase resident access to recreation, parks, and open space opportunities**

Parks are a vital asset in any community, providing opportunities for refuge, recreation, and socialization, while offering physical and mental health benefits. Newport Beach's varying landscape provides a variety of unique recreational opportunities for the community. Increasing park access and

developing recreational opportunities throughout the community can ensure these benefits are available to all residents of all ages and needs.

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- Assessment of beach access points that may be at risk of flooding or erosion
- Beach access infrastructure and maintenance to be resilient to coastal hazards
- Maintaining high sand quality
- Regional coordination for sand nourishment *and replenishment*

**Goal 7: Adequate support facilities in open space and recreation facilities**

Support facilities are an important aspect of providing parks and recreation spaces that are highly used and enjoyed by the community. Support facilities include but are not limited to, restrooms, showers, lifeguard towers, parking, and staffing. Providing and maintaining facilities needed to support varying recreational spaces in the City can help ensure parks and open spaces are enjoyed by the community and maintain a high-quality level of service.

- Support facilities and services in coastal areas and parks for residents and visitors
- Support facilities that are resilient to flooding, erosion, and other hazards
- Identification of support facilities and service needs
- Lifeguard pipeline program