

# Stakeholder Focus Group Meetings Summary

*On March 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, Raimi + Associates 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. Raimi + Associates also separately met with elected officials. The comments received at these meetings have been categorized into one of four major categories - opportunities, challenges, needs, and examples of desirable, model communities and areas.*

*HR&A conducted a similar focus group meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup> regarding economic development in Palmdale. Summary findings of the economic development stakeholder focus group can be found in a separate report.*



## Consolidated Feedback

### Opportunities

- Current development interest in Palmdale
- Recent development on Avenue S
- Trade and commerce potential
- Aerospace industry provides good quality jobs locally in Palmdale
- Potential to fill gap in the LA film industry with studio space / editing space
  - Capacity to expand existing city partnerships with FBO, Education, and Aerospace industry; including other industries like; healthcare, solar and public sector
- Future Palmdale Regional Airport
- Future High-Speed Rail
- Potential to expand rail service to LA Union Station
- Existing desire for vertical mixed use
- Vacant parcels within the city limits allow for targeted infill development projects

## Challenges

- Existing infrastructure needs improvements and/or upgrades (water, sewer, and roads)
- Palmdale Avenue (Hwy 138) is a State Route and out of the City's control
- Existing traffic/congestion and commuting patterns
- Existing trucking and goods movement
- Access to hospitals is inhibited by rail
- Difficult to attract young workforce to live/work in Palmdale
- The city's largest industry is Aerospace, which can be volatile
- Palmdale has a negative reputation for crime, low-income, few jobs, and no recreational opportunities and few amenities and services
- Palmdale's homeless rate is increasing
- Palmdale has a high rate of foster care/emancipated youth who need services
- (Perceived) City East-West divide
- (Perceived) competition between Palmdale and Lancaster
- Existing planning documents are difficult to navigate
- Existing development regulations that hinder new urbanism development

## Needs

### Services

- Trauma 1 Hospital to serve the community and region
- Comprehensive social services with mental health and drug use/abuse services to better serve Palmdale's needs
- Increased childcare options and afterschool programming
- Access to goods and services (and distributed across the community)
- Four-year educational institution and education hub
- Domestic violence shelter

### Amenities

- Quality public spaces like parks, libraries, community spaces, bikes and pedestrian paths
- Entertainment, nightlife, shopping and family-friendly activities
- Diverse housing types including market rate, affordable, and high-end options
- Senior housing and recreation options
- History Museum
- Increase public art

### Uses

- Manufacturing, industrial, higher education, multi-family residential, and hospitality

### Jobs

- Pipeline jobs for students
- Diverse job opportunities – mid-skill or vocational positions in addition to currently available high and low skill opportunities

### *Model Communities*

- Old Town, La Quinta
- The Village, Arroyo Grande
- State Street, Santa Barbara
- Second Street, Long Beach
- Temecula
- Santa Clarita
- Mammoth Lakes
- Loma Linda and Riverside social services

## Feedback by Group

### **Elected Officials**

- **Mayor**
- **City Councilmembers**

### *Opportunities*

- High Speed Trail and existing public transit
- Palmdale Regional Airport – terminal development
- Strategic infill opportunities on Palmdale Boulevard
- Desire for vertical mixed use, attached multi-family residential and transit-oriented development
- Fill need in Los Angeles’s filming industry with studio space and post production editing spaces
- Connect Avenue Q with High Speed Rail
- Potential rail connections to LA Union Station

### *Challenges*

- Palmdale Boulevard (Highway 138) is controlled by State
- Aerospace influences much of the city’s growth, but is not a steady industry
- Reputation that Palmdale is an undesirable place, unsafe, low socio-economic, etc.
- Attracting young people to Palmdale
- New employees live outside the city and commute into Palmdale
- Existing traffic, trucking and goods movement
- Access to hospitals inhibited by rail
- Existing planning documents are difficult to navigate through
- Existing development regulations that hinder new urbanism development
- Negative stigma around using public transportation

### *Needs*

- Public park space throughout Palmdale
- Higher end multi-family residential housing and entry level housing options
- Senior housing and recreation options
- Nightlife, recreation, activities for young people
- Vertical mixed-use development

- Incentives for growth in certain areas
- Targeted infill development
- Expanded mass transit
- Distributed retail and shopping across Palmdale
- Industrial buildings that meet industry needs
- Attract manufacturing industry to Palmdale
- Domestic violence shelter
- History Museum
- Higher education hub
- Increase public art
- Attract high-end businesses to Palmdale

### *Model Communities*

- Mammoth Lakes
- La Quinta, CA
- Arroyo Grande, CA
- State Street, Santa Barbara, CA
- Second Street, Long Beach, CA
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Promenade, Santa Monica, CA

## **Education Representatives**

- **Antelope Valley Union High School District**
- **AV Career Prep Council**
- **The Palmdale Aerospace Academy**
- **Westside Union School District**
- **Palmdale School District**
- **Antelope Valley College**
- **W.E.C.A.R.E. Education & Employment Services - Antelope Valley Union High School District**
- **Opportunities for Learning**

### *Opportunities*

- Coordination with healthcare, solar and public services industries
- Grow local talent in Palmdale
- Create workplace learning for college credit in high schools
- Expand formalized links with Aerospace
- Educate on the value/caliber of Palmdale School districts (i.e. local relators)
- Joint use agreements with schools to offer access to parks, pools and playgrounds after instruction

### *Challenges*

- Low socio-economic status in Palmdale

- Perception that Palmdale isn't safe
- The number of school districts in Palmdale (nine) makes consistency difficult
- Attracting educators to Palmdale
- Rate of homeless and student homelessness
- Rate of foster youth in Palmdale
- Declining enrollment in public schools and community college
- Time it takes to receive grant funding to build facilities to meet anticipated needs
- Amenities are more prevalent on westside of Palmdale
- State Route 14 serves as a major divide through Palmdale

### *Needs*

- Wrap-around social services for homeless and foster youths
- Shortage of social workers/child and family services
- Four-year educational institution in Palmdale
- Improved business and education relationships
- Pipeline jobs for students
- Regular communication and collaboration between school districts and city administration

### *Model cities*

- N/A

## **Aerospace Industry Representatives**

- **Airforce Plant 42**
- **NASA Armstrong**
- **Northrop Grumman**
- **Lockheed Martin**
- **Los Angeles Airport Land Use Commission**

### *Opportunities*

- Expand R&D industry in Palmdale
- Palmdale Regional Airport (with limitations that won't impede Plant 42)

### *Challenges*

- Negative reputation that Palmdale is low-income, high-crime, high homeless population, and no services or amenities
- Attracting employees
- Maintaining site security around Plant 42

### *Needs*

- High end multi-family housing
- Entertainment opportunities like breweries or music venues (i.e. Canyon Club)
- Palmdale Public Library

- Access to childcare
- Four-year University Campus or additional satellite campuses
- More hotels in Palmdale
- Services for senior citizens and young people

### ***Model Communities***

- Temecula

## Chamber Representatives

- **Palmdale Chamber of Commerce**
- **Antelope Valley Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**
- **Local businessowners**

## Opportunities

- Continue to do Chamber Lunch and Learns
- Informal program to help learn about resources, provide mentorship/support/advocacy
- Partnerships for economic development
- Aerospace industry
- Palmdale Regional Airport
- New hotels
- Utilize social media more in city activities

## Challenges

- Overstated reputation that Palmdale has high crime
- Gaps in development – not enough housing options
- Big box retailers make it difficult for small businesses
- Business permitting process is not streamlined
- Development is planned, but never happens
- Lack of rental homes
- (Perceived) East-West city divide
- Affordability
- Types of businesses

## Needs

- Entertainment and nightlife like a wine bar or tap room
- Market rate or affordable higher density housing in safe neighborhoods
- Diversity of housing
- Access to goods and services
- More restaurants throughout Palmdale
- Family entertainment options
- Connectivity to retail and parks
- Improve public spaces like public parks, bike paths, and overall walkability
- Later operating hours for trains to and from Los Angeles

## Other Locations to model after

- N/A

## Faith-Based Organization Representatives

- Palmdale Vineyard
- Seventh-Day Adventist Church
- The Highlands Christian Fellowship
- St. Mary's Catholic Church
- Palmdale United Methodist Church
- Crosswind Church

### *Opportunities/What's working*

- Expanded coordination between city and churches, community organizations, residents, etc.
- Palmdale has a congregation of love for the community
- Expand family-friendly activities like DryTown, Marie Kerr Park and Mulligan Family Fun Center
- Location of Palmdale has access to nearby attractions (Singing Road, Punch Bowl, Apollo Park, Red Rock Canyon, Poppy Fields)
- Expand access to nature like existing city Trails and hiking paths (off Pear Blossom Highway)

### *Challenges*

- Transportation, especially for senior citizens (ACCESS doesn't go to all parts of the City, isn't flexible, and required 24-hour booking and seniors don't trust rideshare apps.)
- High rate of foster care/emancipated youth
- High rate of people who are experiencing homelessness
- Childcare and afterschool programming
- Feeling of competition between Lancaster and Palmdale
- Perception of Palmdale being dangerous

### *Needs*

- Support and transitional housing services
- Expanded mental health and drug use support services and other social services
- Variety of restaurants and businesses
- Recreational activities
- Park improvements
- Community celebrations
- Flexible community space
- Investment in physical appearance of city
- Invest in infrastructures like roads and bike lanes

### *Other Locations to model after*

- N/A



## Community-Based Organization Representatives

- **LA County Sheriff's Department - Palmdale Station**
- **Children's Bureau**
- **Vets 4 Veterans**
- **Antelope Valley League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)**
- **Valley Oasis**
- **Pueblo Y Salud**
- **Mental Health American Military Resource Center**
- **Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority (LAHSA)**
- **First 5 LA - Communities Department**
- **P.A.Ws Forward**

### *Opportunities*

- A-FAB program (Aerospace program)
- Opportunities exist – but people don't always know what's available
- Palmdale Regional Airport
- High Speed Rail

### *Challenges*

- Affordable housing opportunities for low income
- Public transportation routes are not great
- Access to comprehensive social services – everything is in Lancaster
- Jobs and vocational trade schools (Aerospace Academy, but need more)
- Rates of drug use/abuse in Palmdale
- Places for families (Boys and girls club is saturated)
- Few vocations or mid-skill level jobs
- East side of Palmdale is historically ignored
- History of young people getting educated, then leaving Palmdale
- Over reliance on aerospace industry
- Traffic congestion, only one real entry and exit out of Palmdale
- Parents working more than one job with long commutes

### *Needs*

- Better communication regarding city programs and services
- Recreational spaces
- Trauma 1 Hospital and mental health services
- Focus on prevention for unsupervised children
- City to have better relationship with school district
- Temporary shelter for homeless in Palmdale

### *Other Locations to model after*

- Santa Clarita