



General Plan Vision & Priorities Survey

Summary of Results

March 31, 2020

Background

The Palm Springs Vision and Priorities provide an aspirational description of the type of community Palm Springs desires to become in the future and serves as the foundation for the goals and policies in the City's General Plan. As one of the first steps in the process of updating the City of Palm Springs' General Plan, the City administered a survey to solicit feedback on the existing (2007) General Plan Vision and Priorities to determine if they are still working well or if they need to be updated to guide planning efforts for the next 20 years.

A total of 338 responses were submitted by participants. The survey was administered in both online and hard copy formats from February 24th, 2020 through March 13th, 2020. English and Spanish versions of the survey were made available in both formats. Input collected will be used by the City and the General Plan Steering Committee (GPSC) to inform their recommendations to update the Vision and Priorities and will also be presented to the Planning Commission and City Council. Following is a summary of the information collected from participants.

Who Participated?

The largest number of respondents to the survey were residents; full time residents comprised 67% of respondents and part-time residents followed at 16% of survey responses. Eleven percent (11%) of all respondents both live and work in the City, and those who work in the city (only) comprised 5% of respondents. Only one respondent identified themselves as a visitor to Palm Springs.

Nearly all of the City's recognized neighborhoods had residents participating in the survey (45 of 48 neighborhoods), with the highest percentage of responses coming from residents in the Little Tuscany neighborhood (7%). The Escena, Gene Autry and Lawrence Crossley neighborhoods were the only ones without any identified respondents.

The overwhelming majority of respondents identified themselves as over 40 years of age (89%), with the 40-64 age bracket accounting for 54 percent of total participants. Conversely, only 9 percent of respondents identified themselves as younger than 40-years-old. While few of the respondents claimed an expert-level familiarity with the existing General Plan (5%), a high percentage of participants were either aware of the document or somewhat knowledgeable about it (87%).

What Did We Hear?

Participants in the Survey were asked to identify whether the Vision statement and ten distinct Priorities articulated in the City's existing General Plan were 1) fine as is, or need to be revised; and 2) if they need to be revised, what changes they would suggest.

The majority of respondents (52%) indicated that the Vision statement is fine as it is and does not need to be revised. Participants provided 132 comments for the City's consideration for possible refinements or edits.

The community generally supported the ten existing priorities, with seven of them exceeding 70 percent in positive feedback (acceptable as written). Priorities addressing the efficient use of resources and preservation of the unique and high quality of the built environment were identified by the highest number of respondents as requiring no changes (79% and 83% respectively). Survey respondents had a lower support rate of the way the priorities advocating a range of housing opportunities and retail opportunities were currently written (59% and 65% respectively).

Although the percentage of positive responses for the existing Vision and Priorities leaned toward support of the way they are currently worded, it should be noted that quite a few comments (740) were submitted with suggested changes to the existing Priorities. After reviewing the comments, it appears several are general comments about things the City should consider versus specific revisions suggested for a particular priority. In the coming months, the Steering Committee will be reviewing the comments and helping to make suggestions of how to incorporate them into the updated Vision and Priorities.

Out of the comments received, some consistent themes emerged:

- Desire to address **Climate Change**
- Importance of preserving/conserving **natural beauty and lands**
- Add language regarding **Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity**
- Embrace and prepare for **technological change**
- Better balance between needs of residents and tourists; **expand economic base beyond tourism**
- Preserve and protect the City's **Modernism design roots**
- More services and amenities geared towards to **families**
- Expand image of Palm Springs beyond "high style" to **embrace its more approachable, "laid back", relaxed atmosphere**

The remainder of this document summarizes the key themes that emerged out of the comments associated with the Vision statement and each Priority. A complete list of all responses collected is also attached for those that are interested in reviewing the explicit feedback received by the City in its entirety.

Feedback on the Existing Vision Statement

- In response to the current Vision statement:

A **world-renowned** desert resort community where residents and visitors enjoy **safe** neighborhoods, an exciting **social environment** and a relaxing **leisure experience**.

We enhance our natural, cultural, and historical resources with **sustainable economic growth** and **high style**.

We provide responsive, friendly and efficient **public services** within a **government** that fosters **unity** among all our citizens.

- A slight majority of respondents (52 percent) felt that the current vision statement was appropriate but nearly 47.3 percent believed it needs to be revised. Among those revisions several themes emerged:
 - Strong desire to replace phrase, “high style” with something else; wasn’t reflective of the community sentiment
 - Desire to acknowledge the importance of the city’s cultural, architectural and historic resources.
 - Include a reference to inclusiveness and the diversity of the community.
 - Refer to the city’s natural environment, parks and recreation facilities and include concepts of sustainability or renewable energy.
 - Dislike for the vision statement’s reference to the city as a “resort community”; there should be much less focus on leisure and tourism and more focus on local business, a diversified economy and residents of all ages.
 - Prioritize localized, controlled growth and planning and reflect the city’s “village feel”.
 - Future development should focus less on hotels and convention centers and more on affordable housing.
 - Add references to the city’s working population, educational opportunities and embrace of new technologies.

Feedback on the Existing Priorities (order does not indicate importance)

- In response to Priority 1: Support Palm Springs as one of the world's premier desert resorts.
 - 76 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 24 percent wanted it revised. Those suggested revisions discussed:
 - Less focus on being “premier” or a “world” destination.
 - Recognition of City’s identity as a small city with a local population.
 - More economic diversity away from service and tourism.
 - Removal of the reference to the “desert”.
 - Removal of the word “resort” (“destination”, “community” suggested as replacements).
 - Addition of “place to retire”.

- In response to Priority 2: Establish the City as a leader in efficient use of resources: land, water, and energy.
 - 79.4 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 20.6 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - Additional reference to natural resource preservation.
 - Additional text for climate change.
 - Include more specific goals.
- In response to Priority 3: Diversify the City's economic foundations and promote Palm Springs as the 'first choice' for businesses.
 - 66.4 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 33.6 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - More economic diversity and variety in business types.
 - Confusion about what is meant by “promote” and “first choice”.
 - Defining the specific types of businesses the City wants to promote.
 - Focusing less on being a “first choice” (implying outside businesses) and more on nurturing local businesses.
- In response to Priority 4: Develop a full range of retail opportunities for local, regional, and tourist markets.
 - 64.6 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 35 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - Ensuring that visitors to Palm Springs have unique destinations and businesses that cannot be found elsewhere.
 - Adding businesses that are not related to tourism or hospitality and appeal to all socio-economic groups.
 - Discouraging chain businesses.
 - Encouraging more experiential retail.
 - Removing the reference to tourists.
 - Concerns about the place of retail in the age of internet shopping.
- In response to Priority 5: Provide for a broad range of housing opportunities.
 - 59.2 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 40.5 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - Discouraging vacation rentals in the city.
 - Encouraging more multi-family housing.
 - Encouraging more affordable housing developments.
 - Supporting housing and services for people experiencing homelessness.
 - Making the vision statement less vague by clearly defining what the phrase “broad range” refers to.
- In response to Priority 6: Create unique places that strengthen community identity, offer visual interest, and support lively activity.
 - 77.6 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 21.7 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - Additional references to accessibility.
 - Clarifying the language to clearly define what “unique” means.
 - Creating spaces that are more focused on locals.
 - Support underserved communities.

- In response to Priority 7: Encourage the creative mixing of land uses to promote vibrant neighborhoods and reduce the need for vehicle use.
 - 72.7 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 26.9 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - Improved infrastructure and safety for non-automotive uses: biking, walking, bus system, golf carts
 - Concerns about whether the reduced “need for vehicle use” is attainable.
- In response to Priority 8: Preserve and uphold the high quality of architecture and the unique visual aesthetic form in buildings and neighborhoods that distinguish Palm Springs from other cities.
 - 82.8 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 15.7 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - Clarifying the language and being more specific about what “high quality architecture” means.
- In response to Priority 9: Provide a circulation system that accommodates the smooth flow of vehicular traffic, encourages safe bicycle and pedestrian movement, and presents attractively landscaped corridors.
 - 72 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 27.7 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - More emphasis on mass transit.
 - Additional reference to safety in this priority.
 - Reference parking.
- In response to Priority 10: Promote development that enhances scenic views and provides both visual and physical access to the City's surrounding mountains, washes, open space, and other scenic and natural resources.
 - 77.6 percent agreed that the priority is relevant and 21.6 percent wanted it revised. These suggested revisions discussed:
 - Concerns that this priority would conflict with other priorities relating to development and growth.
 - Exchanging the word “promote” with “support.”
 - Replace “wash” with “ephemeral stream.”
 - Change to “enhances and protects”.