

October 16, 2024

Dear GPAC Members, Ms. Wisneski, and City Manager,

I am submitting this public comment in writing as I may not be able to stay through the public comment period at this evening's GPAC meeting. My name is Sean Nicholas, and I am a long-time resident and property owner in Dana Point's Capo Beach area. In addition, I am a City Planner and had the privilege of serving as Senior Planning for the City of Dana Point from 2013-2018. As you are all aware, the update of the City's General Plan is long overdue, and I have been eager to participate in the update process.

However, I am writing to express significant concern regarding the lack of communication, transparency, and notification about the work the GPAC has been undertaking.

I have made numerous attempts to stay informed about this process. Specifically, I have:

- Submitted my name multiple times to be notified about meetings related to the General Plan update.
- Attended visioning events and provided feedback in person and through online surveys, including submitting my contact information for future notifications.
- Applied to serve on the GPAC itself.

Despite all these efforts, I have received no notifications about the GPAC meetings. As someone who considers himself more informed than the average resident regarding city matters, it is troubling to note that if I had not personally run into Director Wisneski at a professional event last week, where I inquired about the GPAC and informed her I have received no information, I may not have known about the current meeting.

Even more concerning, I reviewed the City's past email blasts that are sent at the beginning of each month, only to find that prior GPAC meetings were not even mentioned in most instances. It was not until this month's email that I saw a brief mention of the GPAC meeting, buried well into the email content.

Given this, I have serious concerns about whether the City has fulfilled its public outreach and notification requirements in good faith. State law requires and emphasizes the need for early and continuous public participation in the planning process, including proper notice of meetings to interested parties. I registered myself as an interested party multiple times, yet I received no notice. How many others in the community have been similarly left out? Has the City met its legal obligation to inform the public and ensure widespread participation?

I represent a demographic that is highly invested in Dana Point's future. My family has owned property and lived in the community for 15 years. We shop, dine, and engage with local businesses, and I have a child attending Dana Hills High School with a second child attending in three years. If I, with my level of awareness and involvement, was not informed

of the meetings, how has the City ensured other residents have had the opportunity to participate?

In reviewing the GPAC meeting agendas and presentations online, I have found it difficult to fully understand the discussions that have taken place. Moreover, I would appreciate clarification on whether GPAC has received public comments during this process. If so, I would welcome access to those comments and request all minutes from past meetings.

At this point, based on what information is available online, I am concerned that the GPAC process is already coming to an end without meeting notification requirements, which more than anything, as a long-time community member, is very disappointing and disheartening. Effective public participation is not just a requirement under California law—it is vital for shaping the future of Dana Point in a way that truly reflects the needs and desires of its residents.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. I look forward to your response and to seeing improved communication going forward, and I look forward to participating in the public process moving forward.

Sincerely,

Sean Nicholas

Resident and Property Owner, Capo Beach, Dana Point

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