



Re-Imagine Santa Fe Springs

2040 GENERAL PLAN

General Plan Advisory Group (GPAG) Meeting #5 - Summary

Date and Time: June 23, 2021; 5:00 PM – 7:00 PM

Welcome

The fifth Santa Fe Springs General Plan Advisory Group (GPAG) meeting was held on Wednesday, June 23, 2021, as a Zoom meeting.

Jose Rodriguez, MIG consultant team member, welcomed GPAG members to the meeting. Seven GPAG members attended, as well as City staff and members of the public. Mr. Rodriguez led the meeting, and discussion notes are provided in the Discussion section.

Presentation and Discussion

GPAC Meeting #5 focused on identifying economic development challenges and opportunities, and was facilitated by Roger Dale of The Natelson Dale Group, Inc. (TNDG). The Natelson Dale Group is preparing two related documents for the General Plan Update Process:

1. General Plan Economic Development Element
2. Detailed Implementation Strategy.

Discussion

Following the presentations, the MIG team led an interactive discussion and GPAG members had the opportunity to provide input on the following discussion topics, and corresponding questions:

1. Assets and Opportunities for Economic Development

- a. What are Santa Fe Springs' strongest assets that are currently under-recognized or underdeveloped from an economic development point of view?
- b. What opportunities may be emerging for Santa Fe Springs based on economic conditions and changes in other parts of Southern California?



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2. Potential Threats to Economic Progress

- a. What are the greatest threats to Santa Fe Springs' economic well-being and progress?
- b. What kinds of actions can the City take to counter these threats?
- c. What are some of the barriers to business growth in Santa Fe Springs (i.e., what factors might discourage firms from wanting to locate or expand here)?

3. City Roles in Improving Economic Vitality

- a. What are the greatest threats to Santa Fe Springs' economic well-being and progress?
- b. What kinds of actions can the City take to counter these threats?
- c. What are some of the barriers to business growth in Santa Fe Springs (i.e., what factors might discourage firms from wanting to locate or expand here)?

The following notes were captured during discussion with GPAG members:

Topic 1: Assets and Opportunities for Economic Development —

- Santa Fe Springs is known for being a premiere industrial/manufacturing location in southern California.
- After World War II, neighboring cities largely rejected heavy industrial uses due to environmental concerns. Now, these industries still need a place to operate but they are generally much “cleaner” than they were historically. Santa Fe Springs can/should continue to capitalize on its niche in the industrial market.
- Santa Fe Springs has long been recognized as business/development friendly. The City has an opportunity to continue to capitalize on this reputation by maintaining business friendly policies.
- City officials in Santa Fe Springs are approachable (i.e., accessible to the business community). In this sense, Santa Fe Springs has the advantage of being a “small town with big city opportunities.”



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- The large daytime population in Santa Fe Springs creates opportunities for retail/restaurant businesses that are larger than would be expected based on the size of the city's resident population.
- Santa Fe Springs' freeway location and close proximity to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach provide a very strategic location for many business types.
- The City also has a strategic location between Los Angeles and Orange County.
- The City's strong tax base has allowed Santa Fe Springs to provide excellent public safety services and municipal amenities attractive to the business community.
- As the economy emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, communities with suburban office campuses (like Santa Fe Springs) will be in an advantageous position for attracting employers.

Topic 2: Potential Threats to Economic Progress —

- The most common complaint from the daytime population is that there is a lack of restaurant/retail options for lunch.
- During the discussion, City staff asked GPAC about perceptions about internet service in Santa Fe Springs (City anticipates preparing a master plan for fiber/broadband). Representations of the industrial/business community said they have "no complaints." One representative of the residential community (manager of a senior housing complex) indicated that internet service is poor.
- Some industrial land uses (especially logistics) have been migrating from Los Angeles to the Inland Empire, based on space availability and costs. Los Angeles County as a whole has recently experienced negative absorption of industrial space whereas demand in the Inland Empire has grown dramatically. (Some GPAC members noted that the loss of industrial tenants has mostly affected large warehouse-type uses; other/smaller industrial tenants have not been impacted as much.)
- The City's contemplated restrictions on industrial development (e.g., moratorium on uses generating high volumes of truck traffic) could potentially undermine economic development efforts.
- Voter-approved tax increases in City (utility user tax and supplemental sales tax) have caused some businesses to leave Santa Fe Springs.



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Topic 3: City Roles in Improving Economic Vitality —

- City should be extremely cautious about imposing moratorium and/or impact fees on industrial uses (to mitigate concerns about street maintenance costs generated by heavy truck traffic). City should investigate other funding sources (besides development impact fees) for addressing these costs. (City staff emphasized that this issue is still being studied and City is in the process of getting input from industrial property owners, developers, architects, etc.).
- City should have a transportation plan that identifies realistic options for getting trucks in and out of the community without impacting residential neighborhoods.
- City should have a realistic plan (and funding strategy) for periodic resurfacing of streets impacted by truck traffic.
- Overall, the City should avoid new taxes/regulations impacting the industrial community. Business friendliness should remain a high priority of the City.
- The City's economic development efforts should include an expanded focus on connecting local employers to the education/workforce development community (e.g., STEAM Academy partnership). Workforce and economic development programming should reflect an up-to-date understanding of remote work trends.
- City should target more office users (many of which are tied to or benefit from the presence of industrial uses in the area). These might include professional services and any business type that would benefit from the strategic central location.

Adjournment and Next Steps

After the group discussion and public comments, the consultant team thanked everyone for coming. The next GPAG meeting will be determined at a later date.