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FEATURED

Palmdale considers transit plan

Amendment will make way for High-Speed Rail

By JULIE DRAKE Valley Press Staff Writer

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Palmdale has been planning the arrival of a high-speed rail station for more than 20 years.

PALMDALE — The City Council will hold a public hearing today on a proposed General Plan amendment and zone change for adoption of the Palmdale Transit Area Specific Plan.

The proposed General Plan amendment and zone change, if approved, will make way for the future California High Speed Rail multi-modal rail station near the existing Palmdale Transportation Center.

"We're excited about that," City Manager J.J. Murphy said Monday during a telephone briefing for today's meeting.

He called the proposed high-speed rail multi-modal rail station a transformational project.

"This high-speed rail station has the opportunity to be our anchor tenant downtown," Murphy said.

The proposed future multi-modal transit center would have bus transportation, a north-south high speed rail line, a potential east-west high speed rail line and the Metrolink station all coming in to one location. Those have the potential to bring in restaurants, and first-floor retail with apartments above it.

"This transit plan talks about a walkable area that makes transportation and public transportation convenient," Murphy said.

The high-speed rail service would provide additional travel options for commuters who live near the station to take the train to the San Fernando Valley, the city of Los Angeles or even northern California.

"I think COVID has shown us that you could work up there and live down here; work from home two days a week and get on a train two other days," Murphy said. "You're an hour, two-hour train ride from anywhere in the state. You could be sitting there making phone calls, returning emails and then you're showing up at the office. This puts Palmdale at the forefront of a north-south and east-west transportation hub. I don't want to undersell it. This is monumental."

Palmdale has been studying transit-oriented development, which involves the creation of vibrant, walkable, pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use communities centered around train systems. Transit-oriented development reduces dependence on personal vehicles, which, in turn, reduces energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, which has a positive correlation to climate change, according to the report.

Palmdale has been planning for the arrival of high-speed rail in the city for more than 20 years. The California High Speed Rail helped fund the city's study with a grant intended to be used for creation of a comprehensive plan that incentivizes and facilitates development specifically geared toward multi-modal transit associated with the future multi-modal high-speed rail station.

City leaders also conducted dozens of community engagement efforts to collect input. Stakeholder input included local schools, the aerospace industry, local business owners, medical professionals, and private landowners.



Some of the key comments and concerns received during the outreach effort included the avoidance of gentrification and displacement of residents, concern over sharp increases in property values with development of the future multi-modal high speed rail station and safety, ease of access, convenience and walkability.

A third study, funded by the Southern California Association of Governments, is currently in the beginning stages. The goal is to evaluate a complete streets corridor on Avenue Q from 20th Street East to Sierra Highway, which will focus on providing multi-modal connectivity to the future high-speed rail station is underway. The study is anticipated to be completed in 2021-22, according to the report.

“We’re proud to be bringing it forward to the council for adoption,” Murphy said.

The proposed specific plan also includes design standards in regard to architecture, such as massing, articulation and allowed colors and materials.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 7 p.m. The meeting will be closed to in-person attendance due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and resulting orders and direction from the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health.

Individuals may participate via Zoom webcast by going to the link <https://zoom.us/j/94173444683?pwd=RIBpdlg1MDVyckRrd21pclhSanRZdz09> or by dialing in at 669-900-9128, webinar ID: 941 7344 4683, passcode: 150263

Verbal comments must be limited to three minutes.

Residents who wish to comment on agenda items without logging onto the meeting via Zoom may do so using the eComment feature on the city's website at www.cityofpalmdale.org

To comment, click on the "Agendas and Meetings" button found at the bottom of the city web page. Next, find the meeting under "Upcoming Events" and click on the eComment button of your selected meeting. Then, scroll through the agenda to find the item for which you would like to provide a comment and select that item to input your comments. You may either sign in to your SpeakUp Palmdale Account, or comment as a guest. Enter your comment in the field provided and type in your name before submitting your comment. Note that one hour prior to the start of each meeting, eComments may no longer be submitted.

The meeting will be broadcast live on Spectrum Channel 27. It is also available online at www.cityofpalmdale.org

The agenda may be found at <https://cityofpalmdale.org/310/City-Council-Meetings>

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