

STAFF REPORT

DATE: August 12, 2026

TO: General Plan Committee (GPC)

FROM: Sherri Metzker, Director, Community Development
Dara Dungworth, Principal Planner

SUBJECT: 2050 General Plan Update, General Plan Committee Meeting #1
Continued from July 22, 2026: Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the General Plan Committee continue the July 22, 2026 meeting and:

1. Hold a public meeting regarding the General Plan Update (GPU);
2. Discuss feedback received on the draft land use concepts and provide direction for a Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map; and
3. Receive public comment.

FISCAL IMPACTS

There is no fiscal impact to the City since this is an informational item only.

COUNCIL GOALS

All City Council goals will be addressed in the General Plan Update.

- Achieving Greater Fiscal Resilience
- Strengthening Climate Resilience
- Shoring Up the Housing Continuum
- Improving Social Services for Vulnerable Populations
- Maintaining High Quality Infrastructure and Services
- Stepping Up Economic Development Activities

BACKGROUND

On July 22, 2026, the City's General Plan Committee (GPC) held a meeting to discuss a Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map. The meeting was continued to August 12, 2026 to enable commissioners to consolidate comments and then share feedback on the Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map (also referred to as the Preferred Land Use Alternative).

The meeting began with a call to order and roll call; election of a GPC chair, Planning Commissioner Brinkley, and Vice Chair, Open Space and Habitat Commissioner Huber; and approval of the meeting administration and procedures.

The City and project team shared a presentation focused on:

- GPC purpose, establishment, and meeting #1
- Initial engagement and General Plan Vision and Project Outcomes
- Phase 2 community engagement on land use concepts and initial direction based on that feedback
- A Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map and key land use considerations
- Next steps in the process

The GPC and project team received public comments from approximately twenty members of the community in addition to written communications. Common themes from the public comment included:

- Revise or remove Village Farms from the Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map due to the results of Measure V.
- Consider adjustments to the urban limit line south of Channel A, and/or southeast of the city limits in Yolo County.
- Maintain existing agricultural and conservation easements in perpetuity consistent with the Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map.
- Develop a transportation network for all modes in tandem with the Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map.
- Add higher density centers focused along transit corridors.
- The need for UC Davis to house more students on campus.
- Discuss existing debt obligations for infrastructure projects in relation to land use changes.
- Concerns about borrow pits and the public health and environmental effects associated with them.
- Increase density in existing single-family neighborhoods.
- The existing General Plan does not need amendments.
- No building in open spaces, conservation easements, or floodplains.
- Maintain the retail requirement in neighborhood centers.
- Include the unhoused population in the planning process.

After public comment, GPC members asked clarifying questions and requested additional information from the project. Requests for additional information are included below:

- Recent population and housing trends in the City of Davis
- Recent on campus housing trends at UC Davis
- Future population and housing needs for the General Plan
- Definitions for terms such as urban limit line and urban service area
- Utility capacity for future development

Social Services Commissioner Ennis also requested the GPC create a sub-committee to revise the Vision and Guiding Principles, though no formal action was taken.

The July 22 GPC staff report is available here:

<https://www.cityofdavis.org/city-hall/general-plan-committee#docaccess-a52198057a802bec1a0870895894bffc>

Planning Commission

The Planning Commission also met on the evening of July 22, 2026 to discuss the Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map. Public comment was similar to the afternoon's GPC meeting focused on Village Farms, maintaining existing conservation easements, developing a transportation network for all modes and the need for UC Davis to house more students. New comments focused on the need for metrics related to the vision and project outcomes and to consider the viability of mass timber / cross-laminated timber to support housing affordability and project feasibility.

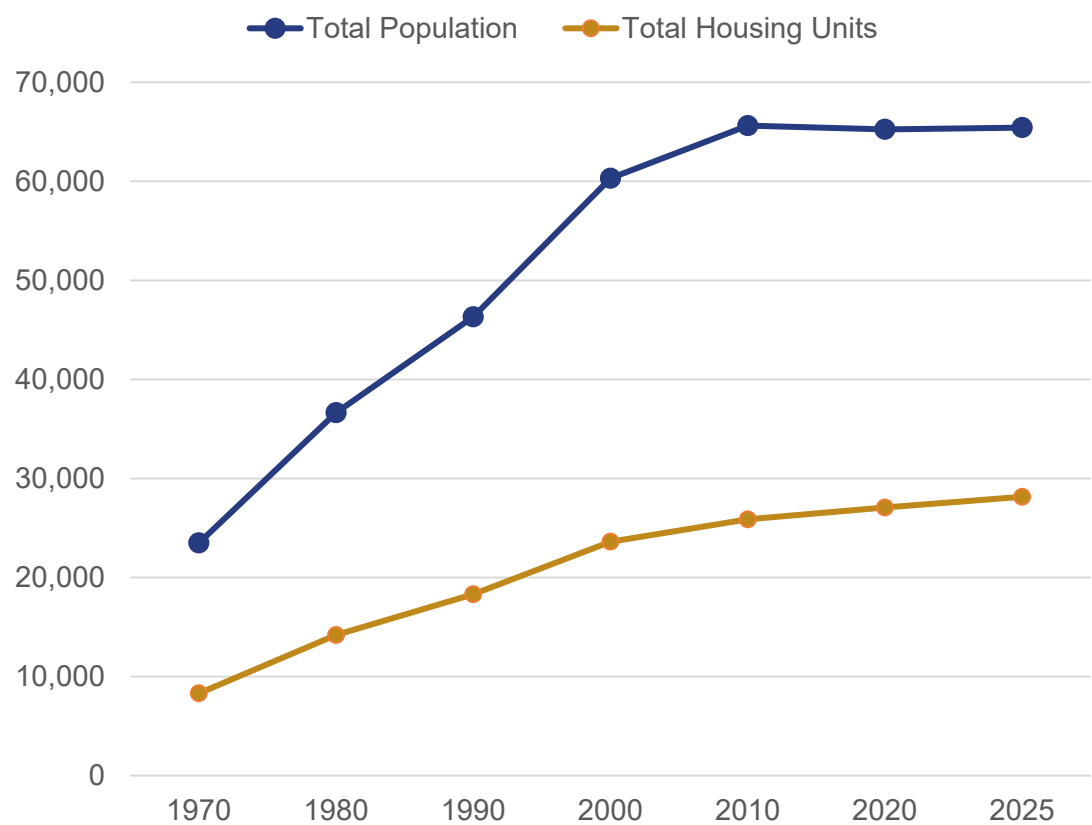
Planning Commission comment included:

- General comments:
 - Need to plan for increased transportation and infrastructure.
 - Include a rough transportation network with the land use concepts.
 - Maintain some retail in the neighborhood centers.
 - Consider bringing back the agricultural buffer around the city limits.
 - By rezoning Downtown, are we delaying development from happening, e.g., will property owners/developers hold their projects for greater height and density once the General Plan is approved?
- Comments focused on south of city limits:
 - Consider expansion south of Davis, near Mace.
 - Consider infrastructure and transportation affects.
 - Consider annexation in Solano County, potentially as an action item for this General Plan.
 - Annex portions of the UC Davis campus.
- Comments focused on north of city limits
 - Incorporate the golf course north of the city limits and west of Highway 113 into the city limits.
 - Better match jobs and housing north of the city limits.
 - Need walkable neighborhood centers, particularly in areas outside the city limits.
 - Increase the density of residential blocks outside city limits to greater than 30 dwelling units / per acre.
 - Remove Village Farms and/or revise the vision for the area.

Recent Population and Housing Trends in the City of Davis

Davis is the most populous city in Yolo County, with over 65,000 residents as of 2025. Davis residents make up 30 percent of Yolo County’s 220,500 total residents. Since 1990, the population of Davis grew by approximately 45 percent, outpacing the rate of growth in California (33 percent). However, since 2010 the population in Davis has remained relatively constant, with a slight decrease in population between 2020 and 2025. Likewise, housing unit production slowed from approximately 4,000 to 6,000 per decade before 2000 to less than 2,000 after 2000.

City of Davis Total Population & Housing Units by Decade



Source: California Department of Finance Population and Housing Unit Data

Each year, City staff produce an annual residential development status report called for in Resolution #08-019, adopted in 2008. The most recent report was provided to City Council on March 17, 2026. The tables below contain summaries of building permits issued for new residential units in calendar years 2009 through 2025.

Total Units 2009 through 2025		
Year	Total units (base and exempt)	Deed Restricted Affordable Units (part of total units)
2025	75	2

2024	151	-
2023	384	10
2022	23	-
2021	340	18
2020	66	38
2019	395	55
2018	374	90
2017	214	11
2016	266	66
2015	105	-
2014	13	4
2013	54	10
2012	188	12
2011	122	74
2010	21	-
2009	27	-
TOTAL	2,818	390

Types of Units 2009 through 2025				
Year (16 years)	Single-family (detached and attached)	Multi-family ownership	Multi-family rental	Accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
2025	31	-	2	42
2024	71	-	41	39
2023	1	-	360	23
2022	6	-	-	17
2021	5	-	315	20
2020	13	-	38	15
2019	35	-	328	32
2018	48	60	250	16
2017	127	60	12	15
2016	173	14	62	17
2015	94	-	2	9
2014	10	-	-	3
2013	48	-	-	6
2012	66	4	117	1
2011	51	-	69	2
2010	18	-	-	3
2009	8	17	-	2

2,818 Total (2009 – 2025)	805 (28.6%)	155 (5.5%)	1,596 (56.6%)	262 (9.3%)
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The March 17, 2026 City Council staff report on annual residential development is available here:

<https://documents.cityofdavis.org/Media/Default/Documents/PDF/CityCouncil/CouncilMeetings/Agendas/2026/2026-03-17/04R-Housing-Element-Annual-Progress-Report-2025.pdf>

Recent Housing Trends at UC Davis

On March 2, 2026, the City, UC Davis and Yolo County participated in a joint special meeting of the Davis City Council. Lucas Griffith, Executive Director Campus Planning & Sustainability and Donelle Denise Allen, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor Housing, Dining, Divisional Operations and Technology provided an update on the 2018 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU between UC Davis, the City of Davis, and Yolo County addresses historic housing shortages.

Since the adoption of the LRDP MOU, UC Davis has exceeded its student housing commitments. The MOU required the university to provide housing for 100% of enrollment growth. UC Davis has delivered 6,266 new on-campus beds while enrollment grew by 2,195 students during the period. Major housing projects, including The Green at West Village and Orchard Park Apartments, have expanded the university's housing supply and enabled UC Davis to exceed MOU bed-count milestones. UC Davis plans to add another 2,784 beds through projects currently under construction or in planning.

These investments have contributed to the proportion of students living on campus. The share of Davis-based students housed on campus grew from 29% in 2016–17 to an estimated 42% in 2025–26, with more than 15,000 students now living in university housing. UC Davis continues to guarantee housing for all first-year students and two years of housing for incoming transfer students, reinforcing its commitment to student affordability, access, and success.

The March 2, 2026 UC Davis presentation to City Council is available here:

<https://documents.cityofdavis.org/Media/Default/Documents/PDF/CityCouncil/CouncilMeetings/Agendas/2026/2026-03-02/03AA-UC-Davis-Housing-Update-Presentation.pdf>

Future Population and Housing Needs for the General Plan

There is no single source of definitive information on future housing demand/need. Rather, City staff and the project team must triangulate different sources of information to establish future housing demand from SACOG 2050 Growth Projections developed for the Regional Transportation Plan / Sustainable Communities Strategy, California

Department of Finance (DOF) Population Projections and California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) Regional Housing Needs Allocations (RHNA).

SACOG Projections

SACOG expects Davis to grow less rapidly than either Yolo County as a whole or Sacramento County, both in terms of employment and housing units. The SACOG regional projections are based on a top-down regionwide growth model; while the jurisdiction-level projections consider the availability of land to accommodate residential and non-residential growth, as well as regional policy objectives to encourage growth in a pattern that facilitates a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, primarily via reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMT). Thus, SACOG jurisdiction-level projections will tend to focus growth on areas with ample land available for development as well as good transit accessibility and a beneficial relationship between jobs and housing opportunities. SACOG projects Davis to add 4,300 new housing units and 2,200 jobs by 2050.

(Sources <https://www.sacog.org/planning/2025-blueprint/blueprint-land-use>
<https://www.sacog.org/home/showpublisheddocument/3025/638845528660070000>)

California DOF Population Projections

The DOF makes long-term county level population forecasts that are less policy-driven and more market-driven than SACOG. DOF projects the population of Yolo County will grow by just over 50 percent between 2020 and 2050, at an average annual growth rate of 0.8 percent, significantly more than the SACOG housing unit projection. The rate of population growth is projected to increase starting in 2030, growing by an average of 25,000 residents per decade. The DOF projections suggest that Yolo County's potential long-term growth may be more robust than indicated by the SACOG projections. By extension, Davis underlying demand for residential growth may also be more robust than indicated by the SACOG projections, to the extent that forces of overall housing demand affect Davis in a manner similar to Yolo County.

California HCD Regional Housing Needs Allocation

Planning for meeting the City's next Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) was one of the primary reasons for starting the GPU. HCD is responsible for determining the regional housing needs assessment (segmented by income levels) for each region's planning body known as a "council of governments" (COG). HCD starts with demographic population information from the California Department of Finance and uses a formula to calculate a figure for each region/COG. Each COG uses its own demographic figures to calculate what it believes the regional housing needs are. Each COG then coordinates with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) — taking into account factors not captured in the calculations — to arrive at a final figure. This final figure is the regional housing needs allocation. Once

HCD and SACOG have agreed to the region's assessment figure (the amount of housing that must be planned for), SACOG takes over and is responsible for allocating the housing need amongst all of the jurisdictions (cities/counties) within that region.

Housing Element law requires local governments to be accountable for ensuring that projected housing needs reflected by the RHNA can be accommodated. The process maintains local control over where and what type of development should occur in local communities, while providing the opportunity for the private sector to meet market demand. Housing Element law recognizes the most critical decisions regarding housing development occur at the local level, within the context of the periodically updated general plan. The RHNA requires local governments to balance the need for growth, including the need for new housing, against other competing local interests. The process of creating the RHNA promotes the state's interest in encouraging open markets and providing opportunities for the private sector to address the state's housing demand, while leaving the ultimate decision about how and where to plan for growth at the regional and local levels. While land use planning is fundamentally a local issue, the availability of housing is a matter of statewide importance.

Cities and counties receive their RHNA every eight years to serve as the basis of the Housing Element policies. In 2021 for the 6th Cycle Housing Element, the City of Davis was assigned 2,075 housing units across different income levels and approximately twice the allocation from earlier Housing Element cycles. While the City successfully identified sites to adequately accommodate the RHNA, the limited supply of vacant sites and few underutilized sites to recycle into housing made accommodating growth challenging.

Future Housing Element cycles will require even more sites. HCD will not accept a site to count for the City's RHNA if the site will not likely be redeveloped. If the City is concerned about making sure that HCD will certify future Housing Elements, Staff advises that the General Plan land use plan: 1) upzone select, likely redevelopment sites (e.g., in Downtown, along transit corridors, and in neighborhood centers) to higher densities to increase capacity; 2) continue to support incremental infill strategies like ADU and SB 9 investment in single family neighborhoods; and 3) consider some areas outside of city limits to help meeting needs in future Housing Elements. All of these strategies were included in the land use concepts.

A challenge for City staff is anticipating what RHNA HCD will assign in future cycles, e.g., 2030, 2038, and 2046. Early indicators from SACOG are that the RHNA numbers will increase. Therefore, Staff recommends that the City plan for a minimum of what was assigned in 2021 for each of the cycles totaled. Staff recommends that the city plan for a minimum of 6,225 additional units beyond the previously assigned 6th Cycle RHNA's 2,075 units. This number could be reduced to 4,150 units if the City wishes to delay the

planning for the third Housing Element cycle under this General Plan (which would occur in 2046).

Definitions and Terminology

While the State requires every City and County to have a land use plan to guide development and growth, it also affords every jurisdiction the ability to determine the contents of its own land use plan. The plan can address land uses outside of the jurisdictional boundaries in which the planning agency believes land uses have a relation to its own planning.

The City of Davis has planning and zoning authority over lands within its City Limits, and “pre-zoning” authority over lands within its Sphere of Influence (SOI). The SOI is made up of unincorporated land and defines a city’s probable future physical boundary and service area. The SOI is a required boundary formally adopted and determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). Land must be within a city’s SOI to be considered for annexation to that city. Annexation is the legal process of incorporating unincorporated land from the SOI into an existing jurisdiction’s City Limits. Davis has no formal authority over any land outside the SOI. The Yolo County LAFCO considers sphere adjustments every five years.

Project applicants outside of the city limits and SOI may submit an application to the City for approval. Those applicants require General Plan and Zoning Code amendments and approval by City Council, as well as amendments to the SOI. If projects are approved by the City, Measure J/R/D requires voter approval before agricultural or open space land can be converted to urban uses.

An urban limit line is a planning tool that restricts development within a defined area to limit urban sprawl and preserve natural and agricultural resources. An urban limit line is not required by State law and is typically set by a jurisdiction’s City Council or public vote. This boundary is often set for a specific period and does not directly control annexation. A Municipal Services Area (MSA) is a geographic area within which a local agency provides, or plans to provide, municipal services and infrastructure necessary to support existing and future development. The two boundaries between an urban limit line and MSA may overlap, but a MSA is more directly tied to infrastructure planning and service delivery, while an urban limit line is more directly tied to growth and land-use policy.

Utility Infrastructure Capacity

An important component of planning for future development is to consider impacts on infrastructure, such as the water and wastewater system, to ensure adequate capacity in the future. Like transportation, the City of Davis is working to understand existing capacity, particularly at the Water Pollution Control Plant.

Water and Wastewater

The City of Davis provides water and wastewater utilities, including service systems, wastewater conveyance, and treatment infrastructure for areas within city limits. This large system of utilities includes a water distribution system with three water storage tanks, seven groundwater wells comprised of five deep aquifer wells and two intermediate wells, and 191 miles of distribution and transmission mains.

The City of Davis wastewater collection system conveys wastewater for the area within the city limits to the City of Davis owned and operated wastewater treatment plant (also called the Water Pollution Control Plant), located at 45400 County Road 28H. The collection system includes 164 miles of gravity sewers, 3,224 manholes, six pump stations, 2.63 miles of force mains ranging in size from four to 14 inches, and approximately 123 miles of sewer laterals. The facility is permitted to treat 7.5 mgd (million gallons per day) of wastewater, with an existing treatment system design capacity of 6 mgd based on average dry weather flow.

Recent Measure J/R/D Project(s) Utility Study

In April 2024, the firms of Brown and Caldwell and West Yost prepared an analysis of the available water and sewer capacity for the Village Farms and Willowgrove projects. The studies found that water supply and sewer treatment capacity were also sufficient. However, the study begged the question whether there would be any additional capacity beyond the projects being considered. Therefore, Staff has done a deeper analysis and has drawn additional conclusions related to sewer capacity illustrated below.

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Estimated Sewer Capacity Analysis

Available sewer capacity related to physical development is measured in total equivalent dwelling units (EDUs) to calculate sewer generation, connection fees, and utility bills. One EDU equals the typical wastewater flow and strength produced by an average single-family home, which local codes typically define as roughly 200 to 300 gallons per day.

The total equivalent dwelling unit (EDUs) included in the City's consultant study was 33,100. It included planning for the Palomino, Nishi, Bretton Woods, Disc 2022, Willowgrove and Village Farms projects. The study did not include capacity planning for

any infill projects, such as the Downtown redevelopment projects or any remaining vacant land within the existing city limits, because the analysis focused on those two projects. Therefore, City staff did a rough EDU estimate of the remaining available lands (within the city limits) yet to be developed in addition to the projects listed above and concluded that the sewer treatment influent could be accommodated with a short-term design capacity of 5 mgd (million gallons per day). There is very little excess capacity in that calculation.

There are temporary improvements being made to the treatment plant to ensure that the 5mgd can be achieved. Within 5 years, the City is planning to do a design/build contract to bring the wastewater treatment plant to its overall design capacity of 6mgd. It is possible, although not guaranteed, that the design/build could be increased to a capacity of 7.5 mgd, as the City's discharge permit allows. The rates are in place, and the design/build planning is underway.

Based on these initial estimates, the City may have up to 1mgd of additional treatment plant capacity. This would equate to about 8,000 additional housing units beyond those studied in projects listed above, with some portion of capacity used for non-residential development. Additional analysis and study would need to be completed to confirm plant capacity and also to understand whether the water and wastewater distribution systems have capacity.

Questions for Commissioners

In the context of your Commission's role and responsibilities:

- Do you think the Draft Land Use Map provided achieves a balance of jobs and housing in the future? Do you have any specific recommended changes to the map?
- Do you think the City should consider expansion south of Willowbank along Mace Boulevard (Montgomery Avenue and Mace Boulevard)?
- Should development projects along transit corridors and in neighborhood centers be allowed to move forward without required commercial space if that helps make housing easier to build?

Next Steps

Following feedback from the GPC and the reconvened City Council Subcommittee, the project team will refine the Revised Draft General Plan Land Use Map in preparation for public review and input. In late summer/fall 2026, the City will host Community Workshop #3 and online Survey #3 to collect public input on the Draft Preferred Land Use direction. In Fall 2026, the City will host an additional GPC meeting to obtain additional feedback and ensure reconciliation between the Commissions' priorities and then present to Planning Commission and City Council the General Plan Land Use Map to seek final input and direction.

Once the General Plan Land Use Map is finalized, Staff and the consultant team will begin developing the complementary goals, policies, and implementation actions for the General Plan chapters or elements. In early 2027, the Team will conduct topic specific focus groups to discuss content for the General Plan elements.

COMMISSION INPUT

This item has not been discussed by any other City commission.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Alta (Raimi + Associates) Power Point Presentation
2. Vision Statement and Project Outcomes
3. Issues and Strategies to Address (Workshop #2 Board)
4. Land Use Concept Maps (presented in April 2026)
5. Workshop #2 Summary
6. Online Survey #2 Summary
7. Draft Preferred Land Use Alternative Map (July 22, 2026)