

Study Session of the Palm Desert City Council, Successor Agency to the Palm Desert Redevelopment Agency, Housing Authority, and Board of Library Trustees

Minutes

September 25, 2025

Present: Mayor Jan Harnik, Councilmember Gina Nestande, Mayor Pro Tem Evan Trubee, Councilmember Karina Quintanilla*, Councilmember Joe Pradetto
** Councilmember Quintanilla participated remotely in accordance with AB 2449.*

1. CALL TO ORDER - STUDY SESSION

A Study Session of the Palm Desert City Council was called to order by Mayor Harnik on Thursday, September 25, 2025, at 2:45 p.m., in the Council Chamber, City Hall, located at 73-510 Fred Waring Drive, Palm Desert, California.

2. STUDY SESSION TOPICS

2.a CIRCULATION ELEMENT GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

Brian Wolfe, consultant from Fehr & Peers, narrated a PowerPoint presentation and responded to Council questions. In response to concerns about truck route enforcement, Mr. Wolfe noted that AB 98 would be implemented through signage to support delivery-only restrictions.

City Council expressed concern about relying too heavily on the Portola Interchange to address Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) and Level of Service (LOS) impacts. Mayor Harnik emphasized the importance of making Highway 111 more inviting and enhancing its overall character. She further requested the removal of the 88.8 VMT/LOS specification from the planning document, noting potential inaccuracies and the associated risk to future funding.

2.b UPDATE ON MEDIAN LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT (PROJECT NO. CFA00011)

Shawn Muir, Community Services Manager, provided an update on the Median Landscape Master Plan development, including Tier One and Tier Two budget phasing, and introduced representatives from Hermann Design Group.

Armando "Opus" Garza, consultant with Hermann Design Group, narrated a PowerPoint presentation and responded to City Council questions.

During the discussion, the following topics were raised:

- The reasoning behind using the same design approach for both Highway 111 and El Paseo, with a focus on visual cohesiveness.
- The use of multiple design tiers versus a single, uniform design, with varying preferences for the amount of landscaping.

- Safety considerations related to gabion features included in the design.
- Interest in combining internal LED lighting with uplighting to enhance gabion visibility and design impact.
- The need for lush landscaping and vibrant colors, particularly in freeway offramp areas, along with a request for cost estimates.
- Suggestions to incorporate natural plants where metal planters are proposed, and to coordinate El Paseo median landscaping with adjacent outdoor dining areas.

2.c 2025 MID-YEAR UPDATE ON CITY COUNCIL GOALS

Department Directors provided verbal updates on the status of City Council goals and responded to City Council inquiries.

3. ADJOURNMENT

The City Council adjourned the Study Session at 4:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Michelle Nance

Acting Assistant City Clerk/Assistant Secretary

Anthony J. Mejia, MMC

City Clerk/Secretary