PALMDALE - City officials are looking for comments from residents, business people and other interested individuals and organizations on what factors should be studied in an environmental impact report on city plans for the area around the Palmdale Metrolink station and a possible future high-speed rail station.

A public “scoping” meeting to take comments about concerns that people want addressed in the draft environment impact report for the Palmdale Transit Oriented Development project will be held 6 to 8 p.m. Wednesday in City Hall’s City Council Chamber, 38330 Sierra Highway, Suite B.

“When we talk about TOD we’re talking about creating walkable, pedestrian/bicycle/public transit friendly communities for people of all ages and incomes,” Transportation/Special Projects Manager Mike Behen said in the city’s announcement of the meeting. “Our vision is to create neighborhoods with more transportation and housing choices where residents can live work and play and maintain lifestyle that are convenient, affordable and active.”

“Transit oriented development” is typically defined as more compact development located within easy walking distance of public transit and containing a mix of uses such as housing, jobs, recreation, shops, restaurants and entertainment, city officials said.

The environmental impact report will focus on the potentially significant impacts and effects of the project and will document the reasons for concluding that other effects will be less than significant.

In 2014, Palmdale was awarded a $400,000 grant by the Los Angeles County Transportation Authority for the transit oriented development study, which will update the city’s General Plan and zoning ordinance for the area around the Palmdale Transportation Center on Sixth Street East north of Avenue Q and the California High-Speed Rail station, which is proposed to be built south of the Metrolink station.

The city also received a $100,000 grant from Southern California Association of Governments for the Avenue Q feasibility study which will provide an analysis on feasibility of developing land along Avenue Q west of Division Street as an extension of the transit oriented development area.

“The city is eager to know your views and your specific concerns related to the potential environmental effects of the project,” said Senior Planner Carlene Saxton. “Information gathered during the comment period will be used to shape and focus future analyses of environmental impacts.”

The transportation oriented development study is looking at the area north of Palmdale Boulevard, south of Rancho Vista Boulevard (Avenue P), east of the Antelope Valley Freeway and west of 10th Street East, with a focus area covering a half-mile radius around a possible high-speed rail station site on Sixth Street East about a quarter-mile south of Avenue Q.

The SCAG grant is paying for a study along Avenue Q, from Division Street west almost to 10th Street West.

The public is also invited to submit written comments describing specific environmental concerns.

Representatives of public agencies are asked to identify their specific areas of statutory responsibility as well as the agency’s views as to the
scope and content of the environmental information germane to the agency's statutory responsibilities.

Written comments must be sent by Feb. 21 to: Senior Planner Carlene Saxton, City of Palmdale, Department of Economic and Community Development, Planning Division, 38250 Sierra Highway, Palmdale, CA, 93550.

Documents explaining the project description, location and the potential environmental effects are available for review at Palmdale City Hall, Department of Economic and Community Development, Planning Division located at 38250 Sierra Highway. The office is open 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

For more information, contact Behen by email at mbehen@cityofpalmdale.org or Saxton at csaxton@cityofpalmdale.org or (661) 267-5200.