

San Tan/Queen Creek Alternatives Workshop Summary Report

Date: February 23, 2008
 Time: 9 – 11 am
 Location: J.O. Combs Middle School
 37611 N Pecan Creek



Handouts

Vision Alternative Handout
 Alternative Maps

Attendees (17):

Wayne Balmer; Suraj Bhakta; Edgar Bonnice; Michelle Breitzman; Tom Caisley; Robert Crowley; Kathleen Esposito; Phyllis Frasier; Tim Lithgow; Cherish Medlock; Dana Nance; Monte Nevit; Lauren Segall; Arline Studley; Jeff Studley; Mark Van Horn; and Benjamin Webb

MEETING SUMMARY

The purpose of the Alternatives Workshop was to bring together residents and stakeholders from around Pinal County to receive input on three land use and transportation alternatives built through the input of previous public involvement activities, work group input, and Comprehensive Plan Team effort. Prior to the start of the event, participants browsed exhibits which depicted the land use and transportation alternatives: trends, dispersed growth, and corridor focused.

The event was guided by a detailed PowerPoint presentation that described the Comprehensive Plan process and project status, addressed some of the planning realities facing Pinal County, reviewed the Pinal County Vision, and described the land use and transportation alternatives in detail. The presentation guided participants through a dynamic feedback instrument that solicited input on several alternative aspects: land use pattern, open space, transit opportunities, and potential land use and transportation features. The Alternatives Workshop PowerPoint is available in the project website Library at: www.PinalCountyPlan.com.

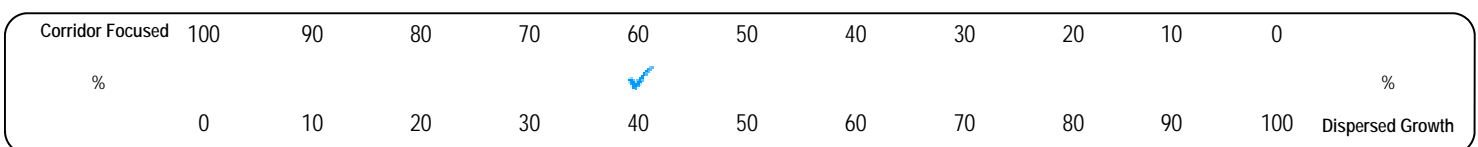
FEEDBACK FORM SUMMARY

Forms received: 15

Note: Feedback as found in this report is recorded as it was received and is not edited for content or grammar.

The average response of event participants to the philosophy questions, the approval totals for the land use and transportation features, and participant comments are provided below:

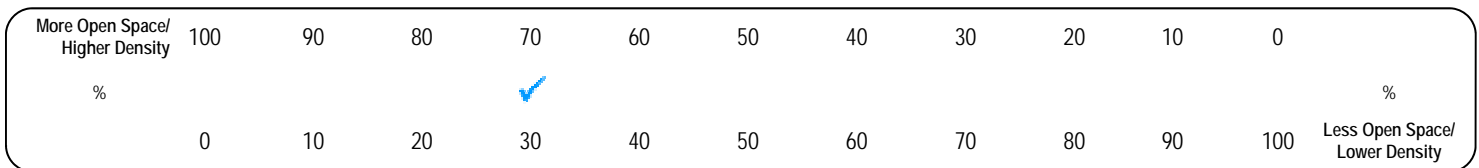
Land Use:



Comments on Land Use:

- Cost effective. Keep industry and roads so people can work in central areas.
- While I really feel the railroad is important, I prefer the dispersed growth because it would also allow for more growth with lower density between the activity centers. Dispersed also allows for more choices of quality of life, to be closer to mountains or cities.
- The only realistic option is a deviation of the trends concept. There are insufficient resources available (or ever will be) to construct the infrastructure required by any of the other options. Given the time to complete the Superstition Freeway, I don't see either the corridor or dispersed. Also, all the new urban infrastructure required at the local level to accommodate the development required will preclude significant growth in many new areas.
- I like jobs going toward the east as well; due to seeing people I work with commuting everyday from those areas as their children remain in schools where they live. Also, I like building on tourism to help with increasing economic growth there.
- Regardless of the choice, we still need the rapid transit. I would like to see low intensity along the proposed tourism/hospitality route.
- Like to keep outlying eastern county small BUT must have better roadways so that open and wilderness areas can be utilized. Dispersed planned roads are good.
- This will be the best to start with - dispersed growth to grow into corridors, focused growth. Pre-planning seems to be able to see vision this way.
- I have a problem with corridor focused, because I can't get past my vision of massive traffic problems with that much density. Our history of building, then improving, then improving the same roadway again will never change. We need to spread out.
- Better roads in the East County with dispersed growth. More industry in the East County, less industry in corridor focused. I think corridor focused industrial centers would congest that area. Dispersing industry would lessen traffic.
- Land use pattern is also a great plan but seldom works; when it does, it's a wonderful process.
- Concentration means fewer expensive highways.
- Corridor concentrates jobs near homes and leaves open space. Do not put growth centers in Kearny, because commercial and residential will conflict with open space plan. Add corridor (dispersed) from Oracle Junction --> Oracle --> San Manuel --> Mammoth since it seems to be growing that way.
- Growth tends to want to concentrate. It makes the most sense to plan for growth nearest to the existing growth. With energy prices increasing, concentrated growth is the most viable.
- I like the dispersed growth, but I like the proposed low intensities. Economic Act center.

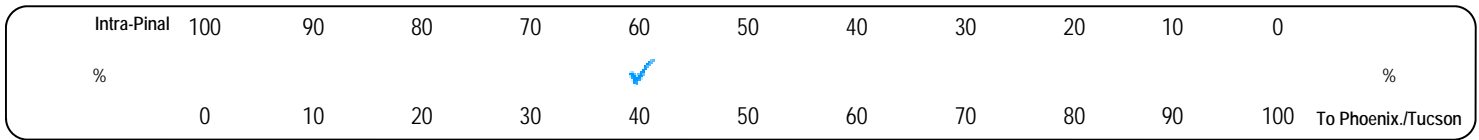
Open Space:



Comments on Open Space:

- Keep more open spaces and trails. Allow apartments, etc., in corridor areas (trade off). Keep Pinal County feeling outside corridor, i.e., horses, etc.
- If we want to be a destination county, we need parks and things to go to. Also it allows for the subdivisions to create parks within communities. There is a large amount of people in the equestrian community here, and they need places as well.
- Density transfer from either State or private land to generate higher densities which would make more efficient use of existing and proposed infrastructure is (or will be) the only logical choice. The need and maintenance of all the streets, schools, utilities, freeways and everything else will exceed the funding to provide them. If you want a university, hospital or arterial street increased, density will be essential.
- Would like more permits sold to use open space, therefore regulating safety and type of use and helping to provide additional funds to maintain those spaces. Then more open public parks/trails without personal costs.
- We are growing, but we shouldn't lose nature to housing. Not everyone can afford large lots, so community accessible open space works for them.
- We need trail system like the White Mountain Trail System. But what about current outdoor enthusiasts who can hit open space from their backyard? To have high density next door is not good. Pinal County needs to keep density down, that is what the residents want. Okay, my thought is higher density in certain areas and lower density in existing equestrian/farm areas with a trail system linking them. It is possible. The Show Low area did it!
- The lower density will develop first, and higher density will follow economically. The County and State have the ability to designate important areas now, before the development.
- I want more open space with less density. I am willing to purchase land to preserve open spaces. Open space to me (which is outside of the slope of this plan) is having open space around my home. No block walls and no two-story houses. To preserve open space --> put it in the deeds.
- Not thrilled with high density but would be willing to be taxed to preserve open spaces. Some high density would be needed as a supplement, however. Open space is important!!
- This is important but never seems to work when government needs land; eminent domain takes place.
- Open space should not be the overriding consideration. It's fine but lets not get carried away.
- Definitely like the trade concept that concentrates houses and work centers so we can preserve open space. I like concentrating industrial along (between) the existing rail lines and proposed (plan) freeway.
- Again, with increasing energy prices, density must increase in some areas. Higher density might help pay for more open space. The draw of Pinal County's open space is its vastness - to make ecotourism viable, we must have vast tracts of native desert. We must, in places, make some arrangements for current residents to maintain their equestrian/ranch lifestyles.
- Higher we need trails park. Leaves to give more cooling effect. Less open space it builds can incorporate landscape to aid in the cooling effect. Lesson the heat from concrete and black top.

Transit (public transportation) Opportunities:



Transit Opportunities Comments:

- Needed to turn the tide to bring people into Pinal County to work and play. I would use rail, etc., to go to Phoenix. Get cars off the roads and save air quality.
- We need to be able to commute within the County. Again, to be a destination we need to make it as easy to get to as possible. We need to be able to get to those jobs we will be creating, yet live in the East County.
- Public transit is unlikely in Pinal County due to the low population, low population density, the number of miles of transit needed and the cost per mile to build and operate. Transit also means you have pedestrians at the destinations, and unless there are uses at the stations, I don't see people using it. You need your car to arrive at the station, so why not just drive the whole way?
- Both types would benefit our clean air and encourage more opportunities for local travel to sporting events, theater, etc., without having to worry about parking, etc.
- We need both. My husband works in Phoenix and I work in Florence. I already use a van pool for my commute, but there isn't one available to my husband. I work with individuals that live in Maricopa County. A transit system would benefit them. We can't expect that people will either live in Pinal County and commute within or commute out of the county.
- I shop in Maricopa County because Pinal County roads are so bad and inconvenient. Ideally I should be able to have my needs met in my home county. The point is to keep tax money in Pinal County, not send it back out. And also not build infrastructure, then have people hop a train or bus and take revenue out of the county.
- We need local transit first. Then we will be able to grow into coming and going to major cities. More local business development with major arteries to and from the freeway.
- If our focus is to build Pinal County, we need to focus our tax dollars in the County and let the State/Feds build the inter-County transit. To throw too much dependency on other agencies worries me. Inter-County transit.
- If we're to increase job growth, we need a method by which to get there, and decrease congestion. Probably would not use it as my hours are difficult for start up transits to do (early morning).
- With the population growth in the future transit opportunities are a major concern for all who drive a transit system (surface) is extremely and must be utilized by more than 25% of the populated area that it is serving. Also stated at the November transit meeting in Apache Junction, the Board has no money. (???)
- Museums and stadiums draw crowds. Let's use non-highways but rather rail and bus. Yes, I would rather hop a commuter train to go to a ballgame in Phoenix.
- Greatest need is INTER-transit for mass transit for both corridor and dispersed model since both require mobility that roads cannot provide. We don't have money to build roads we need now. How will we build (find) them in the future. These plans do not show freeways connecting Johnson Ranch area to jobs in Phoenix.
- With too much improvement of transit from Phoenix/Tucson, Pinal would become more of a bedroom community. With too little connection to Phoenix/Tucson, Pinal County would try to develop within a vacuum. Rail and other sources of public transit are the future; look

at Europe. Gas will never get cheaper, we need to pursue increased density and increased public transit.

- We need rails and bus transportation. Washington State, Seattle to Tacoma and between which is SEATAC have handled it a lot better than the whole valley has done here. Keeping in mind green gas friendly.

Commercial Airport: 13 of 15 approved

Commercial Airport Comments:

- Jobs, taxes, income. Location is easy to access the I-10 corridor. Rail. Available to obtain land.
- Let's not give anyone a reason to leave the county. Good tax base?
- Given the cost of building a major airport, and the long time between construction and use by the aviation business, I do not think this is feasible or realistic to consider construction of a regional airport in Pinal County. The support systems for an airport (freeway access, utilities, arterial street systems, fire/police, etc.), are also billions.
- Yes, looks good where located on map. I pick up my husband who works out of state at least six times a year at Phoenix and it is getting increasingly harder to get in and out. I recently flew from Williams Field and loved the convenience.
- It's a necessity, but I would like to see the flight plans proposed. The current location is acceptable as long as it does not impact the existing residents in the surrounding areas without providing compensation to property owners.
- This is a good idea, because Phoenix/Tucson is getting more and more inconvenient because of growth. Pinal County needs to be self-sustainable. The location on map is a good central location.
- Will be needed as economics dictate.
- Near future limitations of area airports dictates the need of a new airport. Location on map makes sense.
- This is very necessary. It has international flights already. Yes, I am very much in favor of.
- Chicago and New York have two to three airports. Ours will be a LONG time coming.
- Very definitely plan now, so space will be available. Coordinate it with open space. Like location shown on corridor plan since it's concentrated.
- A must to attract business. Pursue duty-free distinction.
- Please use a bigger map. Maybe both Maricopa and Pinal. Use other states, maybe, with circle on both showing population and use of. For example: we need one so far in Gateway. Next in Eloy.
- Need it, plus four to five smaller, i.e., Scottsdale and Chandler business park types.

Commuter Rail: 7 of 15 approved

Commuter Rail Comments:

- Run to airports, i.e., Tucson and Phoenix. Bring people to work in Pinal corridor.
- It would give people a reason to leave the county for jobs but could also bring tourism. 50/50.
- Public transit is unlikely in Pinal County due to the low population, low population density, the number of miles of transit needed and the cost per mile to build and operate. Transit also means you have pedestrians at the destinations and unless there are uses at the stations, I don't see people using it.

- Yes. It will bring in more travel options that should pay for itself in the long run.
- Bus transit would need to be addressed to maximize effectiveness. It should stop at the proposed Pinal Airpark, not near.
- Absolutely not!!! Unless, of course, Phoenix/Tucson will help fund it, because there will be dual benefits. If we do this, it needs to run north/south through Gold Canyon, not off I-10.
- Not cost effective. Waste of money.
- No, no, no. Too much relies on other jurisdictions. Let the State do it.
- For the time being, I think our dollars need to stay in the county.
- Not if it takes as long to build as the Phoenix light rail and is as costly - \$17 million per mile.
- Good for the environment. Get cars off the road.
- Excellent idea IF TRAINS AVAILABLE for morning and evening commute to Phoenix and Tucson. Expand rail line from Florence --> Kearny --> Dudleyville --> Mammoth --> San Manuel. Expanded service supports dispersed plan and open space.
- With some stops/destinations in Pinal County. Would increase property values around stations.
- Yes, it will be speed to and from - will help economic growth. Europe uses this very well.
- Need freeway GRID, not north/south freeway. Commuter rail space option is badly needed. Preserve it!

Tourist Train: 9 of 15 approved

Tourist Train Comments:

- Tourism is needed in Pinal County. Need to evaluate Verde Valley, will provide to hotel, etc.
- I think it would be great. However, I would be concerned about the ecological impact.
- Since the commuter rail and railroad are seasonal and occasional, they'd be even harder to support. Maybe a five- or ten-mile route like in Durango or Cottonwood, but not a large system.
- Yes, tourism should be cashed in on!! We are the Grand Canyon State after all...
- Great idea, more tourism equals more money and education to the tourists.
- Very good idea, because Pinal County is beautiful. Especially our winter residents would love this, not to mention the locals.
- Don't care.
- Private venture only!
- Tourism needs to be more explored. This train could help those communities in the East be more sustainable.
- No, we do not need another Lionel train like Cottonwood?
- Excellent idea along Gila River if open space is maintained.
- Probably not cost-effective/viable. And nice area though. Maybe if ecotourism grows, this will work.
- Maybe in the VERY far off future. Private, ok. Anytime 30 years out.
- Magma Spur perhaps, but not subsidized.

Ecotourism: 12 of 15 approved

Ecotourism Comments:

- Tourism needs to be an active part of Pinal County's future.
- Goes with the tourism train.
- May be an option worth exploring, linked with the tourist train would possibly make it more economically viable.
- Yes. We should cash in on tourism!! We should bring in wildlife enthusiasm.
- I think it would destroy the area if proposed scale is not reduced. Instead of mid-intensity economic development, have low-intensity.
- Absolutely! This area has been trying to do this. But there just isn't the infrastructure. Look at Superior. We are finally getting decent roads. It will help in their tourism quest.
- Develop a major plan tied to the Boyce Arboretum and State Lands with history. Mining the economy with the history and economy.
- Depending on how it is implemented, this sounds good.
- Important positive impacts on area can turn into a bad thing if not regulated.
- No, since the Governor just spent \$8 million to refurbish.
- Bring in spending visitors like other areas of the state.
- Good first step to develop dispersed jobs.
- The wave of the future. Use our open space to produce money! Possible area for star gazing/astronomy-type businesses.
- Yes, we could make a good draw to the area, if the money can be kept.
- Nice touch, as long as I don't live over there.

Gateways: 10 of 15 approved

Gateway Comments:

- Bridge over roads and sign along the road stating, "Welcome to Pinal County." We need a logo or sign that people will know it's Pinal.
- Monument. The courthouse in Florence.
- Could have some merits, but deciding what could be problematic. Big arches over the roads in the ROW or monument signs in the ROW for the major roads entering the county.
- A statue of a miner or mining train or a replica of the old County Courthouse. Something visual and unique to the area they are entering.
- No opinion on this one.
- Pinal County is beautiful. Our deserts need to be emphasized. The theme would be mountain, historic miners, prospectors, ranches, cacti and open space for our kids.
- On a road without a traffic jam.
- This is fluff to me. Not worth talking about. I'm not willing to put tax dollars into "pottery" along the freeway like on the 51. I would go for zoning that set aside the first ten to fifteen miles as low density (farming, agricultural, country living). Residences with small road-side businesses, not fast food, like farmer's markets.
- Mountain monument or miner monument.
- Not needed, this would spend money uselessly.
- Something that stresses lots of open space. Perhaps drive through lots of open space to enter county along major corridor.
- Make them pretty --> horses, mining scenes. Statue-type monuments.
- Much like the Interstate signs.

Other Comments:

- Do these plans create unrealistic expectations and later problems for the county for non-performance? Many/most items are out of the hands of the County, and very expensive.
- I'm also from Circle Cross Ranch. Thank you! Sorry there weren't many attending!
- Very interesting.
- Pinal County really failed in transportation. Roads need to happen NOW. And as far as I am concerned, three-lane roads in the middle of the desert are fine, so that when the growth comes, we don't have a situation like San Tan/Queen Creek.
- Chandler Heights Citrus Irrigation District
- Let's coordinate next meeting to not coincide with area events.
- Thanks for listening to us. Sorry about my spelling and penmanship.
- Good show, knowledgeable staff. Peggy interrupts Curt too much.
- Please use overlays on the big screen to show now and future on your three maps. Then overlay with airport now and future on your maps. Then hand out the maps the way you have them all combined.
- I also live near Johnson Ranch/San Tan and Coolidge. GET ME TO/FROM WORK!!!