

## **Native American Visioning Workshop Summary Report**

Date: August 21, 2007  
Time: 4 – 6:00 pm  
Location: Gila River Indian Community Council Secretary's Meeting Room B & C  
525 W. Gu u Ki Rd.; Sacaton, AZ

### **Handouts**

*The Future at Pinal* Executive Summary  
Comprehensive Plan Fact Sheet  
Vision Handout  
Vision Worksheet

### **Attendees (16):**

Brian Bennon, Margaret Cook, David DeJong, Arzic Hogg, Nancy House, David Jacome, Mihio Manus, W. Barry McCain, Wahlean Riggs, Bart Smith, Glenn Stark, Douglas Torres, Cal Touchin, Derek White, Alex Yazza, Terry Yergan

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

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The purpose of the Visioning Workshop was to gather feedback on draft vision themes, largely defined through the nine previous Road Show events. The event initiated with a PowerPoint presentation that described the Comprehensive Plan process, provided results from the Road Show events in July, introduced some realities about the changing America, and defined the process of community visioning. The PowerPoint is available on the project website at: [www.PinalCountyPlan.com](http://www.PinalCountyPlan.com).

Participants were provided a Vision Handout which was a draft compilation of vision themes derived from the nine Road Shows. These themes included: open spaces and places, sense of community, economic sustainability, quality education opportunities, mobility and connectivity, and environmental stewardship. Participants were asked to review the draft Vision Handout prior to the meeting. After the PowerPoint presentation, participants were asked to complete a Vision Worksheet which asked them to answer the following question for each vision theme: "If we do everything right, how would you describe a successful Pinal County in the future. What would be the outcome of our efforts? What would we have achieved?"

### **Participants were then asked "What do you think about the emerging vision themes? Are there any themes missing? Could any additional theme fall under an existing theme?"**

Participants responded as follows:

- Environmental Stewardship is most important
- Emerging themes are great ideas but need more exploration
- There is an inherent conflict related to them (e.g. limit water vs. encourage continuation of farming); not that they are not solvable
- There are too many businesses in the county with an attitude instead of encouraging diversity; the balance of businesses are important because there is a lot of potential in Pinal County
- Need to bring everyone together to reach consensus

- I don't want to see farming to go away
- Concerned about development around Native American communities; people don't understand our culture; concerned for the safety of my children and grandchildren
- Pinal County needs to interface with Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) regarding water and the Arizona Water Settlement Act
- I like the ideas being proposed; we need to teach Arizona history and culture in the schools so we do not continue to lose our local history
- I like the open space I Pinal County
- There are a lot of pressures on Native American communities' borders from surrounding development; need to determine how space will be better utilized with all these people coming to the area
- The Vision Themes are well thought out but the historical and cultural values of Native Americans are missing; the desert and environment needs to be protected; we need to invest in our future for seven generations like we invest in the past (i.e., rehabilitation)
- Sense of community – how we preserve our culture when all this growth occurs is a concern; it takes better education and collaboration; an understanding that we are all in this together
- Pinal County is so vast – how we connect technologically is important
- Protect respect for our land, animals and the history/culture
- Global warming – how is the Pinal County Plan going to address this important issue
- Water is a resource, but where will Pinal County get the water to support growth?
- Respect for Tribal sovereignty; it is important that surrounding communities respect our wishes
- Development in the county and surrounding communities is greatly impacting our Tribal lands; there needs to be more respect for Tribal lands and sovereignty
- This is a first for GRIC to be a part of the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan; we are part of the county; we believe it is important to be involved

Overall the participants felt that the Emerging Vision Themes covered the issues listed above. However, more elaboration would be helpful.

**Participants were then asked for each of the emerging vision themes, and any additional themes identified, “If we do everything right, how would you describe a successful Pinal County in the future. What would be the outcome of our efforts? What would we have achieved?”** Participants' comments for each theme are as follows:

### **Open Spaces and Places**

- Lower density development would occur particularly close to Native American communities
- Native vegetation is preserved through good regulations
- Thousands of acres have been preserved in open space for future generations to enjoy
- Mountains have been preserved from development
- There are designated areas for wildlife habitat and the pathways have been protected
- We have recognized that we do not have to grow out to the ends of open space and we are building up and not out resulting in large open areas protected
- Arizonans understand and respect the Native American communities and cultures
- We have created open spaces between built communities

- Minimized light pollution so that we can enjoy the night skies
- We enjoy the views of the mountains because they are protected from development
- Open space is the ability to see the full sunrise and sunset without obstruction
- We have protected riparian areas and wildlife habitats
- We have protected native trees and shrubs that are an important part of the Native American lifestyle (i.e., medicinal purposes) as well as the sacred mountains; to destroy these would be to destroy our culture

### **Sense of Community**

- We have developed sensitive gateway aesthetics that announce that you are entering a special and unique place
- We provide more education about our culture and history
- There is a deep sense of pride in Pinal County because people understand that they live in a special place
- There is active involvement in working together
- Though so many people continue to move here from other places, they learn about the Native American culture and heritage quickly and honor it
- There is a respect and acknowledgement of the cultural differences in Pinal County
- There is mandated curriculum in schools about Pinal County history and culture
- We have encouraged and supported small businesses to flourish instead of the large chain stores

### **Economic Sustainability**

- There is a sense of accountability and responsibility by the businesses calling Pinal County home
- Pinal has created strong work centers
- Pinal County and Native American communities are working closely on the borderlands areas to ensure that development is compatible
- New jobs have been created without attracting more unwanted traffic to Native American communities
- Pinal has attracted environmentally-sensitive businesses
- Pinal has retained agriculture that assists in the open space feel
- There is a strong sense of collaboration within the County where communities purchase locally from one another

### **Quality Education Opportunities**

- Pinal is recognized for specialized workforce training
- Lifelong learning opportunities are abundant and people are committed to continuous education
- Pinal has made technological advancements in solar energy and a better use of technology
- Pinal has accessible facilities with state of the art technology
- There are satellite higher educational opportunities throughout the County; there is one system to access any level of educational attainment
- Educational institutions teach respect for our diverse culture that results in a strong sense of community

- Pinal has provides the opportunities for people to get their education here and then begin and end their careers without leaving the county
- Pinal has unsurpassed telecommunication infrastructure that is accessible by all
- There is a close connection between economic sustainability and educational attainment

### **Mobility and Connectivity**

- Pinal has developed adequate transportation corridors to meet future demands
- There is high speed rail from Phoenix to Tucson along existing infrastructure
- There is a strong collaborative effort in planning for transportation corridors
- A regional airport has been developed in Pinal
- Pinal has done an excellent job of smart growth management that the need for transportation infrastructure improvements has been reduced
- Pinal has done better transportation corridor planning around Native American communities without fragmenting the communities or animal habitats
- Completed recreation trails connections within the county and connections to other urban area trail systems
- Tribal sovereignty issues are observed when it comes to transportation and trail planning and development
- The historic trails are preserved and the history of these trails is promoted as a way to honor the region's history
- We have designed a system tailored to the needs of residents that will use the system; we determined how to serve the population better by understanding their needs
- We provide mobility options for specialized populations and the elderly

### **Environmental Stewardship**

- Pinal has found a solution to lesson the impact of channelization of streams and waterways through the maintenance of the natural environment
- There is water running through the rivers again and Cottonwood trees and birds have returned
- Billboards have been limited on the transportation corridors to protect view corridors
- Safe water yield has been achieved; Pinal does not pump more water than what can be replaced
- Through careful planning, homes are put in appropriate places to avoid subsidence issues and lesson impact
- Residents of Pinal live cooperatively as neighbors; there is an understanding of Tribal laws and enforcement
- Native American elders reach out to surrounding communities to educate them about the importance of customs, native plants, and the culture
- Pinal has maintained the migration paths throughout the region

## QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY

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**If we do everything right, how would you describe a successful Pinal County in the future? What would be the outcome of our efforts? What would we have achieved?**

### **Open Spaces and Places**

- Lower density, native landscaping. Preserve and protect open space. Designate \_\_\_\_\_ growing not grow out. Who is building on outside? Buffer. Riparian areas, etc.
- Mountain \_\_\_\_\_, pronounced desert areas, protected areas, gateways
- The County would have tens of thousands of acres of mountainous land preserved, with limited growth in these areas (meaning acreage). Preservation of farmland.
- Quit sprawl development. Ensure clustered homes close to urban centers. The land will still have an openness. Open space preserved equates to attractive settings rather than sea of rooftops.
- Maintain the rural atmosphere—with the convenience of accessibility to services.
- Low density, open space; utilize natural native plants. Class A+ water dense systems preserving farming in Pinal County.
- Parks, trails, wildlife habitats, recreation areas, bike paths
- Concentrated housing, more open space that is protected
- Land management seems the same, as much as possible. Wages (begin) = quality of life
- Land versus economy. Limited growth, water management guidelines, education versus land use
- Sustain the natural environment, i.e., land, water, plants to keep natural environment as is—support the ecosystem—protect the water resources.
- Preservation of land and natural habitat native plants
- Where will you get your water?
- An understanding of the Gila River Indian Community to show them the respect and dignity that the community has forgotten or just uses when they want something from us

### **Sense of Community**

- Gatherings in the community, active community. Small business; promote small business—not eaten up by Wal-Mart.
- Mandate curriculum in schools—Pinal County history.
- Individual communities would preserve their local history/heritage by: 1) requiring schools within the County to teach local history (not just elementary, but high school level); 2) expanding local efforts to preserve history/heritage (physical areas and through local historical societies; 3) maintain unique communities; 4) connection of all communities, including tribal communities and sharing of history/heritage.
- Here on GRIC, culture equates to identity and this ties to the health of open lands. For Pinal County, keeping urban centers unsprawled, development wise, would be best.
- The ability to distinguish the different history. Incorporate the value of culture.
- Increase in tourism, cultural diversity (?), communities knowing their own history
- Maintain identity while incorporating diversity: knowledge of cultural differences.
- Need to recognize the history and the need to promote the tribal history and culture
- Heritage = 40 (?) now plus more communication between diverse people populations
- How to maintain community versus the influx of . . .

- Retention of tribal community. Respect tribal lands and sovereignty in Gila River Indian Community. Build trust and partnership with GRIC—major stakeholder in Pinal County.
- Equal opportunities, sovereignty, diversity of tradition/culture/lifestyle, respect for elders, women, children, etc.
- I don't want to see any farming go away. I do not want to see any more development near GRIC. It would look like people coming from all places—no more Arizona natives.
- Respect one another sense of community

### **Economic Sustainability**

- Borderland opportunities. Types of business attached—environmentally safe. Retain agriculture, sell within to each other.
- Grow and sell to each other—produce.
- Tax credits to encourage economic development. Government support for small businesses. Encourage local economic development opportunities so as to keep residents from working outside the county.
- Attract and build economic endeavors on GRIC that have low impact but centered on “green” philosophy. GRIC needs to connect with Pinal and maintain access to job centers and creation of education partnerships = jobs. Get away from reliance on population driving economics.
- One-stop activity centers for like services, i.e., shopping, recreation, corporate centers within close proximity of built up areas
- A community sustaining itself through its own economic development
- Work centers within local jurisdiction; less “bedroom” communities. Opportunity for collaboration with GRIC
- The economic development is based on green, renewable, and sustainability values.
- Have more choices and more open opportunities in business. Better use of democratic way of life.
- We need to shift to economics that should depend less on water (not farming). The clean use of land in \_\_\_\_\_-use housing.
- Indian gaming, farming, and agricultural economies must remain on an economic mix, considering the growth and economic opportunities in Pinal County (relating to open space).
- Tribe would be able to sustain and improve quality of life. Tribal gaming, economic diversity.
- No respect to our lands. No more farming and development everywhere. More and more people coming from other states, prices of homes go up.
- Give the tribe a courtesy (?) first before you give away right-of-way to the City of Coolidge.

### **Quality Education Opportunities**

- Solar. Understand your neighbors. Accessible facilities. Satellite location everywhere of history taught at colleges of culture. Aging population—lifelong education.
- To allow the educated to work and carry on our traditions
- Eliminate AIMS testing and restore local education control. Create competitive, free-market based schools. Expand college and university opportunities. Continue support for home education as a choice.

- Greater input and partnership with higher educational institutions. GRIC and Pinal residents would have access to local opportunities. A four-year college or university would be great.
- Diverse curriculum which includes history for residents. Post-graduate programs for continued opportunities.
- Educated youth will remain in the community, because qualified jobs are available.
- Adequate/accessible facilities for post-secondary education. Collaboration like Maricopa County. Use of technology.
- More educational institutions for people of region and technology. Understand other culture for better understanding of others and tolerance toward other cultures.
- Relationship between limited land use than fear (?). School would have to be more Internet (online) schooling.
- Establish or expand educational institutions in (ASU/UofA/CAC, etc.) for Pinal County residents, offering curriculum that sustains local economy as well as quality of life.
- Native American history and culture. More community members. Increase employment opportunities. High school on reservation with increase in school attendance, significant decrease in drop-off rate.
- Make Pinal County schools better by providing teacher raises, and be extremely understanding of the Indian communities near them.

### **Mobility and Connectivity**

- Public transit, high-speed rail, additional corridors, airport, ed. trails, cert (?) designs to serve the population
- Design transportation corridor with how the community lives and works.
- More roads, while important, will only encourage more traffic. Residential and economic opportunities must be corrected by reducing regulatory control.
- Planned transportation systems in place before sprawl happens. Access to land, rail, and air transportation by both GRIC and Pinal residents.
- Greener highway/roadway connections. Decrease pollution. Effective transit systems.
- Employment centers closer to homes will decrease traffic. A compromising (?).
- Adequate transportation corridors and full transit opportunities—not quality preservation (?)
- Build up instead of out, good mass transportation, green belts, respect, and encouragement of “old” and “traditional” mobility.
- Better roads, but still have a strong agricultural community with best air quality
- Light rail now becomes a clean (clear?) necessity.
- Create public transportation systems in buses/public transit—rail systems. Develop a transportation road system to meet the demands of growth and traffic.
- Access to community resources. Significant decrease in transportation problems, improved roads. GRIC is the center of all this growth, and I feel that . . .
- Fix 87, put turning lanes at Blackwater School Road, Gilbert Road, Skousen Road, 387, Section Flats turn off.

### **Environmental Stewardship**

- No buildings on the mountains, water flow in Gila River, Cottonwood trees planted. Riparian areas available. Reduce billboards. Elders go out to outside communities to educate (outreach). Wildlife corridors. Perra (?) maps.
- Educational outreach on tribal lanes and way of life
- Ground water agreement (?) will read equilibrium (withdrawals equal recharge). Protection of open space. More land fill space and free or reduced parks (dumps?) may eliminate dumping in the desert. Protection of groundwater resources.
- Adherence to methods and institutions that do keep land open ahead of roofs. Wildlife will suffer, but riparian areas and corridors will allow them to survive a little longer. GRIC sticks to cultural \_\_\_tage.
- Green technologies, wildlife preservation, green empires (?)
- Pinal County agricultural history would not be lost—newer ways of agriculture.
- Go “green,” development of bio\_\_\_\_\_
- Less pollution, contamination issues, protection of water in all aspects
- Better use of alternative energy sources, especially our sunlight.
- Managing resources with high levels of inequality
- Global Warming—is this factored in plans? Don’t pollute or ruin the environment (ecosystem!) This is very important, especially in determining the economic/business development plans. Keep the environment clean!
- Green building development. Respect for the land, native plants, petroglyphs/water, animals, etc.
- I do not want smog, air pollution. I want to keep our mountains safe for our animals.