

Apache Junction Preferred Future Workshop Summary Report

Date: April 22, 2008
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
Location: Avalon Elementary, K-8

Handouts

Preferred Alternative Vision Handout
Land Use Plan Map
Multimodal Circulation Plan Map
Economic Development Plan Map

Attendees (16):

Steve Abraham; Ferrell Anderson; Cameron Carter; Dedrick Denton; Kay Karver; Wayne Karver; Michael Kean; Keith Krueger; Wayne Leipold; Edward O'Brien; Cyndi Ruehl; Jessica Sarkissian; Tami Tack; Chip Wilson; Peggy Wilson; Mark Young

MEETING SUMMARY

The purpose of the Pinal Preferred Future Workshop was to bring together residents and stakeholders from around Pinal County to receive input on Pinal Preferred Future built through the input of previous public involvement activities, work group input, and Comprehensive Plan Team effort and depicted in a series of three plans: land use, multimodal circulation, and economic development. Prior to the start of the event, participants reviewed the Pinal Preferred Future Plans and browsed related exhibits.

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, multimodal circulation, and economic development plans. The presentation guided participants through a feedback instrument that solicited input on the three plan maps presented, as well as 12 "Cool Tools" which could help implement the Plan; some of the "Cool Tools" presented were those offered by the Morrison Institute in their 2007 report, *The Future At Pinal*, while others were developed by the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan team. The Pinal Preferred Future Workshop PowerPoint is available in the project website Library at: www.PinalCountyPlan.com.

FEEDBACK FORM SUMMARY

Forms received: 16

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

Pinal Preferred Future Plan Comments

Are there changes you would suggest regarding the **land use** plan?

- The Land Use Plan should respect the efforts of the cities and towns. Land Use should be looked at on a more local basis so that areas of growth can be addressed with more detail.

- Some of the low density should be kept as rural-residential. This is what a lot of people that moved to this county wanted. Not 1-4 homes per acre. Look at the direction that several communities back east are doing; they are making more large lots available for use and less available to the developments.
- I'm just glad this state is finally planning for the future. It sure hasn't done that in the past. Thank you.
- Some of the information on the Land Use Plan is incorrect in terms of what already exists. For example, Gold Canyon would currently qualify as a medium-density residential environment (4-8 dwellings per acre). Overall, the plan looks very good.
- No real changes needed. Good planning. We know changes will occur.
- Need a stronger water availability test before we allow development. More active management areas (Pinal County is not part of one currently).
- Pinal desperately needs the tools and plan to assure the preservation of the land for future generations.
- Show more high density surrounding employment areas to support the employment. Where is focus around tail end of Williams Gateway area?
- The plan sounds good today. The future will, no doubt, revise any plan. Keeping the plan on track will require continuous monitoring of the county and national economy. Influx of "planned" industries, etc. Funds to implement a plan; availability. Results of Land Trust Reform. Will we have water to support ongoing growth?
- The concentrated high-density areas (leaving "sensitive" spaces open), based on suitability analysis is exactly where we need to be headed. We (the County) need to be very proactive in density transfer and attracting developments into planned centers.
- Nice job on all three plans. Without intense review, it generally looks acceptable.

Are there changes you would suggest regarding the **multimodal circulation** plan?

- The build-out plan should show more roads in currently undeveloped areas so that growth can be accommodated along planned roads.
- The County needs to take real action on north-south freeway if all economic development/employment is higher along this corridor. Can the County accelerate development of the freeway somehow?
- My only comment is don't depend on mass transit to relieve traffic congestion. Mass transit should be seen as a nice bonus to provide an extra buffer from congestion; but don't count on it.
- I like the plan.
- I like the planning process. We all know that changes will occur as they should.
- Show highway and transit routes when there are both, even if they use the same roadway.
- Scenic Route 79 should be preserved as it currently exists. If necessary, a separate road should be added.
- The north-south freeway corridor seems very feasible; however, it is slightly redundant being so close to the 87. Just a thought to try to fix or address.
- Buffers adjacent to wilderness areas are critical.
- Seems to be a bit too aggressive, even without a build-out date. Nice to have all of these routes, but I doubt this will be a reality in 2099.

- Transit centers need to be located at major corridors into neighboring counties to ensure a link across the regions (West Apache Junction, Queen Creek, North Maricopa, and South Red Rock). The 79, can we improve instead of enhance? Yes.

Are there changes you would suggest regarding the **economic development** plan?

- Do not propose majority of economic growth along a road that does not exist.
- I like keeping the 177 as an enjoyable sight-seeing roadway.
- No, looks good.
- I think it will work.
- I like the plan and support it. Keep up the good work.
- Make colors more distinguishable, i.e., when mixed use and hospitality are both on the same legend.
- Corporate America has learned how to grow and increase profits without adding new locations. A local Arizona example is See's Candies. Given all the problems/costs/pollution and quality of life issues associated with development, it's time cities and counties learn how to do the same. The economist at the P&Z Commissioners' Seminar made the same point: You can have economic growth without population growth.
- More employment south of the I-10 near Eloy; it seems underutilized. More government facility areas increase possibility to draw in high-quality employment, as well.
- This is intriguing. I suggest the north-south corridor be more density indicated by both employment centers and housing centers. I-10 will naturally occur; the north-south corridor presents an opportunity for great planning.
- We need more hospitals and medical institutions. Post-secondary education may cover with satellite facilities. In Pinal County, you have a 4% chance of obtaining a Master's Degree. There is no workforce for good paying jobs. What attracts business and industry?

“Cool Tools” Selection Summary and Comments

Participants were asked to select up to four “Cool Tools” they liked most. The following summarizes the selection totals and any submitted comments.

Pinal Consensus Council: 5
 Pinal as Regional Service Provider: 1
 “Greenprint” Developable Lands: 9
 Purchase Open Space: 10
 Outdoor Education: 1
 Megapolitan Mobility Project: 6
 Community Garden Project: 1
 Sonoran-Friendly Landscaping: 9
 Pinal Scholars Fund: 3
 County-Wide Broadband/WiFi: 3
 “Green” Employment District: 5
 Cash for Grass Rebate Program: 1

Comments provided:

Pinal Consensus Council:

- Regional approach?

- Would a group this large ever reach a final consensus on any given topic? I doubt it.
- An annual report would indicate the sustainability.

Pinal as Regional Service Provider:

- CFD's? We can do this already.
- No, the county is too large and diverse.
- Ongoing.
- Can the county do this under state law?

"Greenprint" Developable Lands:

- Would hopefully "protect" selected land space "forever," not until money changes the rules.
- May infringe upon private property rights. Prop 207.

Purchase Open Space:

- Combine Greenprint and Open Space.
- Purchasers of land for development should bear partial cost to develop "infrastructure" to support development final use and purchase of protected open space.
- Seems to be the only way to guarantee open space.
- Input fees. Some say they are too expensive already. Is this politically viable?

Outdoor Education:

- No, leave to private sanctions.
- Important!
- Great for schools! How would we fund?
- How is this relevant to the Comprehensive Plan?

Megapolitan Mobility Project:

- River of trade?
- Important!
- Should be done with local Pinal companies and residents. If need outside assistance of the ratio of Pinal County residents, consider Maricopa owners. 80/20 or such.
- Transportation of cargo, doesn't this make Pinal a "pass-through" county?

Community Garden Project:

- No, not important by County administration.
- Important to educate; particularly "sense of place" and learning about the earth and our desert ecosystems.
- Becomes like a community park and could be difficult to maintain/enforce safety and provide funds.
- How does this relate to planning for the future build out scenario? Aren't they inconsistent as they relate to water?

Sonoran-Friendly Landscaping:

- The State has this. Several cities/towns have adopted it; Apache Junction, for example.
- No, not a role of the County Government.

- Should be a part of the county's "sustainability and vision code". Codes/ordinances. We also need to protect the plants and animals during construction.
- Prohibits landscaping that requires more and more water, grass, etc.
- Isn't something similar already in place?
- Palms are not native to Arizona!
- Good idea to preserve water usage.
- Can this be done under the Comprehensive Plan?

Pinal Scholars Fund:

- Great idea.
- Very important! Provide incentives to those who go to school away from Pinal, then get to return to live and work in Pinal County as well. Tax incentives for new homes?
- Good idea. Can this be done under the Comprehensive Plan?

County-Wide Broadband/WiFi:

- No private sector will step up to this level.
- Waste of money. Look at Tempe. Very costly to install and maintain. Too many security issues. Many other alternatives via private enterprise. Too bad if you can't sit in a park and play internet games.
- Seems hard to implement. Might be more feasible on a local municipal level.
- How about energy that is sustainable?
- If it is viable. Private industry might fund it. Again, how does this relate to Comprehensive Planning process?

"Green" Employment District:

- Our county climate needs this type of industry.
- Possible tax breaks for a number of years (ex: Nevada)?
- Would the county develop incentives for private development to do this?

Cash for Grass Rebate Program:

- Property tax credit? One time/continuing/how to track and enforce/payment?
- No, this is not a major issue. When to convert?
- Should be a part of the county's "Sustainability Vision and Code."
- It's rarely a good idea to throw money at a problem. How about a planning/zoning ordinance?
- Permeable. Not paved parking lots.
- The city can do this.
- How does this relate to the Comprehensive Plan?

Additional comments:

- Pinal County is the size of Connecticut, but there are few meeting locations including not meeting in the highest density of population in the Johnson Ranch/San Tan area, which is larger than Casa Grande, Apache Junction, and Maricopa.
- Included in the purchase of open spaces should be money allocated for education, restoration, and "outdoor education." Boulder County, Colorado, approved a sales tax that backs all of this. I think it is incredibly important to identify areas that are particularly

sensitive or critical in which to preserve. Some areas are best to be developed, but we must reach this through research, science, and consensus, then uphold with teeth. What about incentives for alternative energy usage and incentives for developers to build high density and use alternative energy? The Consensus Council is important as a regional working approach. We have to have a county-wide agreement among the cities about what is acceptable and not sell out for money.

- Greenprint and Purchase Open Spaces are complementary and could be considered one item. Cash for Grass can also be accomplished by step-wise rate; strained for water usage. County is already a regional service provider of sorts now for unincorporated areas, except for garbage.
- As a fifth Cool Tool, I like the Sonoran-friendly landscaping.
- Greenprint should identify and preserve all washes. County needs to collect impact fees from developers to build roads and buy open space. Right now, impact fees are too low. Sonoran-friendly landscaping is common sense. Shouldn't even be an issue. Should be mandatory for developers to install in front yards. Pinal has a lot of resources to attract green industries such as abundant sunshine and dark skies. Dark skies tend to attract people interested in technology (natural skies).
- Cash for Grass rebate, what about the pools and water parks? Talk about wastes of water.