

## **Florence Preferred Future Workshop Summary Report**

Date: April 24, 2008  
Time: 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.  
Location: Florence High School

### **Handouts**

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

### **Attendees (28):**

Tim Ahrens; Doretta Allison; John Allison; Don Althouse; Bonnie Bariola; Suraj Bhakta; Barbara Brown; John Enright; Lisa Faiss; Saeid Farr; Lee Anne Halliday; Dana Hawman; Bohdan Hirniak; Sharon Keiser; Elwyn Moore; Sandra Moore; Brenda Newitter; David Newitter; Scott Richardson; D.R. Rittenback; Carol Lee Sherwood; Mary Shope; Stu Thomas; Sue Thomas; Mark Thompson; Danielle Tomerlin; Mark Van Horn; Mary Van Horn

### **MEETING SUMMARY**

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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](http://www.PinalCountyPlan.com).

### **COMMENTS OFFERED IN OPEN HOUSE**

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- Reform state law to allow for better coordination between land use/development and water management
- Find innovative ways to finance new County programs (additional taxation cannot be the only answer)

## FEEDBACK FORM SUMMARY

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Forms received: 20

*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 State Constitution should be changed so that Trust Land is not sold for profit. This is a nonrenewable resource. After all the land is sold, it will no longer be available to generate sales income tax. Land use and water resources must be tied together.
- Get water use in control. The county should start a solar electric company to generate revenue and provide energy and jobs!
- I like the idea of encouraging higher density in the “core center” and preserving open space in the other regions. It meets approval of PCTA and MGCP – both groups I am involved in.
- Increase open space corridors. Include an environmentally sensitive roadway design policy for Eastern Pinal County. Include a policy of density transfers to promote 100% open space conservation. Point at that BLM lands shown as open space cannot/should not be developed at 1 dwelling per acre. Not the same as private/state lands. Clarify the 1 dwelling per acre. Show habitats/occurrences of T and E species to alert various land users of potential issues. Include a map to show/contrast current land uses with proposed land uses. Reduce the footprint and development in the Red Rock area to reduce impacts to Ironwood N.M.
- We need changes in the State Land Use. Before the county can do too much, but zoning will be the key to open spaces and land use.
- We need to think urban for the future of Pinal County. We need to limit urban development to areas that have urban services such as sewer, municipal water and fire protection. No more PAD's in rural areas without water, fire, and municipal sewer. Keep rural rural. Make farm land as valuable as urban land though tax breaks, etc., so that the farm operator can continue to farm. Provide mitigation measures to transfer rural land to urban land so expensive that it will remain rural.
- Too much detail to comment.
- I'd just like to know if there is a plan to implement these plans.
- The present plan did not take into consideration many of the existing land uses. Good research will make this a much better plan.

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

- Roads that allow such to occur. Try to get in and out of Anthem.
- From the several groups I am involved with, Pinal County Trails Association and the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership, really encourage the idea of the parkway in the eastern portion of Pinal County.
- We need better bus systems between towns, not just a light rail as you have to drive to get to it.
- Include an environmentally sensitive roadway design policy. SR77 should also be a “context sensitive corridor”. Avoid circulation elements that cross/divide/fragment open space. Heavily promote the concept of rail, busses, and mass transit. It seems to be headed that way. Good job! Reduce uses along the San Pedro River.

- We cannot develop industrial centers without transportation. We need solutions now! We also need point to point rail with a good bus system at the terminals. The light rail will not work in cities if you have to drive to get to the rail, and then drive when you get off. Why? Rail is fixed and cannot change with demographics and needs. Develop a good bus system!
- We really need to utilize the existing rail system to draw from Phoenix and Tucson, as well as provide alternatives to road traffic for commuters.
- Set aside transportation corridors early and identify in Comprehensive Plan so that PAD's will be required to set aside these areas for transportation routes and the public doesn't have to spend development prices for homes to purchase right-of-way. It is better to set aside more vacant land than purchase as developed land.
- I would expect to see more employment and mixed use activity centers between Coolidge and Casa Grande, like along Highways 87 and 287.

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

- Support.
- Very important that jobs are made available so Pinal County does not become a bedroom community for Maricopa and Pima Counties.
- Reduce development footprint at Red Rock to reduce impacts to Ironwood N.M. Reduce uses along San Pedro. Support and promote natural values to residents. Consider indirect effects of economic development; increased traffic, pollution, lights, natural resources, etc. Promote "green" economic growth; birding, hunting, fishing, hiking and camping. Lots of money in open space. Tap into it!
- Do it now! Resolution Copper is planning \$4 billion dollars in rail improvements now. Tie a light rail line to their lines. It is cheaper to do this with existing improvements and will be needed to tie Phoenix and the East Valley to the Superstition Vistas and Globe-Superior. Start highway development; Coolidge to Red Rock and Red Rock to Highway 79.
- Encourage economic development along multimodal routes. Provide education for citizens free in return for working in Pinal County to pay their education back.
- How about a commuter rail along the I-10 into downtown and west Phoenix and Northern Arizona.
- Do everything in Pinal County's power to bring businesses and jobs!

### **"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: 10

Pinal as Regional Service Provider: 5

"Greenprint" Developable Lands: 15

Purchase Open Space: 8

Outdoor Education: 2

Megapolitan Mobility Project: 15

Community Garden Project: 0

Sonoran-Friendly Landscaping: 9

Pinal Scholars Fund: 2

County-Wide Broadband/WiFi: 0

“Green” Employment District: 8  
Cash for Grass Rebate Program: 0

**Comments provided:**

Pinal Consensus Council:

- Need unified leadership.
- Provides small community input.
- NOT a government entity.
- Not workable. Half the county is unincorporated, already provides police service. Cannot see cities giving up control. Maricopa County Sheriff jurisdiction?
- Collective smaller communities.

Pinal as Regional Service Provider:

- This should already exist!
- Not workable.

“Greenprint” Developable Lands:

- Don’t we have a planning department already?
- I am interested in knowing what areas are areas of development and which ones are for conservation.
- How is this different from “open spaces”?
- Develop in urban areas with higher densities to protect sprawl into the very limited natural Sonoran Desert offers.
- We can do this, but most important words are “should”. We have no authority to implement this.
- Provides certainty for developers and long-term conservation of important resources.
- Must ensure some land is preserved as open space throughout perpetuity.

Purchase Open Space:

- Will deter new businesses.
- Interested in buying open space land with fees from new developments or just putting a priority on open space. Maybe we should just turn down some of these developers that want to come in and just say that only so much can be developed. I know this is feasible with money/taxes.
- Through impact fees but not taxes, or at least the bulk of the money should come from impact fees.
- Create opportunity to purchase State Trust Land.
- This is expensive. We can gain something from zoning. High-density trade off for open space.
- County can maintain long-term control of open space for appropriate management.
- Could be money from environment or tourism.
- On each new home build.
- Use grant money. Don’t use tax increases.

Outdoor Education:

- Combine with environmental education, recycling education and “green” behaviors.

- It would be nice to get kids outside to appreciate it.
- Works well with schools and the BioSphere to have a great opportunity to teach children the great outdoors that the Sonoran Desert offers.
- Can do. But see very little value other than a feel good subject.
- Provides future generations with the knowledge and understanding needed for long-term protection of natural resources.

#### Megapolitan Mobility Project:

- Transportation problems can make or break the county. As a newly developing area, it is very important to prevent problems before they start.
- Road congestion is always a growth problem (formal review of alternatives).
- We need solutions now!
- Important to the development of any region. Residential development focuses transportation routes. Unfortunately, Pinal County has done this and has approved residential development with no appropriate transportation routes.

#### Community Garden Project:

- LAME! No sense of community in society. Waste of time!
- Silly non-workable program. Water, land, weather?
- No.

#### Sonoran-Friendly Landscaping:

- Keep the area with some sort of organizational code to prevent any kind of mixed up look.
- Private funding, not tax dollars.
- Interested in leaving landscape of the area and develop around it as like Scottsdale.
- Promotes water conservation and controls non-native plants.
- Encourage native planting of flora and provide nursery socks for homeowners to have mini urban flower gardens of native Sonoran plants.
- Again, a zoning problem.
- Maintaining native habitats and land identity.

#### Pinal Scholars Fund:

- Must keep scholars to enhance the future.
- Need more colleges, better jobs will bring them back! If it's a good place to live, they will stay on their own. No tax dollars!
- Why not? Schools in Pinal County. Keep people in school here. Provide jobs for students.

#### County-Wide Broadband/WiFi:

- Are you kidding? Why be involved? Not a county issue! We have bigger issues!
- Great idea, but to date, has seldom been implemented successfully as a sustainable option.
- No.
- No, again, silly idea.
- No.

**“Green” Employment District:**

- Need better jobs! Provide higher quality jobs!
- Creating good local jobs is important.
- Why? We need all industry. Perhaps a tax break for “green industry”.
- Definitely a vision of the future that should be investigated.

**Cash for Grass Rebate Program:**

- Already like gas for electric mowers! Not worth tax dollars. APS/SRP. Change building codes for new construction.
- Should the county get involved in this?
- I’d rather pass a law outlawing grass that exceeds ‘xx” square feet.
- Cannot work without control of water supply. How do you monitor industrial water use? A rebate for less use is a better tool.

**Additional comments:**

- County incentives to entice businesses to come to Pinal County.
- Thank you for your well-informed presentations.
- The Council, Regional Services, and a Planning Department/Urban Planning should already be in Pinal County!!! Zoning and building codes need to be changed. We are all screaming for changes!
- I think these “Cool Tools” were very badly thought out.
- Please utilize Natural Resource Agencies as a resource on a local level, as an important resource and tool. We can help you! USFWS, AGFD, BLM, and NPS. To be effective, we need regional consistency.
- Invest in economic development. Bring large businesses with well-paying jobs to the county. Chandler, Arizona has done a GREAT job with this.
- Need to ensure water supply before allowing the development. Need to get the taxes in Pinal lowered so we can compete with the other counties. Companies and residential won’t pay higher taxes for less services.
- Every house in Pinal County deserves an adequate and responsive fire department. Every homeowner/resident deserves keeping a view/vista/environment that does not deteriorate due to inordinate development. No resident should be forced to move due to “neighbors”. Almost everyone uses/drinks milk and eats hamburgers/steak. Someone needs to ensure that a developer and development follows the plan along with the spirit and flavor. Attracting quality people requires a quality environment. This includes residents as well as tourists. Tourists can be future residents. All of us need the ability to move throughout the county with ease and safety.
- Funding is an important issue for all of the projects above.