



# Pinal County Comprehensive Plan Pinal Preferred Future Workshop Executive Summary



In April 2008, six “Pinal Preferred Future” events were held throughout Pinal County. The purpose of the Pinal Preferred Future Workshops was to receive feedback from participants on the preferred alternative for Pinal, specifically depicted in three maps: land use, multimodal circulation, and economic development.

Apache Junction, Arizona City, Casa Grande, Coolidge, Florence, and Oracle hosted Alternatives Workshops; a total of 100 participants signed in at registration, though more attended the events. The following report summarizes the results of these six events. Specific meeting summaries for each Pinal Preferred Future Workshop event are available as an appendix to this executive summary.

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The Pinal Preferred Future Workshop was the fifth public involvement activity of the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan Update process. Participants of the Preferred Future Workshops were provided a handout on how the preferred alternative addresses the Vision, as well as copies of the three maps that make up the preferred alternative: land use, multimodal circulation, and economic development (see appendix).

Participants were led through a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation that outlined how the preferred alternative was developed, followed by a systematic review of the features of the preferred alternative; participants were asked to identify any changes they would recommend to the land use, multimodal circulation, and economic development maps. The focus of the presentation then shifted to implementation; participants were introduced to a dozen “cool tools” developed over the course of the Comprehensive Plan process. These “cool tools,” offered by Morrison Institute as part of their July 2007 report *The Future At Pinal* and by the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan Team, were a selection of unique and innovative implementation strategies for some of the concepts identified in the citizen-driven Vision and implemented in the preferred alternative. Participants were asked to comment on the “cool tools” and select up to four which they would most like to see used. All input received will be used to finalize the Pinal County Comprehensive Plan Update.

## Reviewing the Preferred Alternative

### Land Use

The preferred alternative employs a corridor focused philosophy, concentrating higher density development in Pinal’s central core while preserving the rural-feel of east County. Large swaths of open space are preserved, incorporating the majority of the Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan. The land use map includes land uses within municipal planning areas (MPAs) and incorporated communities to illustrate development Countywide. Upon review of the land use map, participants told us the following:

- **Open Space**—Participants liked the emphasis on open space preservation and reiterated the need for comprehensive State Trust Land Reform, necessary for successful implementation of the aggressive open space plan. Density transfers and other innovative land use strategies were also supported.
- **Water**—Participants echoed the need to address short- and long-term water availability in Pinal County. Allowing more local control that better ties land use planning and water resource management was articulated.
- **Green Building**—Participants encouraged the use of ‘green’ building codes and consideration for environmentally sensitive development in Pinal County.

- **Existing Land Uses**—Participants encouraged continued cooperation between other jurisdictions in Pinal County (municipalities, Indian Communities, etc.) to ensure the Plan acknowledges existing land use. Tools like specific area plans were also offered to detail local-level planning.

### Multimodal Circulation

Assuming a central-Pinal, corridor focused land use and economic development pattern, a true multimodal transportation philosophy was employed. Ensuring a variety of high capacity roadways exists, as well providing intra- and inter-Pinal transit options that compliment the land use pattern and service the activity centers Countywide. Further, categorizing SR 79 (Pinal Pioneer Parkway) as a “context sensitive corridor” preserves the natural ambiance and character of the area, including the implementation of significant native vegetation set backs, protected viewsheds and washes, minimal signage and lighting, and limited access points. Upon review of the multimodal circulation map, participants told us the following:

- **Multimodal Transportation**—Participants were very pleased to see a circulation network that complemented the corridor focused land use and economic development pattern, including the endorsement of a parkway infrastructure concept and a north/south freeway. Participants emphasized the use of transit in the Plan, and specifically encouraged the use of existing rail and connection of commuter rail to the regional airport as priorities.
- **Context Sensitive Corridor**—Participants appreciated the philosophy of the ‘context sensitive corridor’ and suggested its use along SR 77/177 as well, noting that these east County roadways could be particularly enhanced with features like scenic viewpoints and development set backs.
- **Preserve Right-of-Way Now**—Participants appreciated the identification of high capacity roadways now to ensure appropriate right-of-way is set aside and protected now for initial and future development. Some participants suggested identifying smaller arterials (not just high capacity roadways) to ensure planning and protection for all levels of transportation are addressed.
- **Trails**—Participants appreciated that the Open Space Master Plan was employed in the preferred alternative, but noted the need to ensure the Trails Master Plan was incorporated in the multimodal circulation element—modes by pedestrian and equestrian are important features in Pinal.

### Economic Development

The preferred alternative emphasizes an activity center philosophy, concentrating significant employment and infrastructure along Pinal’s central spine and other key transportation corridors. To ensure the county’s sustainability, the Plan will support the achievement of a 500 jobs per 1,000 resident target, with an emphasis of creating quality pay, career jobs in Pinal County. Use of Pinal’s existing resources is embraced through a tourism and hospitality corridor in east County, a place where ecotourism could flourish. Other important features, including a commercial airport, have been conceptually located. Upon review of the economic development map, participants told us the following:

- **Quality Jobs**—Participants overwhelmingly agreed that Pinal needs more jobs, and an emphasis needs to be placed on acquiring quality pay, career jobs—brining quality jobs to Pinal, participants said, reduces congestion, improves environmental quality, and improves quality of life. Additional activity centers were suggested along and southwest of I-8 and I-10.
- **Attract “Green” Industry**—Participants said it was important to attract employers and industry that complemented their values, specifically environmental sustainability. The implementation of the tourism and hospitality corridor, participants said, was another example of matching economic development needs with resident values.
- **Innovative Tools Needed**—Participants recognized that quality employers need a reason to move to Pinal; a comprehensive package of incentives and tools was encouraged as part of the Comprehensive Plan.

# Taking the Temperature of Some 'Cool Tools'

Participants were also asked to react to a dozen 'cool tools' and select for up to four they most wanted implemented. The following summarizes participant feedback, ranking the 'cool tools' by their popularity:

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1. **Megapolitan Mobility Project**—creates a regional entity to implement long-term transportation solutions

*Regional problems need regional solutions; participants often noted the over-due need for comprehensive transportation solutions not just in Pinal, but Arizona-wide.*

2. **"Greenprint" Developable Lands**—identifies which lands should be protected and which can be developed

*Participants saw this as a way to promote conservation practices by ensuring compatible development on Pinal's environmentally sensitive lands.*

3. **Purchase Open Space**—implements a County-wide impact fee to purchase open space

*Purchasing land, participants said, guarantees preservation of open space. While this should not be the only tool used to implement the aggressive open space plan, it complements others, like density transfers, grants, etc.*

4. **Sonoran-Friendly Landscaping**—introduces a County-wide native plant landscaping code

*Participants noted that this was responsible way to conserve and protect the Sonoran landscape and habitat.*

5. **"Green" Employment District**—dedicates activity centers that promote sustainable industry and technology

*Identifying "green" employment districts tie together the important tenants of the Plan: honoring our vision for environmental stewardship and attaining quality employment opportunities.*

6. **Pinal Consensus Council**—creates a regional organization to ensure long-term sustainability

*While a consensus council will serve as a great collaboration tool, participants were mixed on whether it should be a governmental entity.*

7. **County-Wide Broadband/WiFi**—provides high speed, broadband internet access

*Participants noted the difficulty of employing this technology, but granted its need County-wide.*

8. **Pinal Scholars Fund**—provides scholarships for those who stay/return to Pinal

*Employers need talent, and talent needs employers—ensuring a well trained workforce might be a way to lure quality employers.*

9. **Pinal as Regional Service Provider**—serves as an agency other entities can contract with to provide services

*Participants were mixed on the need for and interest of the County serving this role.*

10. **Outdoor Education**—ensures all youth in County experience Pinal's great outdoors annually

*With unique features and existing attractions (like BioSphere), this makes sense, but maybe not as a County program.*

11. **Cash for Grass Rebate Program**—provides rebates when converting grass lawns to Xeriscape

*Concerns regarding funding led participants to believe this was better suited for private entities to employ.*

12. **Community Garden Project**—encourages community gardens and co-ops

*Participants noted that community gardens seemed to be a local project, and not necessarily compatible with the Sonoran landscape.*

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