

The Future at Pinal

MAKING CHOICES | MAKING PLACES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When Arizona’s economy depended on the 4Cs – copper, cotton, citrus, and cattle – Pinal County was a leader in 2 of them. These historic sources of wealth and touchstones of heritage still play a role in the county’s economy, but dramatic population growth and new economic drivers make this a different, distinctive time. This new era demands new vision, new ideas, and new ways of thinking, even as past strengths are kept in mind.



The Pinal County Board of Supervisors commissioned this report from Morrison Institute for Public Policy (School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University) to kick off a long-term visioning and planning process among residents, elected officials, business leaders, and community activists. The result will be a new county-wide comprehensive plan. **The Future at Pinal** was prepared for community activists and business leaders as well as elected officials and public administrators. The report provides information and ideas that are intended to inspire creative thinking about Pinal’s future. The project included interviews with more than 50 public and private sector leaders, a public opinion survey, research on comparable counties and lessons from Maricopa and Pima counties, and compilation of demographic, development, and historical data.

From about 300,000 residents now, Pinal County will soon be as large as Pima County is today. Substantial development is already underway, and more than 650,000 units have been “entitled” by local governments. Pinal’s trajectory easily could be assumed to be an extension of the patterns in Maricopa and Pima counties. Yet, many leaders and residents say they want something different, and yes, even something better. Clearly, it is time to choose.

For a copy of **The Future at Pinal**, see www.morrisoninstitute.org. For information on the comprehensive planning process, see www.PinalCountyPlan.com.

Big Ideas for Future-Oriented Thinking

SUSTAINABILITY

Meeting current needs without harming the future

SMART GROWTH

Intelligent, balanced development that preserves the best of the past

COMPETITIVENESS IS LIVABILITY AND VICE VERSA

Quality jobs and quality places go hand in hand

KEEPING SCORE TO STAY ON TRACK

Regularly answering “How are we doing?”

Fundamental Characteristics Will Shape Pinal's Choices

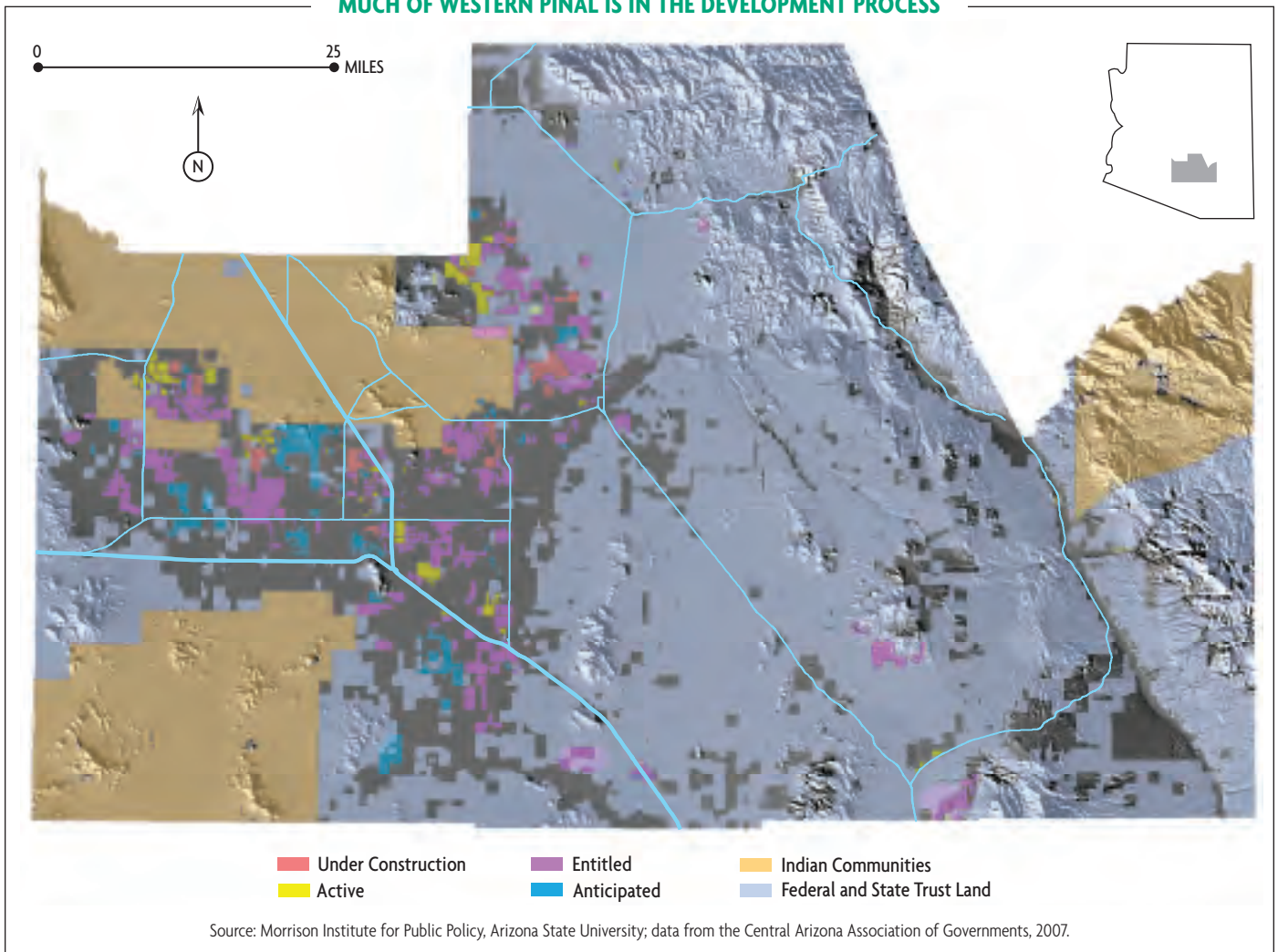
Four fundamental characteristics will play important parts in Pinal's next era. These include:

- **Tribes: Important Partners and Stakeholders:** The Ak-Chin Indian Community, Gila River Indian Community, San Carlos Apache Nation, and the Tohono O'odham Nation have a significant presence and growing influence in Pinal. Many noted in this study that the tribal communities were not consulted enough about Pinal's future.
- **Pinal, Agriculture, Land, and Indian Communities:** Pinal, between Maricopa and Pima counties, is in the center of Arizona's dramatic growth. It is also ground zero for another critical future: the relationship of water and growth. The

connections among long-term agricultural use, urban growth, and the sustainable size of Arizona's "megapolitan" Sun Corridor should be debated, and that discussion can start in Pinal.

- **The Public: Pinal's Potentially Most Influential Landowners:** More than 3/4s of Pinal's land is owned by Indian communities and the federal and state governments. More than a third of Pinal is state trust land, which is managed by the Arizona State Land Department for the benefit primarily of Arizona's public schools. The State Land Department is arguably Pinal's most important landowner.
- **A Network of Changing Municipalities:** Pinal's 11 municipalities have rich histories, yet each is facing important changes and tricky transitions that require thought, leadership, and communication.

MUCH OF WESTERN PINAL IS IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



“Placemaking” Goals for Pinal

From all of the research for **The Future at Pinal**, it was clear that leaders and residents agree on many items, such as good jobs for Pinal’s residents. Most important, many value cooperation, identity, and quality as foundations for Pinal’s future. The project highlighted 6 “placemaking” goals that would set Pinal apart and support the long-term success of its people and places.

17 Cool Tools for Pinal

How can Pinal achieve these placemaking goals? **The Future at Pinal** presents 17 “cool tools” that could be used as is or simply as inspiration for even better ways. Some of the 17 would be easy to use now, while others would take at the least negotiation and at most state legislation or authority.

A Stark Choice

Will Pinal become a distinguishable destination or simply a McMega drive through? If Pinal rises to the occasion, the result can be a vibrant, sustainable, and competitive place that takes advantage of its location. If Pinal fails to choose wisely, its bedroom community future is already visible in the East Valley and subdivisions north of Tucson. As **The Future at Pinal** shows, there is interest in large-scale choices for unique places. However, the outcomes Pinal wants will not become realities without a sense of urgency, as well as investments of time, energy, and dollars. In this case, good things will not come to those who wait. Good things will come to those who choose, plan, and act.

Cool Tools

PINAL’S LEADERS AND RESIDENTS FOCUSED ON 6 PLACEMAKING GOALS

PLACEMAKING GOALS

COOL TOOLS

Distinguish Pinal from Maricopa County and Pima County.

1. Establish the **Pinal Consensus Council**.
2. Agree on a **Pinal tax treaty**.
3. Establish Pinal as a **regional service provider**.

Protect miles of desert and open land.

4. “**Greenprint**” the state trust land in Pinal.
5. Use a uniform county-wide **impact fee to buy open space**.
6. Make Pinal a leader in outdoor education with **Pinal’s Outdoor Kids**.

Provide choices for transportation and mobility.

7. Create the 3-county **Megapolitan Mobility Project** to move people and cargo efficiently through the heart of the Sun Corridor.

Support unique, “fair share” communities.

8. Celebrate agriculture with **community gardens** and co-op farms.
9. Use the **3Rs to fix it first**.
10. Carry out **smart growth principles** in all development and redevelopment.
11. Adopt a **uniform “green” building code** across Pinal.
12. **Prohibit landscape plants that are harmful** to the Sonoran Desert.

Create and attract “career pay – career path” jobs.

13. Integrate education, training, economic development, and employment services **with Pinal Workways**.
14. **Agree on locations for employment centers** and do not allow homes to be built there.

Develop Pinal’s talent pool.

15. Establish the **Pinal Scholars** fund.
16. Use **arts and culture as a major tool in quality education**, strong communities, and a robust economy.
17. Give every child in Pinal a **Super Start**.

Source: Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona State University, 2007.

A PINAL INDEX

- 299,875: Number of Pinal residents in July 2006
Percent increase in population between 2000 and 2006: 66.9
- 6th: Rank of Pinal among the fastest-growing counties in the United States
Number of Pinal residents projected to live in Pinal by 2050: 1,302,950
- 2037: Year that Pinal will eclipse the 1 million residents mark
Number of people on average that move to Pinal every year: 23,500
- 1: Number of new families that move to Pinal every hour of every day
Percent of urban land currently planned for employment across Pinal: 9.4
- 22.8: Percent of urban land currently used for employment across Maricopa County
Number of jobs per 1000 residents in Pinal in 2004: 261
- 585: Number of jobs per 1000 residents in Maricopa County in 2004
Number of jobs per 1000 residents in Pima County in 2004: 514
- 15.2: Percent of Pinal residents in poverty in 2005
Percent of Arizona residents in poverty in 2005: 14.2
- 17.6: Percent of Pinal's children in poverty in 2005
Percent of Arizona's children in poverty in 2005: 19.9
- \$41,164: Median household income in Pinal in 2005
Median household income in Arizona in 2005: \$44,282
- 25: Percent of Pinal's residents that moved in 2005
Percent of Pinal's residents that moved to Pinal from another county in Arizona in 2005: 8.2
- 1.7: Percent of Arizona residents who moved from one county in Arizona to another in 2005
Percent of Pinal's residents with a college degree or higher in 2005: 16.7
- 25.6: Percent of Arizona's residents with a college degree or higher in 2005
Median age of Pinal's residents in 2005: 35
- 34.5: Median age of Arizona's residents in 2005
Average number of minutes it takes Pinal's workers to get to work in 2005: 27.9
- 24.8: Average number of minutes it takes Arizona's workers to get to work in 2005

Source: Morrison Institute for Public Policy, Arizona State University;
data from Arizona Department of Economic Security, U.S. Census Bureau,
Central Arizona Association of Governments, 2007.

