

Arizona City Visioning Workshop Summary Report

Date: August 2, 2007
Time: 6 pm – 8:30 pm
Location: Central Lutheran Church
12921 S Sunland-Gin Road, Arizona City

Handouts

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

Attendees (19):

Suraj Bhakta, Evelyn Casuga, Kayne Crison, Patrick Erickson, Jace Finman, Bob Jackson, Judee Jackson, Lois Lashley, Willie Masters, Dick Myers, Yvonne Pledger, Irma Potter, Claudine Sabel, Paul Sabel, Justin Stabley, Jean Stevenson, Timothy Terrill, Glinda Weddle, and Lewis Weddle

MEETING SUMMARY

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.

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:

- Healthcare; perhaps fits under sense of community or economic sustainability
- Transportation; perhaps fits under mobility and connectivity
- Safe community; perhaps fits under sense of community
- Municipal cooperation (including integration of master plans, general plans, tribal plans and the comprehensive plan); perhaps fits under sense of community
 - Perhaps this is an overriding theme, describing how Pinal County should lead
 - A well planned County does not think in terms of boundaries, but instead, should work towards integration and collaboration of efforts County-wide

- The County should work together with municipalities (and tribal entities)
- Health, safety and welfare

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

- We would have parks and recreational areas for hiking, biking, etc; we would have places for our kids to go
- Governments would have worked together to preserve open spaces in the County
- Open spaces would have been strategically located near people so they don't have to drive long distances to get to or use them
- Tools would have been established to preserve open space in the County
- Native plant life would have been preserved and the desert protected
- No houses would be built on our mountains; we would have protected the mountain from its floor to its peak
- Open spaces would have been accessible, however, ensuring sensitive areas are protected
- Opportunities for ATV recreation would be made available, so other open space and areas of open desert would not be destroyed
- An open space system would be in place, connecting open spaces throughout the County
- We would be able to see mountain vistas by prohibiting tall structures from being built in the County
- We would have identified the open space that is most important for residents to preserve, while allowing other spaces to be developed
- The use of density transfers or transferring of development rights allowed some portions of Pinal to develop while preserving more important spaces
- We would have utilized tourism as a mechanism to pay for the preservation of our open spaces and places

Sense of Community

- “Civic” places would have been created where people/communities can come together to gather
- We would have built off our past, respecting our differences and preserving our individual characters
- People would be better off because they moved to Pinal and Pinal would be better off for having these people; we would have cultivated a connection between the people and the place
- We would have integrated new residents to our greater Pinal County community
- We would establish Pinal as a place, as ‘home’
- We would create jobs here so people are more vested to their County
- Small class sizes/schools would cultivate community

Economic Sustainability

- We would have set aside space in major developments for purposes of economic development
- We would have brought jobs here so people could stay here
- Activity centers would be established throughout the County to provide services, shopping, jobs, etc. to communities
- Lands for employment centers would be set aside and preserved
- Employment opportunities in the County would be flexible and able to change as technologies and the environment changes
- Employment in the County would address the global marketplace
- We would have addressed commuting solutions, and better understood transportation habits in Pinal County
- We would create an environment where employers come to employees
- Virtual workspaces would be developed and innovative work solutions developed
- Laws would protect agriculture lands and we could utilize the product to be self-sufficient
- Ensuring development occurred on agricultural lands, not on open desert, would preserve our water resources
- Pinal would stay ahead of technology and champion cutting-edge technologies
- Pinal would have planned smart activity centers, smartly placing industrial, residential, etc.

Quality Education Opportunities

- Community-based (local) schools would be emphasized
- Pinal would have a 100% (high school) graduation rate
- Schools would be better planned, ahead of development
- Pinal would have a 4-year accredited university
- Non-traditional forms of education would be utilized, including institutions like University of Phoenix
- Pinal would host a broad range of technical training programs
- An institution offering a public service education (including a Master's of Public Administration) would be established
- An environment of industry partnering with educational institutions would be cultivated

Mobility and Connectivity

- More transit corridors throughout Pinal County would exist
- The County would investigate a transportation network that included roads along section borders
- Public transit opportunities (including bus, light rail, commuter rail) would exist
- Pinal County would connect their activity centers
- The County would establish and enforce a standard for road building and maintenance
- Pinal would reserve transit corridors early, even if development comes decades down the road
- Transit opportunities would exist for the needy, including the elderly and youth
- Pinal residents would direct transit needs, allowing for flexible transit options as needs/desires change

Environmental Stewardship

- Pinal would be known as a leader in environmental stewardship
- Pinal would protect the environment by protecting pristine areas of the County
- Pinal would retain their open space and preserve their air and water quality
- Pinal implemented cutting-edge conservation techniques County-wide
- Pinal County is the ultimate destination to experience the Sonoran Desert
- Environmental stewardship is integrated into childhood education
- Pinal implemented green business practices County-wide
- Pinal would attract businesses with 'green' values
- Pinal would be cutting-edge in energy conservation
- Pinal is livable for both people and animals

Potential Theme: Health, Safety and Welfare

- Pinal would have mass transit to meet the needs of residents
- Local health service needs would be met
- Pinal would maintain a clean environment and promote healthy lifestyles
- Pinal would be self-contained and self-sufficient; all services for Pinal residents would be available in Pinal
- Pinal would have addressed gang and drug activity
- Pinal would maintain safe communities
- Pinal would maintain quality law enforcement
- Pinal would have been proactive in creating quality communities

QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY*

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

- Preserve all mountain areas. CG Mtn, Picacho Mountains & peaks, Table Top, Sawtooths, etc. Hiking tours on them.
- I would like to see nature destinations that both preserve the environment but can generate economic dividends/are attractive to tourists.
- Need parks and recreational areas within Arizona City for children and adults.
- A collaborative effort, including property owners as well as residents. Explore tools to obtain open space—donation, density transfers (?), purchase development rights, dedications, conservation easements, funding.
- Education.
- With growth, open spaces are sacred.
- Areas that residents could enjoy publicly. Plenty of privately-retained areas. Enough space for man and nature to co-exist. There's no reason why we can't have growth while

* The survey tool distributed at Arizona City excluded a space to respond to "Quality Education Opportunities"; participants' thoughts concerning Quality Education Opportunities were captured during the meeting.

protecting certain areas. We have so many naturally beautiful areas that must be protected.

- Land that should be preserved.
- Don't want to see everything filled with rooftops. Low-density housing—keep desert areas.
- Ability to drive and see miles of desert/nature without housetops. Desert needs to be preserved.
- Specifically areas of scenic beauty. Minimal development of areas for family outings (four-wheeling, etc.)
- More focus on and support of historical sites/open spaces like the Casa Grande Ruins and Sunland Visitor Center. Parks & recreational activities, especially in unincorporated areas like Arizona City.
- The city would be spread for maintaining open space.
- Connectivity between communities
- Variety of places: desert, picnic areas, cultural, activities driven
- Mountains need to be preserved.
- Protect environmentally sensitive areas—connectivity to the areas. Outline parameters that make environmentally sensitive areas significant.
- No building on mountains, preservation of natural open space within our cities/county, protection of native plants and animals.
- More open space between homes when they are built. Some houses are too close together and neighborhoods look sandwiched in. Also, open space for parks, picnic and playground areas. And open space left in the county to protect wildlife.
- Parks, playgrounds, and green laws. Each neighborhood would host a park or playground.

Sense of Community

- Education
- Healthcare quality
- Build community centers/amenities that encourage people to meet and greet. Allows families to “break the ice” with less effort.
- Need a community-type center for recreation for all people in Arizona City to come together – seniors, families, and children.
- Identify employment centers first, building communities around them. Identify regional transportation facilities.
- Banding together, rather than different directions
- Appreciation and support of the diverse communities that we have, whether diverse due to culture, economy, or proximity to metropolitan areas. We all belong to Pinal County and should preserve that. A community where this is a priority. Focus on uniqueness and what sets us apart from larger areas.
- Working together with all cities in Pinal County for the purpose of uniting order to better control open spaces, sense of community, economic sustainability, etc.
- I like small communities—easier for people to voice their concerns and be heard.
- Programs for every age group
- Schools are the center of activity and inviting.

- Pinal County has a rich Native American, Hispanic, and agricultural community base— would like to see preserved.
- Sense of safety, law enforcement, more funding for youth organizations and youth programs. Some actual support for unincorporated areas that Pinal County seems to really care less about. Accountability to unincorporated areas for a return on our tax dollar from Pinal County.
- The county would become “the spot,” between two large cities.
- Integration of local cultures, community celebrations
- Provide “civic” spaces for community participation opportunities.
- Buy in at the lowest level of community, home property ownership. When someone buys a Pinal County property, they should feel that they are in a win/win situation. The county is better/they are better.
- Define who we are today by region—Native American, farmers, miners, etc.— then determine how best to retain that identity.
- Rich variety of cultural opportunities and crime free
- More open community meetings, and besides notices of meetings being only advertised in newspapers, also on the Internet and flyers put in the mail to everyone, so people can come together to be a working part of the community.
- Change nothing. The neighborhoods as they exist are liable and likable.

Economic Sustainability

- Municipal cooperation. Integrate City plans into County Master Plan and County Plan into neighboring counties and agencies.
- I get excited about industrial-scale projects in Pinal County, i.e., _____ plant in Maricopa, rail yard at Picacho, airpark near Red Rock. “Don’t hate me.”
- Major grocery store(s), hardware stores for residents to shop within Arizona City.
- Economic balance will be maintained regardless. Don’t push costs higher too quickly, or growth will not happen to provide infrastructure funding. Where to put a regional airport?
- Big business encouraged—industry
- A place with a wide variety of employers, large and small, that can offer employment to skilled, non-skilled, professional, etc. We can’t lose employees to out-of-county employers. We have to bring them back, but at the same time have a qualified and dedicated workforce.
- A budget that benefits the entire County (Pinal)
- Need jobs to keep people in the county—clean-type jobs. Need to get away from bedroom communities.
- Variety of businesses—obtain business growth who participate and give back to their communities.
- Prefer employment centers—industrial areas.
- Average household income would keep up with sales and property taxes/tax rates. No wildly fluctuation tax rate increases, and NO arbitrary or unjustifiable tax rate increase/valuations.
- A good way to stay interesting is to concentrate on the newer generation.
- Preservation of employment centers
- Create jobs with livable wages and benefits.

- Recruit employment within and throughout population centers (avoiding bedroom communities).
- Ties into mobility and connectivity. Jobs need to be either nearby (within 20 miles) or easily reached through County-maintained transportation systems or connectivity infrastructures.
- Flexibility so as needs and jobs change, we have the ability to change with them. Example: Auto industry and the Midwest. Locate job centers convenient to housing and commercial.
- Recruit, support businesses that reflect a commitment to sustainability.
- Arizona City needs more businesses and industry.
- More job centers. Bring in an incentive Fortune 500 and large manufacturers.

Mobility and Connectivity

- Transportation. Pave all section line roads (N-S, E-W). At least one major four-lane road to Central Arizona College from each community with overpass at RR and highways.
- This contributes to all themes. Projects like commuter or light rail preserve native and open spaces (less dependence on roads), get people together, create jobs that are eco-friendly!
- Need to open up connecting roads—Trellis to Battaglia in Arizona City and Overfield (Arizona City) to 287 connection.
- Regional corridors involve ADOT. Local corridors tie residential to jobs base. Identify future airport locations.
- Public transportation
- Pinal County isn't just I-10. It should be a series of roadways and transportation systems capable of moving residents to and through Pinal County.
- Maintain the mobilized environment, mobilized transportation. Need more roads.
- Roads are way behind the growth—cross country roads are needed to move people and goods.
- Bus system between and within communities. Affordable!
- Local TV and radio to highlight events and report news.
- County-wide public transportation. Need plan with not only highways but rail and bus.
- Infrastructure: Electric, utilities, put in larger plan.
- Commuter rail between Tucson and Phoenix, right through the Casa Grande area (along I-10), eventually connecting to Flagstaff. And a stop light at Sunland Gin road and Battaglia Drive. Also widening Sunland Gin Road.
- Buses and other public transports are needed, promoting technology advances.
- Provision of different modalities, i.e., car, bike, pedestrians, public transport
- Plan ahead to integrate employment and population centers
- Master plans of cities/towns flow seamlessly into and out of County Comprehensive Plan. Fully integrated planning cells.
- All types—equestrian, transit, rail as well as auto
- Develop transportation between our rural/remove (?) cities in the county focusing on transportation for medical and educational needs. Expand transportation modalities to include mass transportation for jobs and the full range of needs.
- Arizona City here in Pinal County needs some sort of bus service to get to Casa Grande. Pave and put Trellis Road all the way south from I-8 to Battaglia Road. Now I have to go

Sunland Gin Road to I-8 to Trekell to go into Casa Grande. A direct route would relieve traffic on Sunland Gin road and I-10 to Casa Grande.

- Expand the roads.

Environmental Stewardship

- Stop illegal dumping by opening all landfills to county residents on weekends.
- Enforce off-road vehicle laws (dust, plant and wildlife protection)
- The trend towards environmental consciousness is growing. Little things can make a big difference. Make builders use eco-friendly light bulbs, encourage demand-driven discounts for power and water (APS does this!).
- Need to preserve farmland rather than build on it. Also need the hometown shopping to save gas traveling.
- Create definitive standards for what this means. Biology, cultural and handling of waste must be forward thinking.
- Clean, environmentally-friendly industry
- Preservation and protection of land, wildlife, sustained agriculture (though I don't know if that will be possible) and alternative and increased energy options
- Protect the environment—wastewater, land fluids (?), illegal dumping.
- Educational opportunities, safe school system, 100% graduation rate
- Keep our clean air and clear skies—too much growth can ruin the environment.
- Recycle programs for all communities, not just the larger cities.
- Water conservation
- “Green” building development—implement support and incentives—water conservation, sustainable agriculture.
- Protect the aquifer/water table that has been so badly devastated in Pinal County over the last 100 years. Yet don't discourage agriculture in Pinal. Also, mandate some actual policing of illegal ATV—off-road devastation of natural habitats.
- Many wildlife parks and land reservations
- Integrate green building concepts within private and public projects, compatible with desert living.
- Incorporate desert sustainability in K-12 and education.
- Emphasize quality education opportunities: expansion of Central Arizona College, additional college/university opportunities, public and private
- Make things better—reuse, do not recycle.
- Education
- Renewable energy—solar, etc. Water conservation all need to be encouraged and reworked to assure best use of our resources. Balancing water use with reuse.
- The County needs to educate and model environmental stewardship in all facets of government. Develop programs to reward environmental stewardship and penalize those who ignore environmental stewardship in government, business, and residential.
- Wildlife preserves