

Central Arizona College Visioning Workshop Summary Report

Date: August 4, 2007
Time: 9 am – 11:30 am
Location: Central Arizona College
8470 N Overfield Road, Coolidge

Handouts

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

Attendees (23):

David Ascoli, Maureen Berger, Bill Bridwell, C. Alton Bruce, Cynthia Collings, William Collings, Linda Doherty, Mark Doherty, Dennis Dugan, John Fillmore, Virginia Flahart, Robert Flatley, Kathryn Hollenback, Pat Judy, Nick Labadie, Wayne Leipold, Bill Ludeke, Janet Macha, Donna Neuleib, Kim Rodriguez, Susan Shaw, Frank Shelton, Greg Stanley

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:

- Many of these themes seem overlapping; most talk to our natural habitat
- We need to address affordable living opportunities
- It is hard to get to places in Pinal; we need a transportation network in order to create a 'community'
- Pinal needs to be a place, not just what lies between Pima and Maricopa

- Is “sense of community” really a County issue? Does Pinal need to distinguish itself? Does ‘community’ exist beyond municipalities? Does the County have a responsibility to support individual communities?
- Problematic dichotomy: people are attracted to Pinal County for their open spaces and rural atmosphere, but once they get here, they demand city-like amenities
- Pinal is unique: our individual communities create a unique stand-alone community
- Providing jobs locally is critical to establishing a sense of community
- A diverging theme occurs in Pinal: we want everything but at the same time want to keep rural atmosphere and open space
- Role of government and associated costs not necessarily identified in themes
- There are limited resources in Pinal County; we need to address creative funding mechanisms
- Municipalities need to craft their own visions
- Pinal needs to be flexible enough to endure change (in economy, industry, environment, population, etc.)
- County needs to control growth
- Pinal needs to be a destination
- Cooperative government may be a missing theme

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

- Pinal will have low density, master-planned communities
- Pinal preserved open space, not just added more golf courses
- Pinal would have ensured competitive agriculture exists
- Open space will have been preserved between cities; transportation infrastructure will allow for maintenance of open space
- Open space in Pinal County is a release from urban spaces and stresses
- Pinal would have kept the feeling of Pinal Pioneer Parkway
- Pinal would have been instrumental in redefining the State Land process
- Pinal would have developed a progressive, comprehensive, visionary land use plan that was followed
- Open space was a tool that serviced other vision themes (by providing recreation, by facilitating a sense of community, by being environmental stewards, etc.)
- Anti-malls would exist in Pinal County; instead, we would craft areas that made people walk to places and get out amongst their community; ‘walking-malls’ would exist
- Municipalities would have been successful in capturing small pieces of state land within their municipalities to use as open space
- Pinal would have found mechanisms to afford open spaces, including utilizing density transfers

Sense of Community

- Pinal would have preserved historical sites, places and cultures

- Community infrastructure, including schools and community service facilities, would be established for all populations
- Infrastructure for safe and reliable travel would be established; connectivity (work/play/medical/etc.) is important
- Pinal established themselves as a destination—unique communities together create a unique destination
- Pinal would be a place for people to live, work and play, thus creating community
- Educational institutions would be a model for developing ‘a sense of community’
- Pinal would be a conduit to connect municipalities

Economic Sustainability

- Employment centers would have been developed around airports
- Pinal would have recruited ‘green’ and environmentally-sensitive businesses
- Developers would have been mandated to dedicate portions of their development to jobs and education
- Planned development would have mixed use elements
- Pinal would have a broad spectrum of employment options (industry and service)
- Developers would have more responsibility for infrastructure and utilities
- Pinal should dedicate and keep employment centers
- Unique ways to finance infrastructure would be identified
- Pinal would develop an appropriate and logical land use plan
- The County would coordinate and facilitate economic development
- The County would have attracted employers to fill the empty housing stock
- Workforce development centers would be established and connecting communities throughout the County
- Pinal would be known for using alternative energy sources

Quality Education Opportunities

- Pinal would have quality *pre-K* through 12 education
- Lifelong educational opportunities would be prevalent in County
- Pinal would have a 4 year, post-graduate institution(s)
- Technical and workforce training opportunities would exist throughout the County
- Collaborative distance learning opportunities would exist and partnerships between school districts and Central Arizona College would thrive
- Pinal would have new, creative, and innovative education systems
- Educational systems in Pinal County would be tailored to the needs of Pinal
- Financial tools would have been identified for supporting quality educational opportunities
- Public/private educational partnerships would exist
- Pinal would attract and hire quality teachers, rather than serving as a place for quality teachers to gain experience then leave
- Pinal teachers would be some of the highest paid in the state
- Pinal would ensure their teachers *teach*, rather than parent and discipline
- Pinal would address the issues that can be handled locally, and would have worked with the state and federal government to address the others
- Educational centers would be placed in the heart of municipalities

- Mechanisms to get residents to educational institutions (or bring the institution to them) would be established

Mobility and Connectivity

- Pinal County would be link virtually (for purposes of communication, etc.)
- Light rail would exist in Pinal County
- Biking would be prevalent in Pinal County
- East-west freeways would be built
- Residential and trucking transportation corridors would have been reserved
- Airports would be connected and a regional airport established
- Use of toll roads and road improvement districts would be established in Pinal County
- Transit options for people to get to work and educational institutions would be established
- Pinal would have developed a transportation plan which considered future growth
- Pinal County would utilize impact fees
- Multi-modal transit opportunities would exist in Pinal

Environmental Stewardship

- Development in the County would concentrate around activity centers and include higher-density, multi-family developments
- Pinal would support alternative energy use
- Utilities would be encouraged to purchase environmentally friendly energy sources
- Pinal would be known as the 'green' County and leader in environmental sustainability
- Pinal would require 'green' development
- Pinal would be the leader in building 'green' homes
- Pinal's desert would be preserved
- Pinal would address light pollution and preserve the night skies
- Pinal's residents and wildlife would live in harmony

Potential Theme: Cooperative Government

- Pinal and it's communities would engage the community through town hall meetings and other events
- Policies and regulations would be standardized county-wide
- Cooperative government would have facilitated success in the other six themes
- Communication networks between governmental, private, educational, etc. interests would exist

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

- I agree with space between towns and communities. Include in open spaces—hiking trails (walking), off-leash dog areas, parks for residents and travelers for lunch, preserve historical areas.
- Large regional parks that are easily accessed, smaller parks within cities, trail networks that connect regional parks with trails for hiking, picnic areas. City parks for more intense uses (playgrounds/pools/night use in summer)
- Open space and compatible agriculture uses scattered through and separating clustered residential _____ surrounding urbanized city core to an overall density of water per acre.
- Meaningful corridors that provide recreational opportunities, as well as view corridors that maintain the beauty of the area. Open spaces must be carefully defined, integrated, and designed to maximize the value inherent in open space. Appropriate massaging of open space will be _____.
- Change zoning laws to permit only 2 – 2.5 max homes per acre. That would give quite a lot more open space for kids to play, bringing families closer together.
- Specifically selected areas set aside and protected from commercial or residential building. Recreation—camping, picnicking, etc. allowed.
- Achieved dedicated open space by working with various existing organizations. Used various methods to purchase and maintain open spaces.
- Open space today will remain into the future necessitates governmental set asides of trust land and other public lands that require initiative-legislative action voted on by the citizens of Arizona.
- Open malls, small shops, local business districts, retail districts. Green.
- Two different types of open spaces. Open space within developments for recreational/exercise purposes and large vistas-type open spaces for hiking, camping, and wilderness.
- Keep/preserve areas for regional open space a la the Chicago Forest Preserve System.
- Density building—good grief! Useful and usable green space for all developments. Enough golf courses!
- Ideally, I would think open spaces would be configured over time in a way that provides for large scale inter-connected spaces that offer multiple activities, amenities, and are accessible to everyone. This is as opposed to small “parks” that do not connect and are effectively hidden. There needs to be a combination.
- Development that blends horse trails, walking trails, parks with commercial and residential. Off-road vehicle recreation is a viable resource to continue.
- Should tie in with environmental stewardship. Too many “planned” communities tout open spaces, but in reality are drainage systems and parks, neither of which is natural.
- Mountain preserves and parks, regional parks
- Agricultural and desert areas would be preserved around defined city and/or community core areas. Significant visual buffers would exist between population centers.
- Place more houses in the non-productive areas like mountains and the slopes. Maintain open spaces in our flat, agriculture lands.

- The energy theme may be because we have not heard from the “urban area” of Apache Junction yet. Concern is that of business and easy transportation. How do we not become a bedroom county? The “jammed up, up North” is Apache Junction and now a blight on the openness. Must focus on paths of transportation and controlled growth through leadership.
- These would stay pretty much the same as today. We must maintain the open spaces to maintain the wildlife.
- Managed open space available/accessible throughout the county. Regional parks/wilderness areas.

Sense of Community

- Pride in each community by preserving history, pride in community leaders, plan occasions to meet neighbors (concert in park, chili cook off, etc.) Historical sites should show interconnection to other communities.
- Restore downtowns and make pedestrian friendly with restaurants and small shops. Return downtowns as destinations.
- Two levels: On an individual community level, preserve a sense of unique place and destination. On a county-wide level, cooperation and collaboration on a common goal.
- Investment in public, private, and faith-based institutions that foster social interaction and relationships. Celebration at any signature items that define a community as a special place and which are consistent with the ultimate character as put forth in vision.
- Goes along with zoning. Also, new cities would help alleviate costs to the county.
- Don’t lose all of the farming/agricultural aspects. Rural lifestyles are valued, alongside modern day conveniences.
- Achieved by allowing citizens in community to mold and move attitudes and ideas forward to their stated vision. Different sense for various communities.
- Each locale has a great sense of community—an overriding sense across Pinal requires a change in leadership and a new sense of trust in the elected officials.
- County sports leagues, local museums, theater road shows
- Housing infill in communities, coupled with required services and shopping, entertainment, eating establishments, work, education—communities may be specialized.
- Continue the communication between existing residents and new residents; promote lower density communities.
- Developers would have a “circular” development: stores, restaurants, townhouses, lofts in center of town, and parks & rec area. Expand outward to condos, duplex housing, and parks. Then third rung would be small and large single homes with parks, connected by a transit system—train. Restore old buildings.
- A feeling of true identity that provides a positive mental picture in someone’s mind when they hear “Pinal County.”
- So very important—small-town atmosphere to preserve. Define in each community its uniqueness. Indian culture needs to be a part/sense of connection.
- Most of the communities I have worked with have spent time developing their own plans for the future. Are these being reviewed and honored? Each should be able to maintain their sense of individual community.
- Gathering points for people to come together
- Cities and unincorporated communities would have defined urban centers and discrete boundaries. These communities would be generally self sustaining in terms of employment.

- Community “parks” to promote a community atmosphere. Keep promoting community spirit.
- The county is “man” communities divided by real estate, miles, and attitudes. What matters in Superior does not in Maricopa and in Oracle means nothing to Apache Junction. We must develop a “Pinal” attitude similar (?) to Pima County and Maricopa.
- Free or low-cost meeting sites in every neighborhood or development. Schools open after 3 pm; churches open during the week, city meeting facilities available.

Economic Sustainability

- Clean, environmentally aware businesses and industries. Create enough places for all who want to work locally. All ages and colors.
- New industry with high-paying jobs. Structure tax incentives to keep high-paying jobs. Maintain or reduce costs to live (utilities/taxes) in order to keep people here.
- Conveniently located job centers providing variety of employment opportunities—from entry level to high tech to executive.
- Balance of manufacturing, industrial, commercial, residential, and other land uses.
- Elimination of non-sustainable industries such as agriculture.
- Give credits for more business to move into area to create less traveling for taxpayers.
- Attract technology that will employ a high number of low, middle, and upper levels of education (Intel type). Ensure schools offer programs specific to these businesses.
- Achieved by requiring developers to dedicate land, resources, expertise in formulating regions for types of industry, public utilities, education, shopping.
- Early wide/regional economic development foundations and planning protocols that encourage concurrent residential/economic growth.
- Strong foundation system _____ throughout. 21st century _____, solar, electric car, research and development (labs, research facilities)
- Areas that have employment opportunities close to living areas, as well as high-speed rapid transit to larger metropolitan areas for outlying communities.
- County support of an employment center on State land around the Coolidge Airport.
- Encourage diversity: specialty stores, stores that are open after 5 pm and open on weekends. Encourage new sustainable business—mom and pop, grocery, Be Green, solar power, alternative travel.
- Fewer trips for work to Pima/Maricopa, strong employment base, and a full spectrum of employment opportunities.
- Bring in commerce that employs. This is a must. 21st century businesses. 21st century communities versus a bedroom community. Think 21st century lifestyle: green, solar smart, education directed at 21st century jobs/thinkers, future transporting, air travel.
- New economic development must be based on the other emerging themes. It would be of great benefit to the county if those who do business here would locate here.
- Providing jobs for Pinal County into Pinal County but close to where they live.
- Pinal County would have a strong mix of employment opportunities varying from land intensive uses such as agriculture and mining to high-tech manufacturing and research.
- Jobs in the area to retain people and bring people to the areas. Stress to community leaders to promote Pinal County.

- We need a centralized “areas of interest,” i.e., Casa Grande for education and with major retail development or ballparks. Eloy with clean commercial, trucking, etc. Then maintain with arts and history.
- Attract light industry.
- Diverse job opportunities available throughout the county (somebody needs to think about our two divergent delusions (?)—eastern county and the western developments.

Quality Educational Opportunities

- A four-year college in county. I like the extended classrooms and internet classes I heard about on Saturday. Quality education for all ages up to senior citizens who want classes of interest.
- Get all our society involved in education. Encourage development of a four-year university (private or public or both). This state needs more, and Pinal County could set a higher standard than the current ones have.
- Improved elementary and secondary programs, top quality and flexible technical and vocational training programs, in-county four-year and graduate level educational institutions(s).
- Increased investment in K-8 and high school through capital partnerships with developers about faster creation of new facilities, increased taxes to provide for operational expenses, establishment of ch____ community college system and increase integration via technology and facilities to State university system.
- Raise teacher salaries where good teachers who are allowed to discipline (rules). Make students enjoy school.
- Attract high-quality educators by offering competitive salaries and promoting the community lifestyle. Make state-of-the-art facilities and equipment a priority.
- Achieved by building upon Central Arizona College structure. Obtained private and public four-year degree colleges.
- Expansion of private option CAC expansion to State college – legislative action
- Strong recreational/retention plan with solid connector to private dollars and housing, support for out-of-state teachers.
- School to work programs/distance learning centers/hard-wired community to schools.
- As housing development took place, K-12 facilities and locations were built into the plan. Transportation to centrally located post-secondary education facilities.
- Encourage the growth of Central Arizona College and vocational schools to increase our skilled workforce.
- Accountability for educational leaders with two-year testing of instructional staff, more pay, smaller classes, _____ classes, i.e., student reading at third grade level yet does math at fifth grade level. Can they be in classes to suit each?
- Dedication to providing for schools and a goal of finding/attracting/locating a variety of schools from K-12 to two-year and four-year institutions.
- Put money into the schools. I hear from families of the “challenges” in the education area. Lifelong county-wide communication system, development dollars earmarked to the education field for salaries, programs,—not just for land and buildings.
- Currently, development has nearly destroyed our “small” school districts. They are unable to grow quickly enough, and children are suffering. Currently, educational resources are determined at the State level, which often does not support Pinal County’s needs.

- Community college becoming part of community. No sense of community now. More vocational training on high school level for more college-going students.
- Graduate and post-graduate academic opportunities would be available within Central Pinal County.
- Promote the three _____ in state. Additional four-year university is not the answer. Two-year colleges are needed in more communities. Need distance learning (higher tech).
- We need to develop more “blue collar” opportunities with Central Arizona College, becoming capable of four-year degrees and prepare to lead in solar, biotechnology but construction and
- Need to make sure our schools are providing quality education. Offer four-year and post-graduate opportunities in the county, so residents don’t have to drive to Phoenix or Tucson (light rail).
- Well-regarded educational opportunities, from pre-school through graduate level, and for the working adult population.

Mobility and Connectivity

- Yes to public transportation within towns, between towns, and some quick rail to Phoenix, Tucson, even Flagstaff.
- Commuter rail to supplement a well-developed arterial and freeway network. Reliever airports.
- A transportation system that provides a variety of options, predictable travel times, minimal congestion, and a cleaner environment.
- Improved roadway network
- Mass transit paid for by substantial taxes on motorists and businesses that benefit from that transit.
- More jobs in community would give opportunity to have more taxpayers involved in government.
- Absolutely need mass transit to Tucson and Phoenix. At least start with Park-and-Ride and airport shuttles.
- Achieved by planning viable main arteries for the immediate needs, as well as capillaries for future growth. Engaging the use of toll roads, light rail through private facilities.
- Expanded road improvement district, developer participation/requirement. Master plan regionally.
- Light rail with ident. EC/ENT/Retail/Residential. Alternative _____ taxi/shuttle system, Identified trucking/car routes, bike paths/scenic sidewalks.
- Park and Ride lots for commuter transportation (rail, bus, van pool)
- Avoid the congestion that comes with growth by planning transportation routes in advance.
- Build a transit system now—toll roads, airport, train systems.
- A long-term plan for multi-modal transportation, while providing in the present and near term for adequate roadways built with development. Also, a more holistic plan for transportation that understands more than traffic counts to account for how the transportation system design effects other aspects of quality of life in Pinal County.
- Bring on the overpasses. We as a society are conditioned to “hop on an expressway” and go. This is a must if you want economics and education to flourish. Wireless connection.

- Multi-transportation systems must be identified now before land is used for other purposes. Public transportation is necessary for both inter- and intra-travel. Lack of alternative transportation will negatively impact the environment.
- Regional airport, train depot
- Well-defined high volume road corridors will connect urban centers and community nodes.
- Very important—plan and construct east/west highways and freeways. Expand the I-10 corridor ASAP. This is needed now. Mobility and connectivity will promote economic issues.
- We need to focus on the paths as Will Smith did—elected leadership needs to set paths and build around them so that ideas and visions become reality.
- Upgrade highways, possibly tram service to Phoenix and Tucson to cut down on Interstate traffic and pollution.
- Public transportation within communities and from one community to the next. Better highway connections north and south.
- Transit system
 - Vision cooperative network
 - Forums
 - County and city codes regulated
 - Facilitates six items
 - Clear roles of responsibility

Environmental Stewardship

- Is _____. Without this as the basis of all progressive moves, nothing else will matter in the big picture (long run).
- We'd be a leader in the use of new technology for buildings/infrastructure. These would be environmentally friendly technologies that reduce energy use, enhance topography, and use of solar.
- Preserves natural, scenic, archeological, cultural, water resources for future generations.
- Establishment of water conservation goals, including significant cost for excess use.
- Consideration of financial incentives to convert to alternative fuel vehicles. Increase emphases on PMIO compliances.
- With new zoning laws, quality of life would improve. Air quality.
- Become green. With so much growth ahead, start now. Require builders to use solar power and recycled water. Make conversions affordable and rewarding.
- Achieved by understanding the true meaning of "green" and offering options to attain environmental strength to the area.
- State Trust land reasonable reform. Sensitive area development criteria.
- Identified parks/reserves. Homes with larger lots/single flair, more community parks
- Elimination of light pollution from mercury vapor lamps in unshielded light fixtures. Xeriscaping on most areas, except play areas. Use of runoff water.
- Be more like Pima County than Maricopa County and Pima County's environmental programs.
- Desert landscape required for all new housing and buildings. Where is a solar community? Quit feeding wildlife!
- To be honest, I think Pinal County has true environmental stewardship well down on its list of priorities and is and will be focusing more on open space preservation.

- This can blend—mountains, vistas, growth, preserves, trails, homes, industry, education, medical facilities, and alternative energy.
- Unbridled development must come to a halt. There will come a point that development will render environmental stewardship an impossibility. The desert must be left alone.
- Desert habitats will be preserved and connected by open space corridors.
- Federal regulation will most likely set this standard. Dust and pollutants will always be a point of discussion.
- We have opportunity in solar and bio_____ to build infrastructure for “smart homes and clean living.”
- Most toward environmentally friendly power such as solar. Encourage electric companies to develop solar energy plants.
- A tighter (?) environmental policing for air/water quality; overall plan for water management.