

SUMMARY NOTES

Economic Development Task Force – Meeting #3

Date: Wednesday March 19, 2008
3:00 pm to 5:00 pm
Location: Ocotillo Room
Pinal County Government Complex; 31 N. Pinal; Bldg. F

Attendees:

Janet Apkaw-Williams, Ak-Chin Indian Community
C. Alton Bruce, City of Coolidge
Evelyn Casuga, APS
Doreen Cott, Town of Queen Creek
Steve Filipowicz, City of Apache Junction
Roger Hill, Abbott Laboratories, Ross Products Div.
David Jacome, Gila River Indian Community
Dennis Jenkins, Central Arizona College
JC Larson
Benjamin Maresca, Rose Law Group
Jim Nelson, Salt River Project
Sally Odette, APS
Paul Ringer, Central Arizona Regional Economic Development Foundation
Jack Tomasik, Central Arizona Association of Governments
Peter VillaVerde, Florence Industrial Development Authority
Jeremy Wells, Ak-Chin Indian Community
David Welsh, Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, Inc.

Staff Present: Curt Dunham, Peggy Fiandaca and Audra Koester Thomas, Partners for Strategic Action, Inc.; Jerry Stabley, Pinal County; Judie Scalise, ESI Corporation

The meeting convened at 3:05 pm

After welcome and introductions, participants received a project update.



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Draft Alternatives Presentation and Workshop Results; Proposed Activity Center Philosophy

Peggy Fiandaca and Audra Koester Thomas provided an overview of the alternatives presented to the public in February, the results of the participants input, and the resulting draft preferred alternative based on the Workshop feedback. Task Force members provided the following feedback to the draft preferred alternative and the activity center philosophy presented:

- Love the protected ecotourism corridor; it's a great way to attract science and research industry
- While some of the new activity centers and resulting residential development (or, “new cities”) won't occur anytime soon, it's great that the Plan will protect those employment centers now
- Worried that there still isn't enough employment lands identified; large swaths of employment lands needed to attract the kinds of quality employment Pinal residents told us they wanted, and necessary to create the “live, play and **work**” philosophy a reality in the County
- I-8 corridor needs more attention; west County should have additional economic development
- Perhaps the two high-intensity economic activity centers pulled from North/South (“Central”) corridor shouldn't be removed, but instead reduced to mid-intensity
- Preserving employment lands are important; Oro Valley is currently trying find employment lands to fill the gap left when previous employment lands were dissolved for residential use
- A dedication to economic development in Pinal County is essential; political will necessary to stay-off the short-term residential pressures to preserve long-term employment lands
- State Land reform needed
- More generic employment lands needed in east County—not necessarily couched in an activity center
- Concerns about the difficulty of convincing developers and retail interests that placing their development behind a context-sensitive corridor along SR 79 is viable
- Ecotourism in east County should fit within a conservationist philosophy and the corridor-focus philosophy
- Some people in east County desire significant economic development and quality jobs, as opposed to remaining rural and untouched
- Protect culturally sensitive areas (including the north Gila River and areas in east County)



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- Multimodal transportation concept great
- Concerns about the development pressures placed on the aggressive Open Space Plan
- Florence Junction has the potential to serve as a great general aviation site and economic development anchor for northeast Pinal
- If Maricopa and Pima Counties achieve a 500+ jobs per 1000 person job balance, Pinal needs to achieve the same
- Should “industrial” be changed to “employment reserve” to address the concern the image of “industrial” brings?
- Need to address Hidden Valley growth and resulting MAG study in Plan
- Need to address the viability of development south and west of I-10 and north of Ironwood National Monument—potential economic development there, too
- Great idea of keeping SR 79 “scenic” while addressing the developability of that stretch of State Land is a great idea
- This kind of plan is overdue!
- Need to consider east-west, north-south moving cargo through State
- Higher education opportunities a necessary element of economic development philosophy
- Consider more economic development in Hunt Highway corridor
- Development in west Phoenix could just as easily be done in Pinal County
- What are the costs associated with maintaining the open space—tools need to be included regarding the implementation of the open space plan

Policies Development to Implement Activity Center Philosophy; Pinal County’s Future Role in Economic Development

Peggy Fiandaca and Judie Scalise led a discussion on potential policies which could implement the economic development strategy, as well as asked for consideration to the role Pinal County plays in future economic development; the following input was offered:

- Consider a different kind of governance model (consolidation of municipal/county government, for example)
- View the preservation of open space as a tool to lure high quality employment
- Develop area plans to address the unique circumstances of regions while implementing the philosophies of the Comprehensive Plan
- Ensure a compatible built environment in activity centers or economic development corridors
- Implement a dark skies ordinance County-wide
- Create County design standards that “make Pinal different” in look



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- Develop policies to make Pinal a leader in LEEDS standards and environmentally sustainable development
- Define activity centers in the Comprehensive Plan well enough to ward-off residential development pressures or non-compatible land uses
- Identify “employment reserve lands” that may not specify kinds of future employment, but preserves the land for employment dictated by the future market

Discussion of Comprehensive Plan Calendar

Participants were thanked for their contributions to the Comprehensive Plan, and were asked to continue to participate in future events, such as the April Pinal Preferred Future Workshops and May/June Forum Series.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm

