

4.0 LAND USE ELEMENT

4.1 Introduction

The Land Use Element, in concert with the other elements of the Comprehensive Plan, establishes a planning process designed to achieve a well-integrated and efficient decision making process. This element will accommodate growth in the unincorporated portion of the County until the year 2011 by identifying goals, objectives, and policies that translate into land use designations. These should influence the pattern and timing of land development in the County, while recognizing environmental constraints and the desires of residents to have different types of living and working conditions. These policies and objectives are designed to result in balanced and harmonious communities where a high quality of life can be maintained.

Land use in Pinal County changes as it is affected by existing and new factors. A more efficient land use pattern is envisioned for the future. Reliance on the automobile and the expanding roadway network result in a dispersed development pattern, thus contributing to street and highway congestion and other regional deficiencies. Housing and employment are not always well integrated. The separation of housing and employment increases commuting time and distance, thus affecting the quality of life. Innovative patterns of growth are needed if the county is to attract high-quality development and maintain an improved quality of life.

This plan element will create a foundation upon which future planning by the County, adjacent cities, the Indian Communities, other public agencies and the private sector can be coordinated. While the land use element does not cross jurisdictional boundaries, it does consider land uses throughout the County to help establish a coordinated and sustainable development pattern. Pinal County will consider the adopted land use plans of adjacent cities when developing future county land uses. As with the other elements, this section acknowledges there are explicit rights and responsibilities of both the County and private property owners.

The Land Use Element permits development at urban densities where urban services can be provided efficiently and discourages urban densities in areas where urban services cannot be made available. Large scale development master plans are permitted if these developments are of high quality and can provide the necessary services. Rural areas, where urban services are not currently expected to be provided, are also addressed.

The County will consider the adopted General Plan of the incorporated city or town surrounding a county island for any action pertaining to land use issues within such County islands.

4.2 Land Use Issues

Through public participation activities, the following County-wide land use issues were identified.

- A. Protect the natural environment, including scenic views, wildlife corridors, native vegetation, natural and cultural resources, and open space
- B. Maintain the visual quality of the natural environment when designing new developments.
- C. Encourage quality master-planned communities as an appropriate pattern of development in unincorporated areas of the County
- D. Promote and encourage high quality design and construction in all new development.
- E. Discourage development on slopes greater than 15%.
- F. Encourage the use of clustered development in order to protect the natural environment.
- G. Encourage the maintenance of rural character in the rural areas.
- H. Encourage positive visual integrity in existing neighborhoods by maintaining strong maintenance standards.
- I. Encourage buffering between different land uses.
- J. Promote and encourage diverse and sustainable economic development.
- K. Encourage cell towers to be located as far as possible from the roadway.
- L. Recognize the current zoned properties within the boundary of this plan.

4.3 GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The purpose of the Comprehensive Plan is to translate community values and goals into a framework for decision making on growth, land use, the natural environment, traffic circulation, and water resources. It expresses a long-range vision of how a community is to look and function in the future. The Goals, Objectives and Policies section sets forth those values and goals, giving guidance for achieving that vision. Implementation is provided by land use ordinances, land development proposals, and public spending for facilities and services. Goals, objectives and policies are included as part of each of the Comprehensive Plan Elements.

4.4 LAND USE PLAN

The majority of land within the County is owned by the State of Arizona. The second largest land ownership category is private. Following are percentages of land ownership: Arizona State - 35.3%, Private 25.8%, Indian Communities 20.03%, Federal 17.84%, and Other 1.03%. (Federal lands consist of BLM 11.1%, National Forest 6.54%, and Military .2%.)

To encourage orderly growth, Pinal County needs to plan and provide for present and future growth. All areas within the County contain resources that make certain land uses more suitable than others. Incompatible land uses can prevent the further productive use of natural and man-made resources. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, along with the adopted Goals, Policies and Objectives, will provide for the orderly development of the planning area.

The County has been divided into a number of land use designations. The intent of these land use categories is to provide direction in determining the growth patterns for today and for the future. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map is based on the Goals, Objectives and Policies developed through citizen, agency and governmental participation and takes

into consideration the physical conditions and environmental constraints generated from the data collection and analysis section of the Comprehensive Plan.

The Land Use Map indicates the intended use of the land. The Plan provides an overall mix of land uses. Land use boundaries are intended to represent natural or man-made features where possible. The boundary lines are to be considered approximate and discretion may be used in determining same. These boundaries do not necessarily reflect currently zoned property. Approved zoned properties are recognized. Where boundaries are not easily defined, transitions are to be allowed, provided the intent of the Plan remains intact. A cluster option development, with an overall density no greater than the maximum density for the area, may be allowed in any of the land use designations as long as it is compatible with the goals and objectives of the land use designation where the development is proposed and the proposed development meets the specific criteria set forth in the zoning ordinance. The land use designations of the Land Use Map are listed and described below.

4.5 Land Use Designations

4.5.1 Rural Area

The Rural Area designation is for lands that are non-urban. Areas within this classification are suitable for lower density development and may include agriculture, grazing, mining, sand and gravel operations, large acreage homesites, small farms, open space and selected industrial uses, meaning those industrial uses not requiring an Industrial Use Permit. Areas not suitable for urban development are also included in this classification. Public services are minimal to non-existent.

Density Guidelines: Single family density in the Rural land use category shall not exceed 1 du/ac. Multi-Family development will be discouraged from locating in the Rural land use category until it is reclassified to another land use.

4.5.2 Semi-Rural Area

The Semi-Rural Area designation is primarily for large lot single family development. Areas within this classification are suitable for medium density development and may include large acreage homesites and open space.

Density Guidelines: Single family density in the Semi-Rural land use category shall not exceed 2 du/ac. Multi-Family development will not be allowed in the Semi-Rural land use category.

4.5.3 Transitional Area

The Transitional Area designation is for those areas currently rural in character but which are anticipated for growth in the future. These areas could sustain uses consistent with the Urban, Industrial, Rural, Foothills, or Rural Community designations. The purpose of the Transitional Area designation is to encourage the retention of existing parcels of land in large tracts for potential development. Until further development, these areas will retain their rural lifestyle. Current activity may include farming, grazing or vacant land.

Transitional Areas may remain rural with the level of existing support services and facilities being minimal or they may be transitional on an interim basis with growth being phased in as facilities and services are developed in these areas.

Density Guidelines: Single family density in the Transitional Area shall not exceed 1 du/ac. Multi-Family development will be discouraged from locating in the Transitional category. As the Transitional Area develops, densities shall be consistent with the final land use.

4.5.4 Foothill Area

This land use designation shall preserve the sensitive foothill areas. Development of the sensitive Foothill Area designation lands should be at low densities and designed in harmony with the natural landscape.

Density Guidelines: Single family density in the Foothill land use category shall not exceed 1 du/ac. Multi-Family development will be discouraged from locating in the Foothill land use category.

4.5.5 Rural Community Area

The Rural Community Area designation is a growth area that currently maintains a rural lifestyle which will provide goods, services and increased residential uses. Growth of these areas tends to be slow to moderate.

Growth should be based on the availability and capacity of public services, facilities, and infrastructure. A rural activity center allowing for commercial, business, governmental activity, health and educational facilities, industrial uses, parks and recreation areas should be an integral part of the design.

Maximum Density Guidelines: Planned Area Development (PAD)

Single Family 3.5 du/ac

Attached (town houses, patio homes, etc., (apartments are not included) 5.0 du/ac

Multi family (apts.) 12.0 du/ac

(With increased open space from the required 15% the density may increase.)

4.5.6 Urban Area

The Urban Area designation is associated with higher and medium density residential development where services are available to support the higher residential development. Urban areas include towns and cities and contain most of the County's population. Most of Pinal County's past growth has occurred in or contributed to the establishment of urban areas. Most of the future growth is expected and will be encouraged to occur in these areas.

In addition to residential land uses, the Urban Area designation should support commercial, business, governmental activity, health and educational facilities, industrial uses, parks and recreation areas. An objective of the Urban Area designation is to provide

high quality, efficient public services, environmental quality, plentiful housing and job opportunities.

Maximum Density Guidelines: Planned Area Development (PAD)

Single Family 3.5 du/ac

Attached (town homes, patio homes
etc., apartments not included) 5.0 du/ac

Multi Family (apartments) 12.0 du/ac

(With increased open space from the required 15% the density may increase.)

4.5.7 Commercial Activity Center

Commercial Activity Centers provide for the most intense concentrations of commercial and high density residential development. Proposed land uses, include retail stores and services, office development, business parks, commercial uses and high density multi-family development. Providing for a variety of uses in Commercial Activity Centers allows businesses to locate near supporting business, and enables employees to combine work and shopping trips. Adequate but controlled access to arterial roadways or freeway interchanges is essential.

Multi-Family density shall range from 12 to 20 du/ac with a target density of 16 du/ac in this land use category only with this density not to be included in Planned Area Developments.

4.5.8 Interchange Mix Area

The Interchange Mix Area designation shall allow for a variety of highway oriented businesses. This category caters to the needs of travelers along interstate highways. Uses may include, but not necessarily be restricted to, hotels and motels, vacation resorts, restaurants, RV parks, service stations, specialty shops and small scale commercial uses. Major truck service centers, large scale commercial uses and industrial uses are not included.

The Interchange Mix Area designations are located at interstate interchanges in non-urban designated areas. Implementation will require a rezoning and the demonstration that water, sewer, power and access can and will be provided.

If located within a natural resource or a mountain area, the development is encouraged to be sensitive to the natural resource and protect the visual qualities by concentrating on scale of development, color, textures and use of materials.

4.5.9 Corridor Mix Area

The Corridor Mix designation is for areas located adjacent to interstate highways within or adjacent to urban areas. This designation provides for land uses of various intensities that

are oriented to and compatible with interstate highways. Land uses may include commercial, office, research and development, industrial park, light industrial, warehousing, recreation facilities, hotels, and high density residential. Open space, landscaping and noise buffers are to be included to insure aesthetically pleasing developments and compatibility with adjacent uses and interstate highway traffic.

4.5.10 Industrial Area

The Industrial Area designation identifies areas specifically for industrial uses. Industries should be grouped with more intense uses which may have impacts more difficult to control (heavy truck traffic, noise, vibration, light, glare, and odors). Impact from these intense industries can best be controlled by separating them from residential and commercial uses. Policies of this Comprehensive Plan are applicable to both heavy and light industries.

4.5.11 Mining Area

The Mining Area designation is specifically for those areas where mineral resources have been identified, prospectively identified, or are likely to be identified in the future. The intent of this designation is to protect the mineral resources by minimizing conflicts with surrounding land uses. This designation recognizes the rights of exploration, mining and processing of mineral resources.

All mining operations conducted by whatever techniques and technologies employed are required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws providing for the protection of environmental resources.

4.5.12 Airport Reserve

These areas are designated for future airports, expansion of existing airports and for employment uses which will be compatible with the airport.

4.5.13 Development Sensitive Area

The Development Sensitive Area classification is intended to preserve the natural environment and the open space characteristics of lands that are environmentally sensitive. Environmental concerns dictate low intensity development that is integrated with the environment and blends with the natural landscape. Land uses may include parks, ranching, livestock grazing, conservation leases, guest ranch, and single family uses, the density of which is no greater than three-tenths (.3) dwelling unit per acre. Destination resorts and associated facilities may be allowed upon adherence to strict environmental and design requirements.

4.5.14 Natural Resource Area

The Natural Resource Area classification includes private and public lands, including State Trust lands which contain one or more natural resources that are enhanced by maintaining the parcels in large, undivided holdings.

Land uses may include active and passive parks, river corridors, natural areas, livestock grazing, conservation leases, national forests, hunting and public recreation, and wilderness areas.

The following are Overlay Areas:

4.5.15 Riparian Area

The Riparian Area designation identifies major riparian areas and large natural washes. The intent is to preserve the existing water courses and vegetation. Land uses within this designation will be limited to very low intensity uses as permitted by floodplain management regulations. Permitted land uses should include open space, natural areas and linear parks. The linear parks may incorporate pedestrian, bicycle and/or equestrian trails, and connect public resource areas.

4.5.16 Sustainable Community

(A Sustainable Community is defined as a self-supporting community in which individuals can live, work, and shop and designed for long-term conservation of natural resources.)

Developments within this category will be designed to encourage the integration of the built environment with the social, economic and natural environments. These communities will:

- conserve natural resources by minimizing the consumption of land through compact development;
- maintain and restore existing ecological attributes;
- reduce the consumption of water, energy and nonrenewable resources and the production of waste, toxic emissions and pollution;
- enhance a sense of place, livability and social and economic interaction;
- increase access to jobs, affordable housing, transportation choices and recreational opportunities; and
- expand the diversity, synergism and use of renewable resources in the operation an output of local economic activities.

Sustainable community developments will consider the environmental impacts on community design and provide for the integration of residential, commercial, recreational and employment uses, designed in harmony with the natural landscape, and reducing the dependency on the automobile.

4.5.17 Flood Prone Area

The Flood Prone Area designation is applied to properties that are subject to flooding and related hazards including the loss of life and property, disruption of business and

governmental services, and large public expenditures for flood protection. The intent of the Flood Prone Area designation is to prevent the loss of life and property, minimize expenditures of public money for costly flood control projects, minimize prolonged business interruptions, minimize damage to public and private facilities, and insure potential buyers are notified that property is in a special flood hazard area and insure that those who occupy the areas within the Flood Prone Areas assume responsibility for their actions.

This Flood Prone Area is an overlay designation adding additional conditions to the underlying base land use designation. Uses permitted include agriculture, open space, golf courses, parks and uses outlined in the Riparian Area designation. Uses permitted in the underlying or base land use designations may be acceptable upon the removal of the flood hazard for the subject property.

4.5.18 Noise Sensitive Area

The Noise Sensitive Area designation is applied to properties adjacent to and within the flight path of all airports including Casa Grande, Superior, San Manuel, and Coolidge Airports and the Pinal Air Park and Williams Gateway Airport. The area is subject to high noise levels resulting from departing aircraft. The intent is to ensure land use compatibility with the airport activities. The Noise Sensitive Area designation is an overlay designation with additional stipulations to the underlying base designations.

Land uses allowed in the Noise Sensitive Area designation include industrial and commercial uses. Residential land uses are discouraged. All uses will be required to reduce interior noise levels to 45 LDN (day-night average sound level) or lower. Mobile homes, recreational vehicles and outdoor activities where the noise level cannot be reduced, are prohibited. Schools, churches, assembly halls, hotels and other land uses allowing large gathering of people are prohibited.

4.5.19 Low Density Area

The Low density Overlay Area can be applied to any land use which allows for single family residential. The purpose of this overlay designation is to provide for single family residential lots of 3 1/3 acres or greater for each lot.

4.6 Goals, Objectives and Policies

The goal of the Land Use Element is to:

Carefully manage and guide urban growth in a manner that promotes economic development, integrates current and future transportation systems, maintains a rural southwestern lifestyle, and is sensitive to the natural environment.

OBJECTIVE LU1: Promote diverse employment opportunities near population bases.

Policy LU1.1 Encourage the preparation of an Economic Development Plan for Pinal County.

- Policy LU1.2 Encourage local organizations, both public and private, to promote community and economic development throughout the County.
- Policy LU1.3 Encourage, coordinate, and support commercial and industrial land uses in growth clusters being aware of transportation availability and requiring each to provide an adequate level of service including roads, water, sewer, and utilities.
- Policy LU1.4 Encourage retention of existing and a diversity of new employment opportunities including mining, agriculture, dairy farms, feed lots, tourism, hi-tech industries, service industries, retail, etc.
- Policy LU1.5 Encourage the provision of buffers in the form of walls, berms, landscaping, or other land uses to protect residential, agricultural, and commercial/industrial areas from conflicting land uses.
- Policy LU1.6 Encourage the development of non-polluting commercial and industrial land uses. Locate less desirable commercial, industrial, and agricultural uses in areas away from residential areas where potentially negative impacts can be mitigated.
- Policy LU1.7 Encourage sewage treatment and solid waste disposal facilities to be located in industrial or remote areas where potentially negative impacts can be mitigated.
- Policy LU1.8 Encourage a suitable balance between employment opportunities and available housing, taking into consideration the labor force and other demographic characteristics of the community.

OBJECTIVE LU2: Provide for the coexistence of urban and rural land uses.

- Policy LU2.1 Encourage the protection, preservation, and maintenance of existing rural land uses and rural character of the County by encouraging a mix of low density/residential development in addition to medium and high density residential development.
- Policy LU2.2 Encourage the preservation and protection of rural areas by safeguarding horse privileges and buffering from higher density areas.
- Policy LU2.3 Encourage adequate separation between intensive urban and rural land uses.
- Policy LU2.4 Encourage the establishment of diverse, compatible, and functional land use patterns.
- Policy LU2.5 Encourage existing non-incorporated communities to grow at a rate they consider desirable, within the limits of acceptability to both the

citizens of the jurisdiction as well as the County, while preserving and improving the quality of life and the aesthetic and functional fitness of land uses within the County.

Policy LU2.6 Pinal County should coordinate and cooperate with the Arizona State Land Department on the planning of State Trust lands within Pinal County.

Policy LU2.7 Discourage residential and other noise sensitive developments within airport approach and departure zones where increased noise levels will be present as a result of aircraft overflight. Where residential development is permitted, aviation easements and other measures should be provided to include public notification of the potential for aircraft overflight and appropriate measures taken to provide for noise attenuation in the construction of the dwellings.

Policy LU2.8 Encourage new developments to locate where amenities and infrastructure already exist, are planned, or will be provided.

Policy LU2.9 Encourage large lot development to include five and ten acre subdivisions.

OBJECTIVE LU3: Promote Planned Area Developments and Cluster Development that provide a mix of housing types and land uses.

Policy LU3.1 Encourage the creation of master planned communities that provide a diversity of land uses.

Policy LU3.2 Encourage residential development to include a variety of distinctive neighborhoods offering a maximum choice of housing types.

Policy LU3.3 Encourage residential development that provides opportunities for a variety of income levels, including affordable housing.

Policy LU3.4 Encourage flexible standards to accommodate innovative and varied approaches to development.

Policy LU3.5 Encourage and accommodate mixed use development including a mixture of housing types and intensities within planned development.

Policy LU3.6 Encourage future development to be located within or adjacent to existing developed areas to eliminate sprawl and strip development, to assure the provision of adequate services, to preserve agriculture, and open space land uses, and to maximize the utility of funds invested in public facilities and services.

Policy LU3.7 Encourage planned communities that incorporate quality design and clustered development.

- Policy LU3.8 Encourage new development to preserve significant desert habitats, natural resources, and landscapes.
- Policy LU3.9 Consider the possible development and adoption of an Impact Fee Ordinance.
- Policy LU3.10 Consider lot split review and the adoption and enforcement of regulations regulating wildcat land subdivisions.
- Policy LU3.11 Encourage the use of the Planned Area Development Overlay rather than Area Plans.

OBJECTIVE LU4: Promote a balance between conservation of the natural environment and development.

- Policy LU4.1 Encourage the protection of ridgelines, foothills, significant mountainous areas, wildlife habitat, native vegetation, and riparian areas.
- Policy LU4.2 Encourage decreased development intensity, site coverage and vegetation removal as slope steepness increases to mitigate problems of drainage, erosion, siltation, landslides and visual impacts. Encourage the protection of hillsides and slopes greater than 15%.
- Policy LU4.3 Encourage protection of wildlife corridors by considering the impact development has on the region.
- Policy LU4.4 Encourage and support techniques for acquisition and maintenance of open space.
- Policy LU4.5 Discourage development within major 100-year floodplains.
- Policy LU4.6 Encourage cell towers to be located as far as possible from the roadway.

