

Introduction

What is the General Plan?

Arizona State law requires each city to have a General Plan that establishes policy for the city's physical development. The General Plan for Phoenix includes goals, policies and recommendations to guide the land use, transportation system, open space preservation, neighborhood development and preservation, employment areas and shopping, and locations for and development of city services for the next 10 to 20 years and beyond. It is designed to ensure economic vitality and sustainability. The General Plan for Phoenix includes 11 existing elements that have been updated:

- Land use
- Circulation
- Bicycling
- Housing
- Neighborhood
- Conservation, Rehabilitation and Redevelopment
- Recreation
- Natural Resources Conservation
- Public Buildings
- Public Services and Facilities
- Safety

Five new elements have been added:

- Growth Area
- Cost of Development
- Environmental Planning
- Open Space
- Water Resources

Some topics and text from the existing elements were moved to the new elements.

The General Plan for Phoenix also includes the General Plan Citywide Land Use Map, plus a summary on the back of this map of all of the 16 elements. The Street Classification Map also is part of the General Plan and is consistent with the General Plan Land Use Map.

The General Plan is a comprehensive document that pulls together in one place the work of the city

boards, commissions, committees, and departments based on adopted city policies and programs.

How is the General Plan updated?

The General Plan for Phoenix was updated comprehensively in accord with the new Growing Smarter legislation passed in 1998 and 2000, and has been amended annually since 1986. While the plan will undergo a major revision and be ratified by the voters every 10 years, adoption and ratification of the plan by the voters will not preclude amendment of the plan as needed to keep it responsive to changing needs and new information. The Plan will be subject to amendment through adopted General Plan text procedures and map amendment procedures consistent with adopted Land Use element guidelines. The City Council, the Planning Commission, village planning committees, boards, commissions and others can submit text and map amendments in accord with General Plan Amendments Procedures and the Land Use element guidelines. Text amendments can be initiated by anyone at any time using a standard application form. There is no fee. Village planning committees and the Planning Commission make recommendations on all General Plan amendments.

What is the planning process?

Planning is a continuous process that begins with a vision and establishes goals, objectives, policies and recommendations to achieve that vision. Planning must recognize existing conditions to the extent that they affect the future. The results of the implementation process to achieve that vision are evaluated, and the goals, objectives, policies and recommendations are modified and readopted. Achieving community consensus on what is desired and how to achieve consensus involves compromises and tradeoffs. There are those who want change and those who want no or very minimal change. There are those wanting to maximize the value of their land and those wanting to preserve the character of the existing community. Planners attempt to reconcile many seemingly conflicting goals in a manner that allows each group to satisfy its needs to the greatest extent feasible.

In addition to resolving conflicting goals, city officials and planners are limited in power and resources in what they can accomplish. Some subjects such as interstate commerce, air traffic patterns, air quality, health care regulation, state lands, mining, and hazardous materials regulation, are handled by other jurisdictions such as departments or agencies of the federal, state or county government. While the city cooperates and coordinates with these groups, the city does not have final authority or, in some cases, any power. Even when it does have the authority to take action, the city may be limited by the availability of its own financial resources, market conditions, and legal due process. Sometimes it may seem to the public that nothing is happening in ordinance enforcement while investigation, court processes and times for owner correction are taking place. Federal and state laws protect private property rights and define the limits of government action regarding public purpose and what is acceptable action to protect health, safety and welfare.

What has been the process for public involvement in the General Plan Update?

The City Council approved a public involvement process before the Update began. The approved process included many ways for the public to be involved to ensure a broad knowledge of the Update and opportunity for input. Much of the Plan's contents also involved updating it to reflect recently adopted Council policies and programs, including those approved by the voters. The following list covers most of the outreach effort.

- ❑ Scientific sample of 2,044 households with representative samples in each Council district. Questions related to each element of the General Plan. Respondents represented a cross section of Phoenix residents by age, length of residence, ethnicity, marital status, and education, as well as location. The "General Plan Survey 2000, City of Phoenix" was conducted by WestGroup Research for the city. An executive summary is available on our website and copies of the full report, including details as to methodology, margin of error, sample size, copy of the survey, demographics on respondents and a full analysis of all responses, is available from the Planning Department. Some questions were asked of all households surveyed so that they could be reported on a council district basis,

if necessary. Some sample questions were asked of a smaller sample that could be reported only for the city as a whole. The margin of error ranged from 2.2 percent for the 2,044 household sample to 4.9 percent for the 400 sample.

- ❑ Newspaper, television, and radio coverage in both English and Spanish media. Advertisements for each open house, public hearing, and mention of how to obtain copies and make comments.
- ❑ Water bill mailer to 350,000 properties.
- ❑ Flyers at public counters and copies of the draft General Plan Update at city libraries, and community service and recreation centers.
- ❑ Four-page tabloid summarizing the draft General Plan in the Arizona Republic.
- ❑ "Neighborhood News" write-up reaching 860 organizations.
- ❑ Presentations and mailings to boards, commissions, committees, the Maricopa Association of Governments Planning Committee, other governmental agencies, neighborhood groups, environmental organizations, and private and nonprofit development professional and industry groups.
- ❑ Web site with the schedule, questions and answers, maps, elements and documents in summary and full draft form. Summaries provided in Spanish.
- ❑ Three widely advertised public open houses and a full-week display with comment sheets in the City Hall atrium.
- ❑ Review by 14 village planning committees at multiple public meetings. Some committees also established subcommittees for extra element review.
- ❑ Creation of matrix of approximately 2000 comments received, which was given to the Planning Commission at each hearing and

made available to the public. Each entry included a staff response as to the suggestion.

- ❑ Review of early and later drafts by the Phoenix Planning Commission with the Phoenix Parks Board, Phoenix Commission on Housing and Neighborhoods, and the Phoenix Environmental Quality Commission.
- ❑ Seven public hearings by the Phoenix Planning Commission.
- ❑ Three public hearings by the Phoenix City Council.

As a result of this input, there were five drafts prepared before the document was finally adopted. Changes included additional material, deletions, clarifications and a professional edit. The city appreciates the efforts of those who took the time to be involved.

How does the General Plan relate to other documents?

The General Plan refers to other adopted city documents for greater detail. Other plans and documents that refine the General Plan are the following: the Capital Improvement Program; the Six-Year Major Streets Plan; the currently adopted (1989) Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Master Plan; all redevelopment area plans; area and specific plans; the Phoenix Water Resources Plan; and the Sonoran Preserve Plan. Before adoption, any changes in these documents should be reviewed by the Planning Department to ensure conformity with the General Plan, so that documents are not in conflict. If there is a conflict, the document or the General Plan may be amended to achieve conformity.

What are urban villages?

The General Plan is based on the urban village model. The urban village model is designed to give residents of the city of Phoenix a sense of identity, and to create places of unique character in which residents may find a variety of life styles, jobs, shopping, educational and recreational choices at a smaller scale. Urban villages satisfy a desire to belong to an identifiable community within a large city, with a sense of control over its environment. The City Council first adopted the urban village concept in

1979 and established nine urban villages. (The first city comprehensive plan adopted in 1972 was a citywide trends plan.) Since 1979, five more villages were added. Figure 1 in the Land Use element provides a map and greater discussion of the 14 urban villages and their five component parts. Urban villages are the urban form or physical land use form envisioned for the 600-plus square miles in the Phoenix Planning Area, which extends beyond the city limits.

How should the General Plan be interpreted?

It is the responsibility of the City Council to interpret the General Plan in order to resolve any ambiguities or inconsistencies among plan elements, policies or provisions.

The General Plan includes an executive summary at the beginning of each plan element. The summaries are a statement of element goals and/or a description of the subjects covered in the element. The summary for the Growth Areas element also includes key concepts that are an extension or subparts of the element's goal. Some elements include benchmarks/performance measures signifying that it is appropriate to assess periodically the degree of progress in achieving a goal, policy or recommendation. Benchmarks/performance measures do not create a program, funding or ordinance.

The General Plan contains goals, policies and recommendations. Goals are the ultimate accomplishment towards which the city's actions should be directed. The goals in this plan may not be entirely achievable, nor are they considered to be of equal importance. However, they are meant to provide direction for Phoenixians rather than being a final decision. Policies are statements of the city's general intention and serve as a continuing guide to implementing goals. Recommendations are more specific and propose actions to achieve goals and policies. It is not expected that all goals, policies or recommendations will be achieved within a 10-year or any specific time frame, due to funding limitations and the need to set priorities. All General Plan components must be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to promote the best interests of the city as it responds to the changes in the region and the world.

Use of terms such as "develop, prepare for consideration, adopt, require, or prohibit" do not of themselves create a program, funding, or an ordinance. Rather they provide direction to city staff to take some action to bring the policy or recommendation, in some form, to the City Council, in some time frame, if existing funding, policies or ordinances are not already in place. The council may or may not adopt the recommendation brought forward.

Standards that relate to particular General Plan policies are found in the following documents: Zoning Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance, Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport Zoning Ordinance, Construction Code, Fire Code, Grading and Drainage Ordinance, and the Floodplain Ordinance.

Conformity of zoning of specific areas or parcels of land with the General Plan will be evaluated against, and in accord with directions given in the Land Use element and state law.

What is the General Plan Map and what does it mean?

The General Plan Land Use Map indicates the intended future function, density and characteristic use of land for the different parts of the city. In general, the Land Use Map does not address small-scale situations of 10 acres or less, the specific characteristics of residential development, or the specific types of commercial and other nonresidential uses. Provision is made for a variety of mixed land use projects, some with a broad range of uses allowed. The Plan and Map do not reflect the intended zoning of individual parcels, but rather generalize desired future land use. The boundaries between use and density designations noted on the map are not fixed precisely. Rather, they indicate general areas wherein the goals of the Plan will be pursued through more detailed planning decisions. A one-to-one correspondence between designations on the map and development decisions is not contemplated. It may be appropriate to vary from the map, either through a rezoning approval (per the standards in the Land Use element, Goal 11) or through a General Plan amendment when it is determined that this would as well or better meet overall plan goals.

Residential classifications covering large areas are not meant to preclude appropriate neighborhood and

community commercial services needed to support the population. Similarly, designation for commercial, industrial or public uses does not necessarily preclude appropriate residential use if allowed by the requested zoning district.

Commercial or industrial designation does not mean that the full range of commercial or industrial uses is appropriate for every given parcel. Appropriateness of a specific use must be judged in accord with the character of the surrounding area, parcel size, access and other factors. For example, heavy industrial uses should not be located near residential uses, whereas industrial development meeting the standards of the Commerce Park zoning district may be suitable. The plan also indicates areas that will be developed in orderly transition over time, from one use to another. The time frame and character of the transition will be determined by market conditions and property owner desire, as well as community input on specific requests. Transition areas may be subject to more detailed plans.

What is the history of community-based planning in Phoenix?

The first comprehensive General Plan for Phoenix was adopted in 1972, prior to area planning or the concept of urban villages. Community-based planning in Phoenix began almost 30 years ago with the Area Planning Program. This effort culminated in incorporating urban village plans into the Phoenix General Plan: 1985-2000. Fast-growing Deer Valley was chosen for the first area plan. A committee worked with staff for two years to prepare a land use plan that the City Council adopted in December 1973. Plans prepared by appointed volunteer committees were also adopted for Paradise Valley, South Phoenix, Maryvale, and the Inner City between 1976 and 1979. Some of the original area planning committee members were subsequently active on the urban village planning committees.

In January 1974, the Mayor and Council charged the Phoenix Planning Commission with the responsibility to present alternative urban forms and their implications. After an urban form seminar for community leaders, the Commission appointed over 200 citizens to eight Urban Form Directions Committees. During Phase I, each committee studied a single topic, similar to each one of the elements required in a general plan by Arizona state law.

The Committees recommended detailed proposals and the urban village concept. The Commission and Council adopted this concept but requested more study of its implications.

A Steering Committee, composed of the chairmen of the Phase I committees, vice-chair of the Commission and a conceptualizer of urban villages, was appointed to develop the concept. Beginning in June 1976, the Committee refined the Phase I goals. Representatives of four area planning committees joined in September 1977 to aid in developing alternative urban village sketch plans and a trends plan reflecting the pattern of growth without any city direction given.

Four subcommittees evaluated the relative advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. The recommended alternative formed the basis of the Phoenix Concept Plan 2000, adopted in July 1979.

The Concept Plan defined the boundaries of nine villages, identified cores, and provided goals and policies. It also instructed the village planning committees to prepare a 25-year concept plan for their villages, and detailed five-year staging plans based on the urban village concept. An Interim 1985 Plan was also adopted, to guide growth until the nine General Plan elements and village plans could be completed.

Eight village committees (comprised of persons living or working in the village) were formed in 1980 (Central City was added in 1984). They gathered information through field trips, named their villages, and determined goals. A Goals Formulation Report was prepared and a conference was held in November 1983 to review the status of village planning. Village issues were identified and preliminary solutions were presented by the village committees.

Planning Department staff, ASU graduate assistants, and Allan Jacobs, a special consultant to the city, aided the committees. To obtain citizen input, the village planning committees held fairs and forums. The public frequently gave input at the regularly-scheduled open meetings of the village planning committees as well.

Beginning October 1984, the Special Liaison Committee, chaired by George Chasse, former

Planning Commission Chair, met periodically with representatives from all committees, Planning staff, and Planning Commission to coordinate the committees' efforts.

The completed draft plans were presented to the Planning Commission in February 1985, at four public meetings with City Council members attending.

Planning Department staff then consolidated the nine village plans into a less detailed Phoenix General Plan, with the nine elements required by state law. The Phoenix General Plan was adopted on October 2, 1985, after three Planning Commission hearings, a Council hearing, two Council Policy Sessions, and a final Council hearing on a revised Plan. The published draft village plans served as background material to help decision makers interpret the Plan. The village plans were proof of the thousands of hours of labor by the citizen volunteers listed.

After adopting the plan, the City Council assumed responsibility for appointing village planning committees, and looked to the committees for recommendations on rezoning map and text amendments and other projects in the villages. Additional villages were created for Desert View, North Gateway, Estrella, Laveen and Ahwatukee Foothills as development spread to the peripheral areas and the western part of South Mountain Village. Area plans were adopted for these villages as well as other developing parts of existing villages. Specific plans were adopted for certain village cores. Also adopted were more redevelopment area plans and specific planning districts to protect neighborhoods. Neighborhood Initiative Areas and Fight Back neighborhoods also brought more resources and focus to subareas within villages. As growth spread to new areas, the city adopted impact fees in accord with previously adopted infrastructure financing plans.

The General Plan is based on area and neighborhood planning work, as well as various facility plans prepared by interdepartmental city teams; Planning Commission direction; City Council policies; and voter-approved programs. The General Plan reflects input from a Resident Attitude Survey conducted in early 2000 with sampling of residents in each council district. Consistent with its adopted vision for the update, "Preserving Our Past and Choosing Our Future," the Planning Commission recommended a

more intensive and focused infill program described in the Land Use element of the latest General Plan.

The General Plan for Phoenix will be subject to amendment through an annual cycle as it has since 1986, so that it can remain a dynamic document responding to new needs and changing conditions. The Plan will be subject to amendment through adopted General Plan text procedures and map amendment procedures consistent with adopted Land Use element guidelines.