

# Pinal County Comprehensive Plan Road Show Executive Summary



In July 2007, nine “Road Show” events were held throughout Pinal County. The purpose of these Road Show events was threefold: introduce the public to the Comprehensive Plan process, discuss the results of the Morrison Institute *The Future at Pinal* report, and to begin a dialogue on the vision of Pinal.

The communities of Gold Canyon, Casa Grande, Coolidge, Florence, San Manuel, Maricopa, Red Rock, SaddleBrooke, and Superior hosted Road Show events; a total of 309 participants signed in at registration. The following report summarizes the results of these nine events. Specific meeting summaries for each Road Show event are available as an appendix to this executive summary.

The Road Show events were the first time the Comprehensive Plan project was introduced to the public. The interactive presentation had several elements: an introduction to the Comprehensive Plan process, a summary of Pinal County data produced by the Morrison Institute, a discussion on what Pinal residents value, a presentation and discussion of a peer county analysis, and a presentation on and discussion of the Morrison Institute’s Placemaking Goals.

## What We Value

Participants were asked prior to the start of the Road Show event to fill out a portion of a survey tool (see appendix). Section 1 of this survey talked to what residents of Pinal County valued and what residents of Pinal County have seen change. The following common themes were derived:

What ONE thing do you value most about Pinal County?

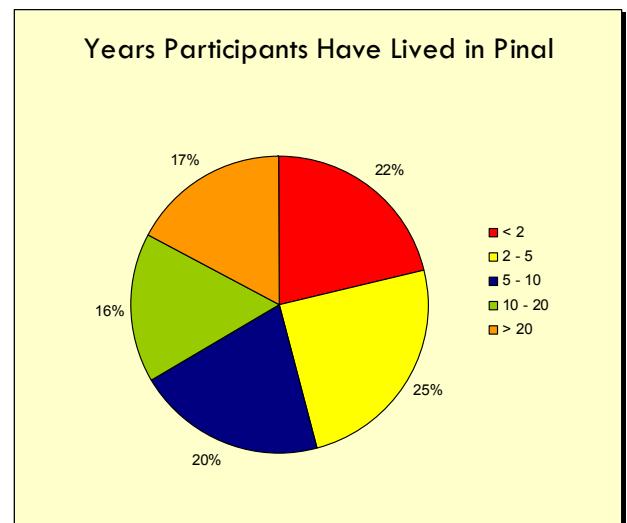
- Open space
- Rural atmosphere and environment
- Natural beauty
- History and heritage
- Night sky and clean air
- Diversity

What ONE thing do you **not** want to lose in Pinal County?

- Open space
- Diversity
- Sense of community
- Agriculture
- Uniqueness
- Clean air, water, environment
- Water resources
- Wildlife

What ONE major change have you seen in Pinal County?

- More rooftops, homes and growth in general
- Loss of agriculture
- Increase in traffic
- Positive synergy between residents and governmental officials



# Lessons Learned

Early in the Comprehensive Plan project, a peer county analysis was conducted. In determining potential peer counties, the following criteria had to be met: experienced rapid growth over the past 20 years, impacted by one or more rapidly growing metropolitan areas, existed an urban/agricultural/open space interface, faced preservation issues and experienced commuting or ‘bedroom community’ issues. Three counties were identified: Polk County in Florida, Cobb County in Georgia, and Arapahoe County in Colorado.

After interviewing long-time planners and professionals from these three counties, the following list of key lessons emerged:

1. Should have developed dedicated funding for infrastructure and roads
2. County and municipalities should have worked better together
3. Should have developed transportation options such as transit, light rail
4. Better job of uniting citizens behind a common vision for the future – unify rural and urban
5. Should have had planning tools in place earlier
6. Long range planning should have been more imbedded to withstand political change

Almost unanimously, participants from the Road Shows urged that Pinal County heed each of the key lessons from peer counties.

# Placemaking Goals

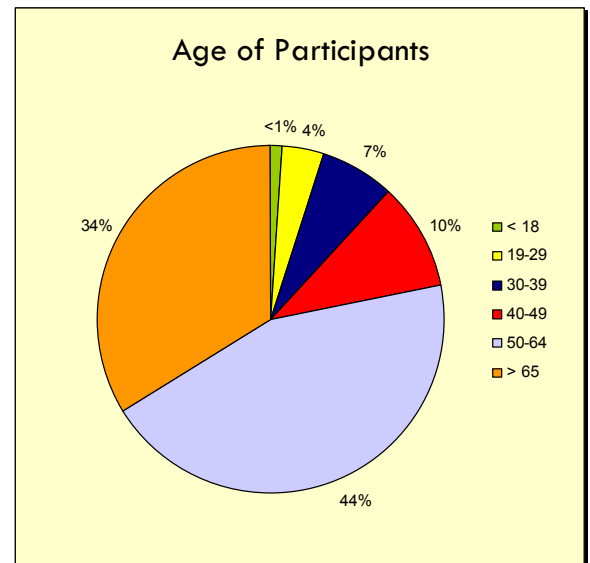
The Morrison Institute identified six potential “placemaking” goals they believed “would set Pinal apart and support the long-term success of its people and places.” After reviewing each of the six goals, participants were asked to write down what each of the statements meant to them. The following provides a brief description of each goal and some selected comments received for each.

**Distinguish Pinal from Maricopa County and Pima County—***establish a cooperative culture and spirit to work to set Pinal County apart from the rest.*

- “I don’t get the point. Why not transfer the top half to Maricopa and the bottom half to Pima?”
- “More than a sign. I want to be able to tell when I leave Maricopa and Pima Counties.”
- “Well planned, less dense population communities that preserve and encourage Native American culture.”
- “Keep our differences—our rural flavor.”
- “We must be different in order to be anything but a bedroom community.”
- “A unique sense of people—recognizing the heritage and spirit of the county”
- “Pinal County should retain its agricultural and mining history.”
- “Relaxing sunsets, compared to falling smog.”

**Protect miles of desert and open land—***aspire to be known across Arizona and nationally for connected open spaces that serve both people and wildlife.*

- “Open space has high value as a distinguishing feature.”
- “Once it is gone, it is gone forever.”
- “Protect free range for wildlife, trails, and geological preservation”
- “Direct development toward existing urban areas. Preserve the rest.”
- “Equestrian trails, wildlife, tourist areas, bike & hiking trails”
- “Preserve strategic vistas and open space corridors that reflect our desert history and sustain our environment.”
- “Preserve pristine deserts and encourage appropriate agricultural uses.”



"I love watching the sunsets with only plant and animal life. No building skylines for me."  
"Don't rely on existing protected lands (federal and tribal)—create and save private and State lands."

**Provide choices for transportation and mobility**—*building and expanding roads is not enough; Pinal needs different ways to move people and goods.*

"This is a 'must' have—not a 'nice' to have."  
"Requirement of developers to provide traffic impact studies and build roads to mitigate traffic generated by their development"  
"There has to be a better life than four hours a day behind the wheel of two tons of steel and plastic."  
"Already, people don't want to move here because of the commute and lack of alternate roads. We need more options for an effective freeway!"  
"Alternative airport to Phoenix and Tucson. Commuter rail along I-10. Light rail within larger communities like Casa Grande."

**Support unique, "fair share" communities**—*strive for communities to take on authentic identities and build upon our already existing historic and prehistoric sites.*

"Ideally, try to avoid homogenizing of county."  
"Stabilize and redevelop unique communities to be viable part of emerging Pinal County."  
"Not really sure, to be honest"  
"Equal, interactive and active leadership working towards goals"  
"Government leaders walking the talk. Cooperation extends across the city/town limits."  
"Work together as communities helping each community to be great at what makes them special."  
"Not sure what this means, but I think we need to establish an identity and understand how we are perceived."  
"History and traditions should be showcased."

**Create and attract career pay – career path jobs**—*cultivate innovative economic development efforts to attract quality companies to Pinal.*

"Have areas to develop as 'office complexes' and industrial 'parks.'  
"Small high-tech companies that could be anywhere but choose Pinal."  
"I want my kids and grandkids to be able to stay."  
"We need to have industry to attract higher incomes. We need areas set aside for industry—then court them."  
"Integrated education, economic development, workforce development system."  
"Quality professional jobs that allow us to be self-sustaining and the education to get there."  
"Economic viability instead of bedroom community."  
"This is essential to keep people living in Pinal County. At this point in my life (I'm 23), I can't imagine I'll be able to stay in Pinal County if I plan to move forward in my career."

**Develop Pinal's talent pool**—*ensure all residents have a chance to make a good living through strong education and workforce policies and programs.*

"With more college opportunities = employment"  
"Higher education facilities, keep talent here—invest in ourselves."  
"Work—live—play—stay."  
"This begins with schools that are supported and not crowded. We need a university."  
"Not sure this is the government's job, but it needs to be done."  
"A new State university."  
"Local four-year education. Allow community colleges to expand four-year programs."

**What participants want to see as part of the Pinal County Vision Statement:**

- Education opportunities
- Protect water resources
- Maintain open space
- Alternative energy
- Environmental preservation and conservation
- Natural beauty
- Diversity

Participants were also asked to rate each of these Placemaking goals as to their agreeableness to each. After taking the results from each of the nine Road Shows, the following ranking lists the goals in order of most agreeable:

1. Protect miles of desert and open land
2. Provide choices for transportation and mobility
3. Create and attract career pay – career path jobs
4. Develop Pinal’s talent pool
5. Distinguish Pinal from Maricopa County and Pima County
6. Support unique, “fair share” communities

## Where were Road Show participants from?

