

Stanfield Visioning Workshop Summary Report

Date: August 14, 2007
Time: 6 – 8:30 pm
Location: Stanfield Elementary School
515 S. Stanfield Road, Stanfield

Handouts

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

Attendees (31):

Ed Barbour, Ed Borromeo, Gary Buchler, Kam Buchler, Matt Carpenter, Brenda Cluff, Merv Cluff, Glendon Collins, Linda Currie, Dick Garcia, Judy Garcia, Adam Gaub, Benny Goodman, Jackie Guthrie, Shirley Hartman, Becky Hendren, John Hendren, Billy Holt, Marsha Hughes, Ronald Hughes, Terri Kibler, Andy Lacy, Karen Lampkins, Rodolfo Lopez, Robert Meyer, Karl Montoya, Janeen Neal, Jason Neal, Sally Odette, Donald Paunil, Abe Walls

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:

- If you do not handle the flooding issues nothing else can happen
- They are a good start; need more specifics
- Sounds good; how long it will take and implement them is an issue
- The impression of the county is very poor
- Flooding problems south of I-8 is a real concern; concern about a lack of attention to this issue; Midway Road becomes a river and needs to be fixed

- Education is an important theme
- To accomplish the themes there must be the political will
- There needs to be more of these types of meetings to focus on development issues so maybe we can address these issues
- I want to clean up the image or look of the area; it gets bad fast; trash on the highways, etc.
- Open space, wildlife is important
- Preservation of agriculture
- Arterial access by farmers
- I-8 – need a parallel access and frontage roads; this area will develop
- It is important that the county work together; residents need to be able to plan our own destiny but it must be cloaked in reality
- Roadway improvements – this area needs better access to get from here to Casa Grande and I-10; otherwise there will be a growing bottleneck
- The county’s high crime rate and high percentage of teen pregnancies is a concern
- The themes are great and are possible if public involvement occurs
- Sounds good – I am concerned about implementation meaning more taxes and more government restrictions
- Encourage more private companies that will bring more revenues to the county and more support for education
- Good first step – I want to make a difference; need to pull our resources together so we don’t get run over
- State Trust lands need to be identified for potential protection; those with natural resource values should be protected
- The county needs a good blend between business and private property rights
- Goals must be implementable and practical
- Sustainability is huge
- Infrastructure as a whole must be addressed; water sustainability is key
- Regional transit

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

- We would have the ability to ride our horses throughout the county; we would have equestrian access to the Gila River and to Maricopa County trails
- We would utilize our open spaces more effectively by having a continuous trail and pathways system
- We would have less two-story homes and more basement homes
- There would be recreational areas and appropriate places for ATVs and other active recreational uses
- There would be community centers with residential areas that are closer together and as you move away from the core the density is reduced; larger open spaces would be preserved at the periphery providing buffers of open space that separate communities

- Many different types and sizes of parks would be developed
- Hillside and washes would be preserved
- Pinal County has created a large regional park similar to South Mountain Park in Phoenix
- Development is controlled and there is a restriction on small lot development
- The rural atmosphere is promoted

Sense of Community

- We have total community involvement activities and festivals that allow neighbors to know neighbors (e.g., National Night Out)
- We have promoted and blended our heritage and the arts by teaching and sharing skills with neighbors
- We provide arts and cultural activities throughout the county and have developed strong cultural centers
- We have developed ceremonial centers where meetings can be held; these range from very affordable to luxurious spaces
- We have been able to keep things local and have protected the uniqueness of Pinal County
- There is a better coordination between the various levels of government; the communities and county work closely together in a very structured way

Economic Sustainability

- Pinal has a lot of small companies that limit residents' needs to travel to Phoenix or Tucson to meet their needs
- There are no large companies
- Pinal has created a variety of job opportunities so residents can stay in the area for work
- Companies are scattered throughout Pinal County in small buildings and complexes
- Pinal has developed a research park similar to the ASU Research Park in Tempe; it is self-contained with a lot of open space and terrific companies offering high pay, skilled jobs located within the campus
- Pinal has kept taxes low because new growth pays its way and the tax structure is equitable
- Pinal does not support absentee landowners with local taxes; they pay their own way

Quality Education Opportunities

- Educational standards are high so that Pinal County children can compete effectively in the Global marketplace
- Teachers are excellent
- Pinal has training opportunities for companies and residents
- Pinal has a four-year university as vocational schools
- Schools in Pinal County are safe for our children
- Pinal County has met the national standards for educational excellence which is much higher than Arizona standards
- Students have opportunities for internships with local companies and become so embedded in local companies that they stay
- The technology available to students in local schools is outstanding. Pinal County schools offer students unique, technology opportunities at a very early age

- Central Arizona College has expanded four-year university curriculum and is accessible throughout the county; it is affordable and accessible for all students

Mobility and Connectivity

- Pinal has developed a comprehensive secondary roadway system
- Pinal County comprehensively plans and develops all transportation prior to growth occurring
- Pinal has expanded Montgomery Road to I-10 to a four lane road
- Pinal County and the Tribes have excellent working relationships and transportation solutions have been identified that are mutually acceptable
- Pinal County residents have changed the way they live and are not so automobile dependent
- Pinal County's planning has allowed the residents to make a shift in lifestyles away from the automobile
- Roads are built large enough to meet the future county needs and include capacity to support transit, pathways, and other multi-modes
- Pinal has reserved the necessary right-of-way for future roads to support multimodal options
- Pinal has established good truck routes that do not impact residents
- Pinal is better connected internationally
- Major transportation corridors have been established that allow people to bypass Phoenix and Tucson if desired
- Pinal has regional reliever airport that is a public/private development offering general and commercial aviation
- High speed rail has been developed between Phoenix and Tucson with stops in Pinal County and connecting communities in the county
- The irrigation districts right-of-way has been used to develop a comprehensive trail system throughout the county and connects all communities
- Farm roads have been maintained

Environmental Stewardship

- Pinal has kept federal lands public (e.g., Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service)
- The Pinal Comprehensive Plan was key in thinking about Arizona State Trust lands differently and ensuring that preservation options are valued by the State Land Department
- Tribal lands within the area are thought of differently and are an integral component to making Pinal County unique
- All flooding issues have been dealt with effectively (sooner rather than later)
- Pinal County is the recognized leader in conservation practices such as water sustainability
- Pinal is the national model for green building, mountain protection, solar energy, and water sustainability
- Water conservation in Pinal is the model for the rest of the state
- Green building practices are encouraged and incentives provided (i.e., a reward system)
- All residents capture their water and use it appropriately so it is not wasted
- Cities and the county work together for the smart use of resources

- Pinal County has instituted a county-wide recycling program and we make it easy for people to recycle
- Pinal has implemented a county-wide fire protection program
- Pinal has a good hospital and quality healthcare is available for all

Other Issues Discussed:

Flooding Issue south of I-8

- People in the area are stranded when the area floods
- Need to clean out the growth (trees, shrubs, etc.) in Green Wash and the Santa Cruz River
- Green Wash floods and strands quite a few people in this area (approximately 40 people impacted)
- Culverts would help; but a bridge is needed
- The problem is that water is diverted from the Santa Cruz River into the Green Wash and it cannot handle the diverted water
- The wash expands to approximately 70 feet wide
- The water builds up behind the CAP
- The flooding issue dates back to as early as 1993
- It was stated that Green Wash was owned by Pinal County
- The wash crosses Russell, Montgomery and Midway Roads

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

- Vacant lots cleared of debris and weeds. Grass trimmed. Trash along roads cleaned. Fewer dirt roads; more paved roads with easy access. Parks with containment systems for trash, fire, and water. Controlled water movement due to heavy rains locally and elsewhere. Hiking, biking, horse riding trails, and campgrounds.
- Rural atmosphere very necessary
- Large parks, large desert expanses with communities that have “breathing room.” Not backing into neighbor’s window or wall.
- Preservation of hillsides, major washes. Creation of a regional park, i.e., smart park).
- We have basics to start with: State Trust land, BLM, wilderness areas (Tabletop). Our desert should remain the same!
- There would still be open spaces and places in the form of big grassy parks. There would still be farms and agriculture mixed between the houses and no tall buildings.
- Continuing as a horse property and farming/ranching county. Wildlife corridors and natural recreational areas. People of this county value their personal freedoms.
- Keep the Middle Gila Canyon area northeast of Florence in public ownership and used for public recreation in ways that sustain the landscapes, wildlife, and rural values.

- Pick up trash. Pride. Clean roadsides on Interstate and state roads. Low lighting on the town, so we could enjoy mountain views. Hiking trails, biking trails, walking, etc. More view f_____.
- I'd like to think we would still be able to have places where you can see the mountains and have the spaces where you can take your family to hike, hunt—just be able to enjoy the habitat. No highrise buildings to block the views.
- Open spaces and places without looking desolate. Consolidate and localize business, residential, recreational, entertainment. Open space areas between homes.
- Allowed development where wanted. Have areas that are either public or private to give options.
- Preserved washes, preserved mountain views. No power lines above ground. No two-story homes, basements okay. Community trails, urban trails, equestrian trails, large grassy parks, county-cross trails.
- Continuous trails, parkways, and preserves
- Open spaces would not look like or be fenced in areas, but be maintained to encourage family picnicking, camping, and wildlife conservation.
- A mixture of wildlife, open space, and community parks.

Sense of Community

- Areas that you would remember to look back at to reflect on the past
- Cultural centers providing activities, arts, music, history—all special to “their” area. Pride in the community.
- Community identity, entry monuments at cities and towns. Unique street scape, i.e., trees, street signs, intersection design in each community to identify one city from another. Percent for art to create cultural prosperity.
- Pinal County has a great working relationship with our Indian communities and cooperates in development of roadways, educational facilities, and cultural facilities.
- Would have “key areas” like Stanfield, Arizona, “Pinal County” where you go for meetings and education.
- We would continue to have small town events like Coolidge Cotton Days, etc., but possibly more or bigger events. Still have all the “little” towns, not one “giant city” like Phoenix has turned into.
- Each area uniting in the history, etc. (historic building and centers), culture, and lifestyles. Also, cultural, arts, and medical facilities, centrally located.
- Community centers where population is concentrated that are surrounded by open space recreation areas that are managed as “natural resource enforcement areas.”
- Friendly people, pride
- Still have the “small town” appeal of community activities to keep everyone connected—county-wide activities, meeting spaces
- Uniqueness, something that distinguishes us as Pinal County people. Familiarity between us and _____ us. Be distinct _____.
- Pride of seeing historic culture focused on for many events, look, ongoing development style, etc.
- Strong, good looking, active downtown areas, community centers, wedding and ceremony centers, charity events, with parks (public and private), park areas with picnic benches, BBQs at mountains and trailsides.

- You would have the different heritages that we have now. Each community should preserve its roots and heritage.
- Individual communities must be allowed to develop their own growth plan. The County should proactively encourage inter-town meetings to maintain city uniqueness and yet develop county-wide themes, i.e., fairgrounds.
- A thrilling county of clusters of areas that will bring certain identification to each and make Pinal unique.
- Pinal County has a great working relationship with our Indian communities and cooperates in development of roadways, educational facilities, and cultural facilities.

Economic Sustainability

- Educational facilities providing a workforce appropriate for the jobs. Keeping our workforce in the area where they reside.
- A variety of job options, where future generations could stay in Pinal County and prosper.
- Communities working with government, economic sustainability, excellent employment
- Where you don't have to drive to a place, Phoenix, to get a good job. Although Pinal doesn't have to turn into a "downtown," good jobs can be in small, scattered buildings.
- Providing and expanding education and jobs that promote a unique vital lifestyle.
- Increase jobs in Pinal County. Don't let it become the bedroom of Maricopa and Pima Counties.
- Increased wages, allowing middle to upper income people to live and stay in the community.
- Large corporations to bring in or keep here the white collar job market. Need a quality hospital to keep people here in Pinal County for jobs and services.
- As a foundation (?), sustainability in the utilities (all). Arid southwest = scarcity. Dual pipe (recycle water) to save water and money and be a leader in the state/nation.
- Have desirable jobs for all. Have services and amenities for those who don't want _____ to work. Generate enough taxes to cover public service needs.
- Full range of low- to high-paying range of educational opportunities, more private schools, smaller class sizes in schools, large corporate and industrial "parks" (ranching and paying jobs in area). Private job placement assistance.
- Jobs keeping people home and in their community from minimum wage to high-tech jobs. Sustainability—providing for your own community.
- A wide variety of small (under 20 employees) companies in diverse industries and service areas, located in multiple "industrial parks" throughout the county.
- The Biotech jobs of agriculture science and bringing that type of industry to Pinal

Quality Educational Opportunities

- K-12—higher standards. Four-year university and vocational schools, teacher training—improved.
- Expansion of Central Arizona College's four-year programs with ASU, U of A, and NAU, or creation of Pinal Arizona University with focus on training to support economic sustainability.
- K-12 through four years of college right here in Pinal County
- Having enough teachers for all the schools #1. I don't think we necessarily need a university but possibly satellite locations or a tram/transport to a university.

- Schools, libraries, etc. becoming living community centers of education
- This goes along with keeping jobs in Pinal County. The population needs K-college opportunities with the County.
- Continued growth at the community college level. Add classes from four-year institutions for completion of degree without leaving community.
- Safe schools where children can be challenged academically, with quality programs, including the arts
- Technology, environmental, sciences geared schools → special programs for schools and leverage and teach these themes. I came from a school like that. Also, college in the area?
- Have quality of life to attract good educators for kids. Have a four-year college in the area, so don't have to send kids away.
- Encourage private institutions to come to Pinal County and set up quality technical, vocational, universities, elementary, and charter schools—also preschool. Private school opportunities keep kids in our communities instead of Chandler.
- After investing money and resources, fund high-end education. Good quality jobs, good educated citizens.
- CAC offering some BA/BS programs in addition to AS programs now available. Secondary school producing graduates that are on par educationally with their peers nationwide.
- Bringing a private or State university to the area

Mobility and Connectivity

- Subway, mass transit
- Just improving the air quality and still keeping the congestion under control
- Multi-modal options to include high-speed rail service from Tucson to Phoenix and connecting all Pinal communities. Trails, bus service, expanded freeways.
- We would have parallel access on I-8 (frontage roads).
- I don't think we want a metro bus system, because that would be too "urban." Maybe just wider roads and a couple more major corridors like the 79 for example.
- Transportation corridors expanded prior to development and mass transportation planned and implemented. Queen Creek and Maricopa need these now.
- Need/would have a public transportation system connecting residential areas with commercial/industrial areas. Also have a transportation system through the county for Phoenix – Tucson and national travelers.
- Trek (track?) traffic off I-10 to a designated new route. Add lanes to existing I-10 or put new Interstate-_____ in. More roads to and over I-10.
- I'd like to see a road put in somewhere on the west side of Casa Grande (Montgomery Road?) up to connect to I-10, so the traffic does not all flow up and down Pinal Avenue. Regional airport.
- Prepare now for the major roads and population boom. Build/plan the direct freeways, boulevards to a transportation _____ now. Con_____ a public transportation circuit. Designate business areas, community areas, industrial areas, and then build a circuit for that.
- More lanes available on heavy traffic roads. Light rail/mass transit at low cost.

- Larger roads and freeways than we need at the time of building can preserve the land used, to change to rail or whatever the future brings without taking more and more land from residents a little at a time costs less in the long run.
- Educated and good jobs here at home will take some commuters away, but education and transportation will be needed for changing people's attitudes, more corridors and road options.
- The foundation for connectivity already exists. Residential growth must be contained to _____ overcrowding. This will require some serious political will.
- High-speed rail from Phoenix to Tucson

Environmental Stewardship

- Conserve our water, reduced air pollution, low-level lighting
- Pinal County would be the national model for preservation (?) of hillsides, agriculture, green building, solar use, water conservation, off the grid power sources.
- We will not have farming as we know it today, so people will have to become more conscious of natural resources. Caretakers of our national resources.
- Pinal County needs a serious recycling program and to promote it. We cannot be "environmental stewards" when I can't even get a recycling bin from my trash service.
- Green building and rewards to encourage environmentally conscious development. Restrictions on lights, pavements, encouragement of natural desert areas.
- Keep Federal lands in public ownership. Define the State Trust lands that should be sold for residential and commercial/industrial uses, and those that should be retained for public recreation/environmental protection uses.
- See #1, Open Spaces. [Pick up trash. Pride. Clean roadsides on Interstate and state roads. Low lighting on the town, so we could enjoy mountain views. Hiking trails, biking trails, walking, etc. More view f_____.]
- We would still have agriculture in the area and plans involving changes to the "flood areas." BLM and public lands.
- Water is scarce—conserve. 1) Recycle, 2) ___face water (if you can get it), 3) limit groundwater, 4) recharge (?) dual pipes → flush toilets, landscape with recycled water
- Allow development to occur where wanted. Would have clean open areas away from development.
- Do not restrict landscaping! Nature will allow something to die if it is not supposed to be here. Less wattage street lights (think Flagstaff).
- Sustainability in energy, reducing energy needs, shorter commutes, solar. Using our water wiser, including wastewater.
- This seems to be a right-product of good planning in the areas listed above.
- A high area of green building, a leading county in leed (lead?) certification awards.