



Growing Smarter

Guiding Principles

for Arizona

Governor's Growing Smarter Oversight Council

September 2006

As Arizona prepares for its Centennial, the people of our state must assess and build upon the landmark Growing Smarter Acts to ensure that Arizona's built environments and diverse landscapes remain desirable now and for its next 100 years and beyond. **One thing is for certain: how we have grown in the past will not necessarily work in the future.** To ensure Arizona's desirability as a geography that combines incredible natural resources with a dynamic and energetic global economy, livability, sustainability, quality growth, must be integrated with our everyday lives, choices, and expectations for our future growth and development.

The Arizona Growing Smarter Oversight Council, volunteers appointed by the Governor, and key state agency representatives, have been given the responsibility of continuously assessing the successes and challenges of Arizona's planning and growth management legislation, the 1998 and 2000 Growing Smarter Acts. For the last five years, we have steadfastly worked for continuous improvement of the statutes. Just as the planning process is dynamic, so must the enabling legislation for planning and growth management provide the best direction and tool box to help communities and counties achieve the best results.

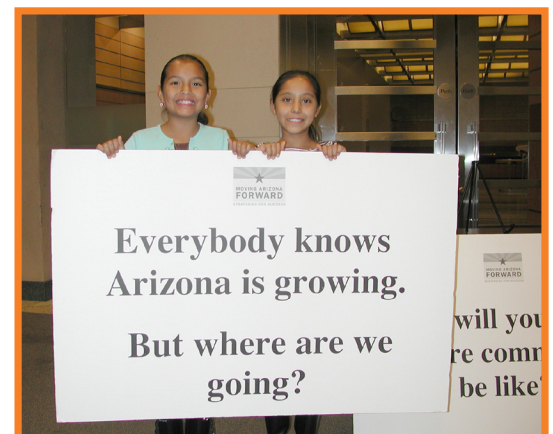
In 2004, Governor Janet Napolitano requested the Growing Smarter Oversight Council initiate a statewide conversation toward a vision for Arizona, and to develop a set of Guiding Principles to help Arizona not just grow, but reach for the next level in developing quality growth. It has been appropriate that this dialogue begin at the same time we prepare to celebrate Arizona's Centennial anniversary. Once adopted, these Guiding Principles will assist Arizona, its agencies, local communities and regions by establishing a framework to:

1. Coordinate the activities of state agencies to enhance quality growth throughout Arizona in collaboration with the efforts of local communities;
2. Incorporate into other statewide plans, such as the Commerce and Economic Development Commission's 10-year Economic Strategy;
3. Guide future updates of local government general and comprehensive land use plans;
4. Highlight best management practices from around the state;
5. Develop performance criteria for state and local decision-makers to assess whether state and local land use planning goals are being accomplished.

The Council, with the able assistance of the Community Planning Office at the Arizona Department of Commerce, held 18 Listening Sessions around the state, from Page to Nogales and Show Low to Yuma. We asked three basic questions:

- Everybody knows Arizona is growing. But where are we going?
- What will your ideal future community be like?
- How will we know when we get there?

Over 600 people across the state participated in the Listening Sessions which resulted in thousands of valuable ideas. We heard a lot. Each listening session was different with comments and thoughts unique to that area of Arizona.



But there was a high degree of commonality as well. So where was that agreement?

- **Water** — *developing reliable information for all areas of the state and incorporating long-term available assured supplies in all future planning efforts.*
- **Transportation** — *ensuring efficient, effective transportation systems and links both locally and regionally simultaneous with future development.*
- **Housing** — *providing an array of workforce and affordable housing choices to assure that people can live in the same community where they work.*
- **Community Character** — *preserving a sense of place and distinctive identities.*
- **Education** — *assuring quality schools, education and workforce development opportunities to prepare for global competition.*
- **Economic Development** — *pursuing stable, diverse economies statewide and preserving traditional economic sectors, such as agriculture, while moving into the global knowledge economy.*
- **Local Authority** — *providing cities and counties the powers and means to manage new development, especially giving counties an array of statutorily authorized powers to manage growth, including subdivisions and lot splits.*
- **Energy** — *making the necessary investments and providing incentives in reliable energy supplies and alternative energy sources.*

To test the results from the Listening Sessions and ensure that they were representative of attitudes in the state, we commissioned a random sample telephone survey (sample size 700). The survey data both validated the type of responses we received at the Listening Sessions and gave us additional feedback on Arizonan's thoughts and desires on growth related issues.

Based on our knowledge gained from over five years of work, the listening session results, the survey, and much deliberation, the Council crafted a draft proposal of Guiding Principles and recommendations. The proposed Guiding Principles were publicly distributed and further reviewed over a several month timeframe. Additional public input has helped the Council accomplish putting forth the following Growing Smarter Guiding Principles.

The Growing Smarter Guiding Principles are organized in 6 major categories.

Responsibility and Accountability ★ **Preservation of Community Character**
Stewardship ★ **Opportunity** ★ **Infrastructure** ★ **Economic Development**

The Principles are derived from the Growing Smarter Acts, and the following basic assumptions:

- Arizonans value their quality of life and recognize its importance to our current and future economic success.
- Growth patterns and urban form have long-term social, environmental and economic consequences.
- Free market forces and individual choices will affect growth.
- Solutions to growth-related challenges need to be flexible and respectful of individual and property rights and the uniqueness of our communities.
- Looking well into the future, up to 50 to 100 years, will highlight key issues and inform Arizona’s vision of how we want to grow.
- Arizonans prefer tools, authority, and resources that empower people to make better decisions at the local level.
- Tribal governments play an increasingly important role in community development, and they are a key part of the state’s economic future.
- Arizonans recognize that good planning at the local, regional, and state levels can return higher economic, social and environmental dividends.
- Arizonans have a responsibility to participate in this state’s governance and planning.
- Growing Smarter is about creating and sustaining healthy landscapes, livable communities and vibrant economies.

Each category contains three components:

- *Guiding Principles*
- *Observations from Public Input*
- *Recommendations to Facilitate Implementation*

The Guiding Principles are the foundation for a vision for managing Arizona’s rapid growth and long term planning for our next 100 years. Collectively, they light the path toward an Arizona that works together, that engages its diverse citizenry, that builds great livable communities on a human scale, that grows and prospers, and that embraces the many natural landscapes that called us here in the first place.

Each set of Guiding Principles is followed by Observations the Council made on the public input from Arizona residents on key topics covered by the Principle. The entirety of the public comments we received is available as an Appendix to this report.

Finally, each set of Guiding Principles includes one or more Recommendations for immediate action toward implementation of the Principles. It should be noted that the recommendations are intended to initiate first steps and are not exhaustive work programs that cover every observation. Rather they represent the Council’s considered judgment on some key items to direct Arizona toward success in achieving a common vision, recognizing the diversity of our people, our communities and our landscapes.

Arizona is going to grow. That’s the easy part. Whether we grow smarter is up to us. If we can harness our collective energy, demonstrate our power to think and our will to act for the long term and embrace the concepts embodied in these Guiding Principles, we will prosper as a people, we will enhance the beauty of the state, and we will collectively leave a legacy for the next generations of Arizona in our next 100 years.

Guiding Principles

State and local government officials should embrace the responsibility for guiding local communities toward beneficial long-term growth and development that recognizes the desires and expectations of local residents and property owners, but transcends narrow or immediate interests and seeks the broadest possible community benefit.

Local public officials, property owners (private and public, including state and federal land managers), and other community leaders should work collaboratively to establish, coordinate, communicate, and implement local planning and land use decisions. Local public officials should also facilitate compliance with and enforcement of local planning and land use decisions.

Regional partnerships involving appropriate local, state, federal, and tribal representatives should encourage collaboration on local planning and land use decisions, share revenues as appropriate, and work together to address common concerns to build strong local communities, strong regions, and a strong Arizona. Planning processes should engage people in issues, encourage cooperation in addressing local and regional issues, and facilitate the implementation of a consensus community vision.

State laws, procedures, expertise, resources, and actions should seek to reinforce local planning efforts.

Observations from Public Input

Local Authority

- ★ Local governments need more authority and a greater array of tools available at local option with local control.
- ★ In recognition that fast-paced growth and development is increasingly occurring in unincorporated areas, county governments need tools similar to those of cities to more effectively manage such growth.

Planning

- ★ Increased long-term planning would facilitate greater recognition of the impacts and requirements of future growth and development.
- ★ Current planning requirements are largely unknown to many residents.
- ★ Some citizens favor greater emphasis on mixed-use development and higher densities.
- ★ Planning should reflect the people living within the physical environment, including their diverse needs, desires, character, and history.
- ★ All future planning should recognize the roles and responsibilities of tribes as local governments, while respecting tribal sovereignty, and foster open dialogue among the tribes, state agencies, local authorities, and private development interests, especially in areas of common interest, like transportation, flood control, and others.

Governance

- ★ Arizonans would like their elected leaders to be thoughtful and provide vision, but feel that they often fail to exhibit sufficient leadership or courage.

Public Participation

- ★ The public wants (and expects) the opportunity to be involved in important decisions about their future, but is often not sure how to be involved (or if it matters).
- ★ Public hearings, while mandated, are often an ineffective method of gathering public input,

so creative and respectful ways are needed to facilitate public participation, especially given the large number of new residents.

Regional

- ★ Some of the most crucial components of future local plans, as identified by the public, are regional issues like water and transportation.
- ★ Arizona has benefited from regional cooperation in critical areas, like the Central Arizona Project, and such cooperation could serve as a model for other planning issues and encourage greater collaboration between city and county governments.

State's Role and Responsibilities

- ★ The State should support local efforts – with resources and tools – and state agencies should be responsive to local plans.
- ★ It is the State's responsibility to protect individual rights.
- ★ State agencies should coordinate their efforts to reinforce positive local planning.
- ★ State agencies should practice design solutions that recognize the natural environment and community context in which they operate.
- ★ State agencies should exercise appropriate stewardship of our state's natural environment.
- ★ State agencies should foster constructive collaboration among state and local government agencies as well as private interests, while recognizing the different missions and obligations of each.

Tax System

- ★ Tax revenues and tax distribution formulas should not overly influence planning decisions.

Urban / Rural

- ★ The urbanization of smaller cities and the spillover effects of larger urban cities is a concern to local residents because of the resulting changes in the character of their communities.

Recommendations to Facilitate Implementation

- ◆ Strengthen the State’s capability to provide valuable guidance and assistance to local governments on managing growth and development, especially in areas experiencing rapid conversion from rural to urban or suburban form. The State should also compile information related to “best practices” in local planning activities, including balancing land use, providing adequate and timely infrastructure, and cost of development planning.
- ◆ Modernize and harmonize state law so that county governments are fully authorized and empowered to manage and enforce land use plans and development in the unincorporated areas of Arizona similar to the authorities of cities within incorporated areas. For example, counties should have the authority to meaningfully manage lots splits.
- ◆ Demonstrate state agency leadership in encouraging comprehensive growth planning by coordinating their respective efforts, acting to reinforce local planning decisions, rewarding regional cooperation, and recognizing quality planning efforts through grants and incentives, similar to programs in other states.
- ◆ Appoint a state and local task force to examine future growth and development in the three county region of Maricopa, Pima, and Pinal Counties, as an example of regional cooperation and planning. This region is projected to be one of the four western “megapolitan” areas with populations in excess of 10 million people. The task force should examine potential tools necessary to manage this type of growth, including but not limited to mechanisms to finance infrastructure in advance of development, to facilitate job corridor development, and land preservation and taxation policies. Recommendations should be made on any necessary changes in state law or policy and on any actions that should be take by state or local agencies and report its findings to the Governor, the Legislature, and local governing boards.
- ◆ Examine the fiscal structure of cities and towns, their reliance on local sales tax collections, and how that reliance affects planning and development decisions.

Preservation of Community Character

Guiding Principles

Future local plans should be based on a “vision” of each community’s future that incorporates citizens’ input and reflects the community’s desires within a regional context.

Strengthening and preserving each community’s culture and history are important to local residents and should be important considerations in all future local planning discussions and decisions.

The public and private sector should partner to preserve and/or conserve special places and provide reasonable access to them.

Communities of differing character and heritage define our state; and future state and local plans and investments should conserve and maintain each local community’s “sense of place” and promote distinct community identities.

Access to undeveloped, public, natural areas is critical to maintaining the character and identity of Arizona and its many differing geographic areas and should be included in all future development plans.

The myriad of consequences, both short-term and long-term, some unintended, resulting from zoning and density decisions must be thoroughly and carefully evaluated as a part of the local planning review process for such decisions.

Preservation of Community Character

Observations from Public Input

Community Character and Identity

- ★ Residents would like to see communities around the state preserve their distinctive identity.
- ★ Preserving a sense of community character is an important component of future development.
- ★ Local plans and land use designs should reflect the character, diversity, interests, and expectations of current residents and attempt to anticipate the needs of future residents.
- ★ Planning must address the unique aspects of local communities, including the natural landscape, the built environment, as well as the character diversity, interests, and expectations of residents.

Culture, Diversity and Historic Preservation

- ★ Future local plans should recognize, protect and appreciate local cultural character and history.
- ★ A diverse population including people of different ages, economic statuses, and cultural backgrounds enhance and strengthen local communities.

Urban Open Spaces

- ★ Developed open spaces, such as parks, greenbelts, and access points to surrounding public open areas are important community amenities, and, when well designed, can contribute to overall public health.
- ★ Parks and other open spaces in urban areas should be connected by greenbelts or trails.

Growth

- ★ New development should compliment and enhance the existing character and identity of existing communities.
- ★ Future growth and how it is managed will determine the quality of life in local communities and all of Arizona.
- ★ Zoning decisions, especially those related to density, have a wide variety of growth and development consequences, many of which are unanticipated at the time such decisions are made.

Recommendations to Facilitate Implementation

- ◆ Commission a comprehensive inventory of the natural, cultural, and historic assets of Arizona, which make Arizona unique, to be undertaken by the State, in partnership with regional, local, and tribal agencies and interested stakeholders. Such an inventory would be a blueprint to assist local, regional, state, and tribal agencies and interested stakeholders to conserve assets that define Arizona.
- ◆ Assess the funding tools available to preserve and protect Arizona’s natural, cultural, and historic assets, such as the Arizona Heritage Fund.
- ◆ Amend the Growing Smarter law to require general and comprehensive plans to include a statement of the community’s vision for its future, which is developed with active citizen participation.
- ◆ Amend the Growing Smarter law to include a “checklist” of planning issues that should be considered during the development of all future local plans, such as consideration of the inter-relationships among plan elements (environmental needs relative to proposed land uses), zoning and density choices, infrastructure requirements, open space preservation, and other key planning decisions.

Steewardship

Guiding Principles

Future planning should recognize that clean water and clean air are essential elements of public health and quality of life for Arizona residents, visitors, and future generations. These vital resources should be preserved and protected, and future land use and infrastructure planning should incorporate this recognition.

Natural open land and native wildlife have intrinsic value and are critical to maintaining the character, identity, and health of Arizona for residents, visitors, and future generations and should be accommodated in all future planning decisions.

Effective stewardship of natural areas is essential to preserve and protect their intrinsic character and beauty and should be integrated in all future plans.

Observations from Public Input

Air Quality

- ★ Preserving good air quality should be a component of future local plans.

Natural Resources, Wildlife, and Conservation

- ★ Residents want to preserve Arizona's natural character, wildlife, and environmental assets, including open spaces and natural areas, as development occurs.
- ★ State agencies must recognize and incorporate wildlife needs when designing and operating both new and existing facilities.
- ★ Local planning needs to better recognize wildlife, its habitat (natural landscapes and corridors), and accessible open spaces for active recreation, as having important economic value, especially for tourism and community quality of life, and needs to emphasize development to preserve and enhance these opportunities.

Open Space and Natural Areas

- ★ Open spaces between communities should be preserved.
- ★ Open spaces and effective design in communities can promote public and environmental health and can also play a role in reducing the urban heat island effect.
- ★ Specific financial mechanisms must be developed to facilitate the purchase or preservation of critical open space and such mechanisms must be structured to meet their specific intended purposes, especially preserving natural open spaces.
- ★ Mechanisms should be developed and implemented to compensate both public and private landowners for the value of land that is to be preserved as open space.

State Trust Land

- ★ State and local agencies should work together to plan for the development of State Trust Lands, including the conservation of some state lands as open space, consistent with local planning objectives and the mission of the Trust to earn revenue.
- ★ Appropriate tools, including financing mechanisms, should be developed to facilitate the preservation of some State Trust Lands as open space.

Sustainability

- ★ Energy and water conservation, waste reduction, alternative land use patterns, and green development / infrastructure are important considerations for local, regional, and state planning efforts.
- ★ Walkable communities, alternative transportation choices, open spaces and recreational opportunities can facilitate active and healthy community lifestyles.

Water

- ★ More reliable, independent information and data on existing groundwater and surface water supplies is needed, especially outside the existing Active Management Areas.
- ★ Local governments (especially counties) need the authority to use the long-term availability of water as a criterion for permitting or prohibiting new development.
- ★ Local community and land use planning should recognize and reflect the amount of available good, quality water and incorporate consumption levels that are sustainable over the long term.
- ★ Some have questioned the adequacy of the Ground Water Management Act to address the needs of future growth.

Recommendations to Facilitate Implementation

- ◆ Increase State efforts to develop reliable, independent, objective, information regarding the available supply of water for each hydrologic region of Arizona.
- ◆ Assure that the availability of clean, safe water is one of the criteria for evaluating all future land use and development plans in all areas of Arizona.
- ◆ Create the tools necessary for state and local agencies to manage and balance the current and future use of water for all municipal, industrial, commercial, agricultural, and natural purposes in all areas of Arizona.
- ◆ Work to conserve the open spaces separating Arizona's communities that define much of the character of Arizona. Portions of these open areas, especially key parcels of State Trust Lands and federal lands, should be conserved even as Arizona continues to grow and prosper. Appropriate compensation mechanisms are needed to facilitate such conservation.

Guiding Principles

Future planning and development should assure the availability of a range of choices in housing, employment, education, and other essential services. Safe, secure circumstances to enjoy these opportunities are a fundamental requirement of all future planning.

Future local plans should consider and incorporate the need for school sites and facilities in conjunction with other development activity.

Observations from Public Input

Crime and Safety

- ★ Safe communities with low crime rates are essential aspects of successful future growth and development.
- ★ Forest health based economic development can help mitigate the risks of forest fires.

Education

- ★ Quality schools and educational opportunities that prepare students and workers for global competition should be a priority in future development planning.

Healthcare

- ★ Adequate, available, affordable health care is a critical issue for Arizonans, especially those residing outside the larger metropolitan areas.

Housing

- ★ An array of housing choices, including both affordable and workforce housing, within communities assures that people can live and work in the same community.
- ★ Variety in housing types helps assure diversity in the residents and the character of new and established communities.
- ★ Effective community and land use planning must balance the trade-off between small and larger lot sizes and the consequent density, affordability, and resource utilization issues.

Recommendations to Facilitate Implementation

- ◆ Develop information and expertise on a variety of approaches and practices to facilitate local communities' growth and development efforts to provide local residents a range of opportunities in housing, employment, education, and other essential services.



Infrastructure

Guiding Principles

M *meeting each community's long-range needs for adequate essential infrastructure such as water, sewer, power, communications, and transportation systems as well as public facilities, in a timely and fiscally responsible manner should be an essential objective of all future plans.*

Future land use plans and community infrastructure plans should be integrated and implementation of such plans coordinated.

Future local planning efforts should encourage public and private organizations, working cooperatively, to efficiently and effectively develop and use community infrastructure and to develop methodologies that provide for the cost of this essential infrastructure to be borne equitably by all beneficiaries.

Observations from Public Input

Sustainable Energy

- ★ Future community design, development and construction should increase energy efficiency.
- ★ Reliance on traditional energy sources can be reduced through increased conservation, greater efficiency, and expanded development of renewable energy sources and should be encouraged with appropriate incentives.

which recognize the natural environment and community context in which they operate. Infrastructure planning and land use planning are inextricably intertwined. Future planning should ensure that community infrastructure, including transportation systems, expands as new development occurs.

- ★ State transportation planning and development should be consistent in purpose and design with local planning objectives.

Transportation, Utilities, and Communication Infrastructure

- ★ Effective, efficient, integrated transportation systems are essential to successful future growth and development and should incorporate context sensitive design solutions,

Water

- ★ Adequate, quality future water supplies (including delivery and treatment systems) should be a prerequisite to future development.

Recommendations to Facilitate Implementation

- ◆ Ensure that state and regional planning agencies work with local communities to fully understand the regional traffic congestion impacts of future, proposed development on both local transportation systems as well as major inter-regional systems. Future local plans should recognize that efficient, effective, and reliable transportation for people and products is essential for economic vitality and quality of life.
- ◆ Adopt local government policies to ensure that residents of newly developed areas can reasonably expect that essential infrastructure, particularly transportation links, both locally and regionally, will be completed within five years.
- ◆ Create appropriate financing mechanisms to allow the development of critical infrastructure, especially transportation, in areas where future development is targeted.
- ◆ Plan at the State level, working with private energy providers, to ensure that reliable energy supplies, especially from sustainable energy sources, will be available to meet to Arizona's future needs. The State, working with private energy providers, should facilitate the necessary investments to ensure that future energy needs are met.
- ◆ Amend the Growing Smarter law to require general and comprehensive plans to include policies that encourage and reward energy efficiency and greater reliance on sustainable energy sources in, at a minimum, construction standards and community development patterns.

Guiding Principles

Future planning should promote a broad spectrum of business and employment that serve diverse community needs and encourage the personal and financial growth and development of existing residents as part of a healthy statewide economy.

Local, state and tribal leaders should work together to strengthen local and regional opportunities for business growth and diverse economic development.

Future planning should encourage regional economic and fiscal cooperation to be more effective in a climate of increasing global competition.

Economic development and vitality should be an integral goal of future local planning activities.



Observations from Public Input

Economic Diversity

- ★ Future local plans should recognize the importance of a stable, diverse local economy, especially in smaller communities.
- ★ While moving toward a knowledge-based economy, future local planning should accommodate the preservation of traditional economic sectors, such as agriculture, mining, forestry, local businesses, tourism, and recreation.
- ★ The development of sustainable energy supplies, such as those resulting from constructive forest management, can benefit some Arizona communities.
- ★ Future local plans should seek to balance the availability of national retailers, businesses, and employers, while encouraging local entrepreneurship and locally owned businesses.
- ★ Encouraging innovation and creativity are important objectives for future economic development efforts.

based economy should be a priority in future development planning. Opportunities for retraining and personal enrichment should also be emphasized.

- ★ Communities should plan for and encourage development that accommodates the needs of senior citizens, including access to housing, health care, transportation, and community services.
- ★ Future local development should encourage the development of employment, housing, and services for younger workers and families.

Growth

- ★ Appropriate growth is different and relative to each community’s character, natural environment, infrastructure capacity, expectations, and regional circumstances.
- ★ While larger urban areas confront the challenges of effectively managing rapid growth, many smaller communities seek to promote growth and economic development.

Education, Workforce Development, Youth, and Seniors

- ★ Quality schools and educational and training opportunities that prepare current and future workforce participants for the knowledge-

Tax System

- ★ An effective tax structure includes regional revenue sharing mechanisms and can be a valuable planning and economic development tool.

Recommendations to Facilitate Implementation

- ◆ Amend the Growing Smarter law to require general and comprehensive plans to include appropriate economic development components to reflect the importance of economic opportunities in future development.
- ◆ Amend the Growing Smarter law to require general and comprehensive plans to include an evaluation of the availability of employment and housing, within a regional context for current and future residents.
- ◆ Establish a state and local task force to consider tools, both financial and regulatory, that are needed to facilitate local communities reserving land designated for future employment sites and corridors.



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Information about the Growing Smarter Guiding Principles project is available on the Arizona Department of Commerce website at www.azcommerce.com.



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