



Compendium of Public Input

Payson's General Plan Update is designed to include public input throughout the plan development and adoption process. The Public Participation Plan exceeds the input opportunities required by state code. Public participation is the heart of the General Plan and is directly reflected in the Plan's vision, goals, and strategies. In addition to the interactive workshops designed to engage participants and maximize their input, the Town also issued a community survey to cast a wider net in engaging the public on a variety of issues including schools, town atmosphere and size, shopping, employment, recreation, transportation, among others.

In this compendium, we will highlight some of the topics, concerns, ideas and values that have emerged from the public input process to date. Additionally, this report will be disseminated at the Information Symposium in February. Public participation will continue in March to more closely explore the issues of land use, connectivity and open space, and then again in May to examine the recommended Plan including specific implementation strategies. The public is encouraged to use the Town's website for information on the Plan as well as giving individual input at any time during the process. Finally, the Planning Commission and Town Council will conduct public hearings on the draft Plan prior to Council's endorsement of the Plan which will then go to a public referendum in 2014 for voter approval.

Kick-Off Meeting

The public input process began in late October with a Kick-off meeting to orient participants to the Plan and the update process and then to gauge the top priorities and concerns that should factor in the plan update. Major priorities include:

- Economic Diversity & Development
- Employment
- Planned Growth Management
- Infrastructure Maintenance/ Advancement
- Sustainable Resources
- Educational Opportunities
- Town Atmosphere
- Parks and Open Space
- Tourism Destination
- Transportation Improvements

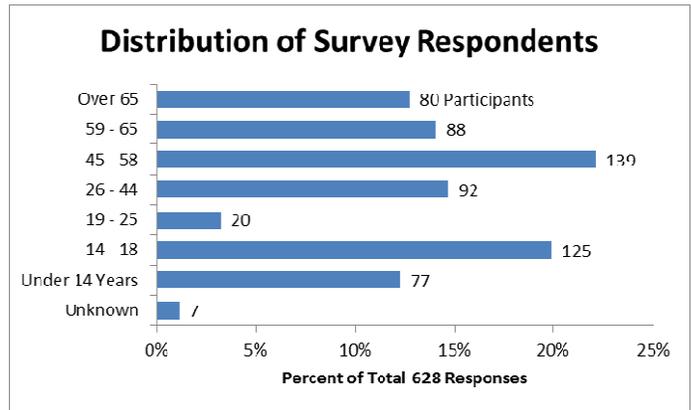
These topics expressed as major priorities have been further strengthened by additional public input as will be shown in this report. Major concerns include:

- Growth Management & Infrastructure Development
- Sustainable Infrastructure
- Aesthetics
- Vocational Training
- Recreational Youth Programming
- Transportation Connectivity/Efficiency
- Quality Employment
- Cost of Development
- Recreation Destination

It is worth noting that the concerns mirror the priorities very closely which is an important result of the Kick-off meeting and a pattern that is sustained in the subsequent Community Survey and the December Issues Workshop.

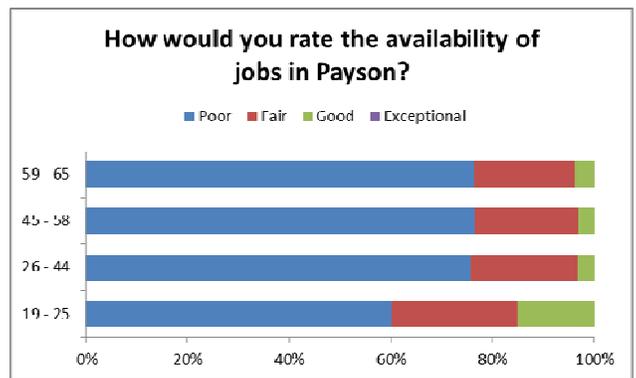
Community Survey

The community survey was posted to the Town’s website for the month of November. The schools participated and generated over 200 responses, and the senior center helped generate over 50 direct responses. A total of 628 qualified responses were submitted and have been analyzed for use in the Plan update. This response rate far exceeded expectations and is an excellent level of participation for a General Plan update. Even more impressive was the equity among age groups in the responses. The survey’s age cross-section very closely reflects Payson’s population demographic.

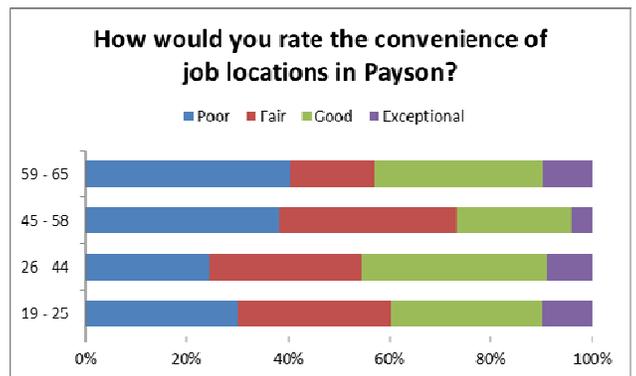


Employment

One of the strongest responses on the survey was regarding employment opportunities and pay levels available in or near Payson. There is widespread concern and dissatisfaction over the issue of jobs and pay. The citizens of Payson want to be able to work for a livable wage in or near town and not have to travel to Phoenix or elsewhere to maintain full employment at sufficient wage rates. As this graphic shows, most responses (over 90%) rate the availability of jobs as fair or poor. This is the primary issue that has emerged in the public input process and is closely tied to other issues such as tourism, infrastructure development and maintenance, vocational training, retail diversity, and university integration into the community.

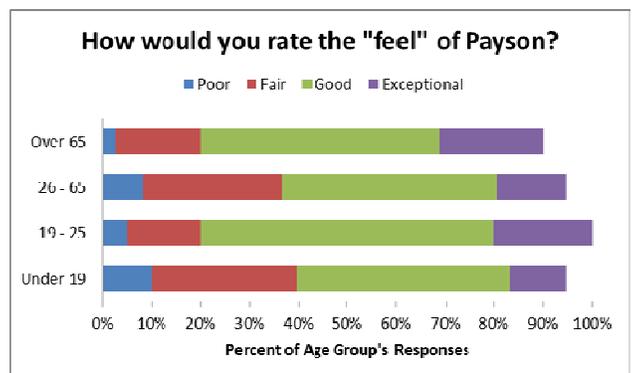


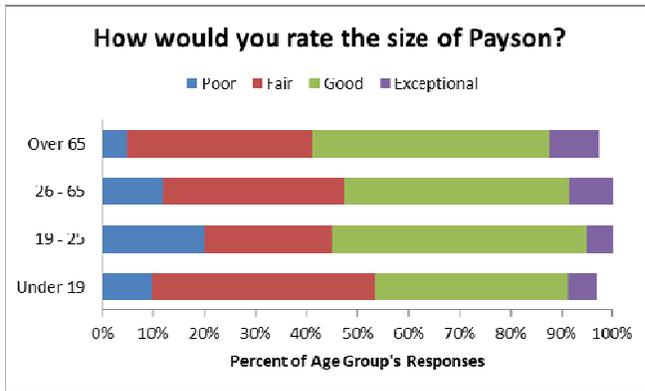
Job location responses emphasize the point that there is the perception, and reality, that most jobs are not located in the Payson area. There needs to be significant expansion and evolution of employment opportunities in the Payson market.



Town Atmosphere

On a more optimistic note, an equally strong positive response to the town’s “feel”, or atmosphere, was reported with well over 60% of respondents giving a good or exceptional rating. This response ties to the community’s desire for more employment opportunities as well as more recreational opportunities. It is evident that people love to live in Payson. Their ability to work and play in their community will only enhance their positive feelings toward the town.





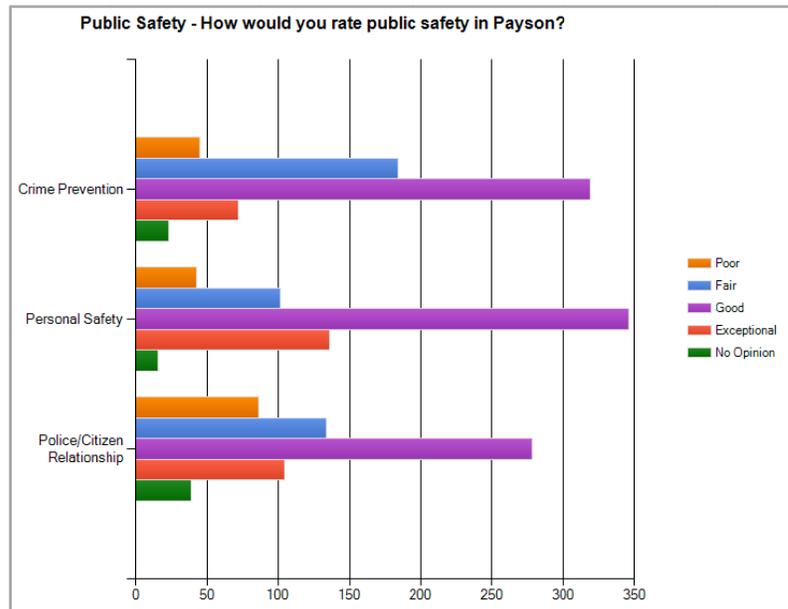
Similarly, most respondents are happy with the Town's size, but in the community meetings it is apparent that it's not the size of the town, it's the closeness of the residents, the "feel" as expressed above, the fabric of the community that citizens value. The size can fluctuate, even grow, as long as the sense of community isn't eroded. In fact, most of the fair and poor responses regarding town size are due to the lack of retail diversity, job opportunities, and "things to do" particularly

for youth. If the population of the town increases in a responsible manner, then it can be an opportunity to positively impact the local economy and diversity of recreational activities.

Public Safety

Another area of strength was public safety. A key to being a tight-knit community is being safe and feeling safe. While there is certainly room for improvement in the rankings, it is clear that the majority of respondents think the town is safe and rank it as good or exceptional.

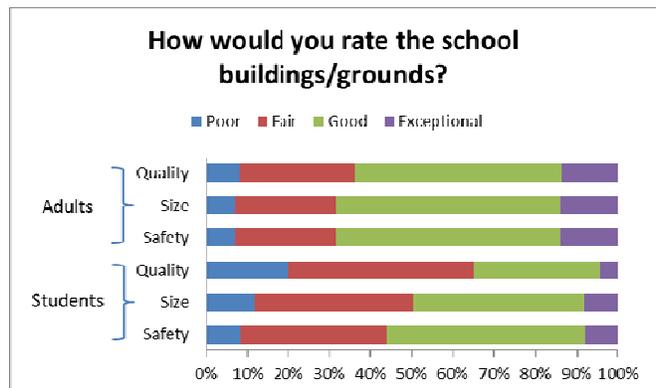
As with most communities, the youth are the least satisfied with the quality of service, particularly the police/citizen relationship. Crime prevention also seemed to lag behind actual safety and received a large poor rating.



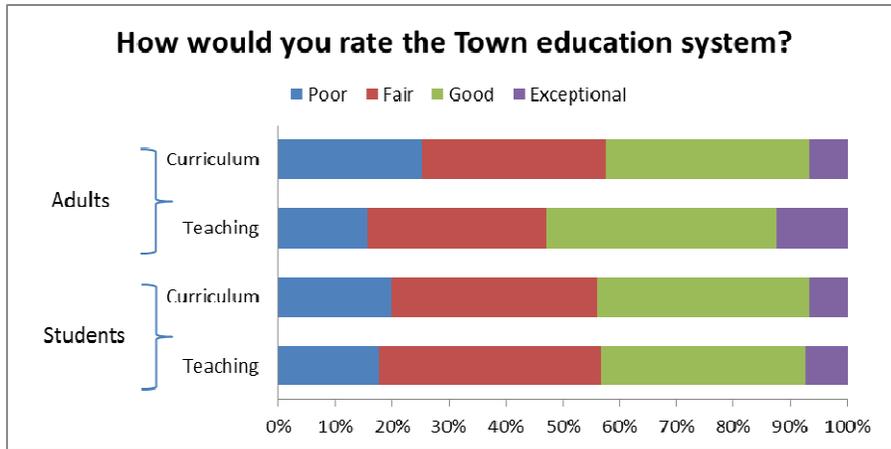
The relationship with citizens and improvements in crime prevention may both benefit with stronger police/school relations and a more visible community police presence. Adequate staffing of the police department is another critical element. The Town's fire and rescue services receive excellent public support and recognition.

Education

The school system also elicited a strong and mixed response and results were analyzed between students (the current users) and non-students. The differences between viewpoints is interesting and should be instructive to school officials. Parents, or non-students, are significantly happier with the quality of school buildings and grounds, school size, and safety. Safety is the issue that parents and students seem to agree on the most, but the parents are



more positive on safety than the children. It is clear that Payson schools are fundamentally in good shape and of good instructional quality. There is also room for continued improvement and opportunity, particularly in the area of post-secondary and vocational instruction.

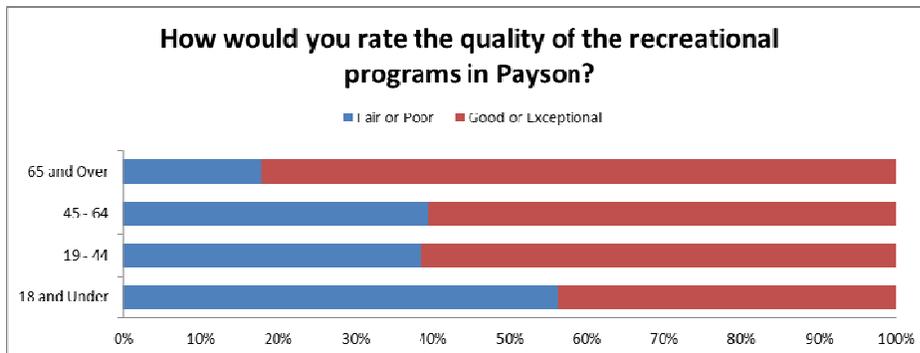


With regard to the educational system, we see a different trend with good or exceptional scores over 50 percent only for teaching and only from parent-aged adults. This response rate leaves room for significant improvement, particularly with the 19-25 age category who are the users most recently

graduated from the schools. High school students and recent graduates are the most dissatisfied groups. Student respondents and parent-aged adults are more satisfied, but still not overwhelmingly so. Students and parents seem to agree that the curriculum could use some improvement. The addition of vocational training opportunities would help in improving this rating and would also contribute to the community’s economic development goals.

Recreation

Recreational opportunities abound in Payson, and it is clear that the community takes pride in those amenities. More active recreational programming and facilities are desired though, particularly as it pertains to youth and attracting competitive tournaments. As seen below, over half of children rate the quality of programs as fair or poor, while seniors give a very positive rating (over 80%).

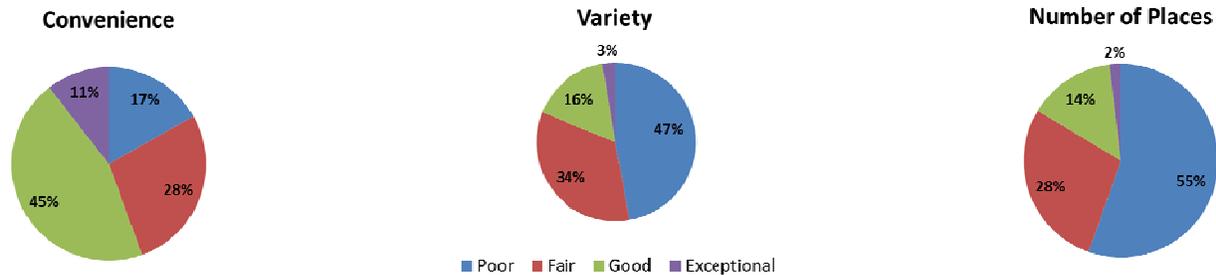


One viable form of economic development the Town can cultivate is recreational tourism, not just for its passive recreation amenities, but for active recreation tournaments such as softball or soccer. There is also

significant support for covering the arena so that more events can be held in inclement weather and also be sheltered from the sun. Facility improvements such as lighting existing athletic fields, developing new athletic fields, and covering the arena also increases the town’s ability to expand its recreational programming. Public input at the meetings has shown strong support for the Town to be a tourism destination, not a pass-through community. It is important to keep in mind that while recreational facilities and activities can significantly advance that goal, there are often significant capital and operational/maintenance costs associated with expanded programs and facilities.

Economic Development

The survey clearly demonstrates, and supports other public input, that employment opportunities need to improve in terms of quantity and quality. More jobs are needed along with more well-paying jobs. Career opportunities are in too short a supply and need to be expanded. Vocational training or other post-secondary education is one key to this expansion. Utilizing a university or other post-secondary educational facility (e.g., community college, vocational school) to expand educational and economic opportunities, among others, is another important key. The inclusion of the above mentioned recreational tournaments and events is another very viable and lucrative goal.



Retail diversity is lacking in Payson and this “shopping desert” symbolizes the need for a more diversified and self-sufficient economy. Residents like the town’s centralized location relative to Phoenix and Flagstaff, but they don’t want to have to leave town to procure goods or services. Payson citizens want to shop at home. They want their hard earned money to stay in the community. The town needs more stores and more of a variety of retail goods and services in order to have a more sustainable and robust economy.

Community Issues Workshop

This follow-up meeting in December reported the Kick-off meeting and survey results to the 70+ workshop participants. There were 12 work groups that participated in the exercise to hone in on the draft vision, identify the community’s top issues and opportunities and challenges. The input was intended to verify, solidify, and advance the previously received information. The results of the workshop are a stronger, more specifically tailored vision for the Town, and issues, principles and goals for the Plan which will be released for public comment at the February Information Symposium.

There was general consent on the draft vision that it was good, but needed to be more specific to Payson and include additional language to better capture the complexity and complexion of the community. Comments from the 12 groups include such things as,

- We like the vision statement. Payson isn’t perfect in any of these stated positive qualities but the vision statement gives us good general goals on how to get more of the good qualities we like and moved here for – add friendly?
- Too inoffensive, mom and apple pie, too simplistic, futuristic – include youth in the vision – are we retirement or tourist town – need to diversify – generosity and giving spirit of community – preservation of small town atmosphere
- A clean safe resilient community that encourage diverse opportunities to prosper and promotes managed growth – we liked friendly also
- Positive statement, but untrue today – vision ok – add aesthetics – clarify “prosper” – different for many – add “environmentally” – “renewable”, etc. – vision not very unique to Payson

The opportunities and challenges listed were equally diverse, but strongly correlate with the concerns and priorities, as well as the survey category results.

Opportunities

- Post-Secondary Education
- Economic Diversity/Development
 - Green Technology/Business
 - Telecommunications
- In-fill Development
- Water Supply
- Outdoor Recreation
- Transportation/Circulation Improvements

Additional comments included such statements as:

- A more diversified economy includes: outdoor recreation, tourism, convention center, covered arena, green business and in-fill development.
- Trees added – upgrade store fronts – upgrade Main Street for walkability
- Healthcare, access to better technology, education – healthcare-quality of life, transportation – link to valley & rest of state/mountain states.
- Costs?

Challenges

- Job Opportunities
- Infrastructure Maintenance
- Growth Management
- Town Center
- Transportation Network
- University Integration
- Retail Diversity
- Telecommunications

Additional comments included such statements as:

- Town incentives for business, lower impact fees, where is downtown, & future costs of college to town.
- University is not a negative or a challenge – will help solve for jobs, retail, growth, more exposure for local arts as a draw.
- University integration – double edged sword – has pros and cons – good for job opportunities, property values, but some fear the college atmosphere
- Impact fees too high, chase business away – incentives to draw business – dumpy look of 87 & Main Street – empty lots, eyesores – need more building inspections & fines.
- Overall goal of attracting and nurturing a diversified economy.
- Desirable – forest management – no earthquakes, tornados, hurricanes, mud slides, tsunamis, but.....fire is a major hazard.

Compendium Summary

The General Plan Update has utilized the public input process to gauge the most important issues, values, and goals as expressed by the community through the meetings and the community survey. The Plan Update will continue to use public input to ensure that the Plan remains true to the Town of Payson's citizenry. The Plan cannot be all things to all people, but it will accurately reflect the community's consensus vision, principles, and goals, and the Plan will lay out a specific set of actions to be accomplished over the next ten years in order to achieve its vision.

The planning process is a dynamic process that should be ongoing from plan to plan, and even in between plan updates. The public input opportunities designed as part of this General Plan Update are intended to be equally as vibrant, and create a foundation for Payson to use in other planning and public outreach efforts. The input received to date reflects the citizen's interest, passion, creativity, and love for their community and it will result in a strong General Plan for Payson.