

Draft Issues, Guiding Principles, and Goals (revised)

General Plan Vision Statement:

Payson is a vibrant recreation destination amidst the tall pines and cool waters of Arizona's Rim Country. Renowned for its western heritage and friendly people, the Town is a safe and sustainable community that embraces education, culture and economic prosperity through quality development.

Land Use Element

Guiding Principle: Enhance Payson's small-town atmosphere and economic development opportunities with strategic land use policies for new development and redevelopment areas.

Issues

- Land use policy needs to support diversified economic activity.
- Growth should be managed so that infill development can occur in under-utilized areas (e.g., half empty shopping centers, sprawling parking areas, other inefficient land uses).
- Integrate the university campus into the town's culture and desired land use pattern.
- Code enforcement needs to strengthen to better resolve ordinance violations.
- Zoning actions need to be uniform to reduce overly restrictive regulations, and to eliminate spot zoning.

Goals

- Adopt growth management policies to direct development spatially and aesthetically, particularly regarding infill development and anticipated new development.
- Incorporate green infrastructure throughout town including the growth areas.
- Create a "Main Street" or town center district.
- Improve design standards and enforcement, particularly along commercial corridors, to strengthen Payson's small-town character.
- Amend and promote zoning policies and procedures, including code enforcement, to better manage public expectations, maximize objectivity, and enable successful results.

Growth Area Element

Guiding Principle: Enact effective growth management policies and sustainable economic development.

Issues

- A large number of commercial vacancies contribute to a stagnant local economy.
- Economic and industrial diversity needs to improve significantly.
- Preserve the small-town character while improving economic activity levels.
- Improve the development process to be proactive instead of reactive.
- Increase the quality and quantity of affordable, workforce housing.

Goals

- Provide and implement a clear vision for the growth areas.
- Concentrate uses to promote infill development and preserve open space.
- Create a vibrant and diverse economy with appropriately scaled businesses.
- Modernize the land use regulatory process.
- Incorporate a variety of housing options in all developments with a mixed-use residential component.

Circulation/Transportation Element

Guiding Principle: Enhance the existing transportation infrastructure to increase connectivity, to improve alternative transportation, and to reduce traffic congestion.

Issues

- Transportation infrastructure is not consistent and needs to improve to reduce traffic congestion at peak times.
- The town's limited ability to affect change along state-owned roads inhibits their improvement.
- Beeline Highway traffic congestion is an increasing concern.
- Improve neighborhood pedestrian safety.

Goals

- Support the State's development of an alternate route to alleviate traffic congestion and infrastructure demands.
- Design and implement a gateway vision that encourages pass-through traffic to visit.
- Encourage non-motorized movement around town.
- Create a more unified look and feel to state-owned commercial corridors.
- Provide transit service in town.
- Increase pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- Implement the 2007 Payson Airport Master Plan in cooperation with the regional airport authority.
- Implement 2011 Payson Transportation Study recommendations.

Parks, Trails, and Open Space Element

Guiding Principle: Expand active and passive recreational opportunities through programmatic and facility improvements.

Issues

- Establish adequate funding for parks and recreation development and maintenance to preserve or enhance existing levels of service.
- Prioritizing community versus neighborhood parks.
- The number of affordable recreation programs for youth needs to increase.
- The trail network is disconnected and needs to be more comprehensive.

Goals

- Develop, adopt, and implement a Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Master Plan.
- Ensure adequate park land to serve residential development.
- Design and implement a wayfinding system that enhances tourism.
- Actively recruit recreational tourism.
- Integrate the development of multipurpose trails in conjunction with the transportation/circulation system.

Environmental Planning Element

Guiding Principle: Strengthen and expand partnerships to continue environmental innovations.

Issues

- Better utilize Tonto National Forest.
- Preserve and maintain excellent air quality.
- Maintain and strengthen working partnerships with federal management of forestry lands.
- Protect threatened natural resources, wildlife, and open space.
- Balance natural resource preservation with development.
- Implement mandatory recycling in the Town since the Buckhead Mesa landfill is near capacity and the availability of land for an additional landfill is severely limited.
- Develop an environmental plan including recycling, alternative energy policy, and other sustainability issues for both existing infrastructure and new construction.
- Develop incentives to encourage participation in the Town's Arizona Solar Community program.

Goals

- Work with federal partners for the protection and continued use of National Forest land.
- Improve stormwater management facilities and practices for treatment quantity and quality.
- Develop and implement an Urban Forestry and Native Species Protection Plan.
- Develop and adopt a comprehensive energy policy.
- Negotiate development agreements to encourage infill, less impervious surface, and economically viable commercial activity.
- Develop and coordinate with local waste management companies to implement a town-wide recycling program.
- Create a Sustainability Advisor position, within existing planning staff levels, to develop an Environmental Plan and provide input on new development and redevelopment.

Water Resources Element

Guiding Principle: Utilize prudent allocation of resources to support economic development and environmental sustainability.

Issues

- Continue to have sustainable water use policies that acknowledge the finite resource.
- Generate revenue through the sale of water to pay for the system.

Goals

- Complete the C.C. Cragain Reservoir pipeline.
- Maximize the use of reclaimed wastewater whenever it is safe and economical.
- Retire the pipeline debt through the responsible sale of water.
- Provide water and sewer to new development.

Cost of Development

Guiding Principle: Maximize the use of planning and financial tools to mitigate the cost of development to the community while providing incentives for well-planned development that achieves stated town principles and goals.

Issues

- Maintain or improve responsible public safety services.
- Continue or improve infrastructure maintenance.
- Maintain or improve the primary and secondary educational quality.

Goals

- Utilize the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) to implement General Plan strategies.
- Ensure the long-term financial stability of the town with fiscally responsible policies and actions.
- Promote and approve high-quality infill development in the designated growth areas where the infrastructure has the capacity to absorb the development.
- Form an economic development strategy that identifies target industries.
- Examine and implement fiscal tools that incentivize development while offsetting its costs to the community.