



March 24, 2008

Mr. George Scott
Southeast Arizona Economic Development Group
P.O. Box 1312
Benson, AZ 85602

Dear George:

This letter reflects our graphic/quantitative displays, summary of findings and recommendations related to discussion groups conducted as part of a Benson Town Hall meeting held in November 2007.

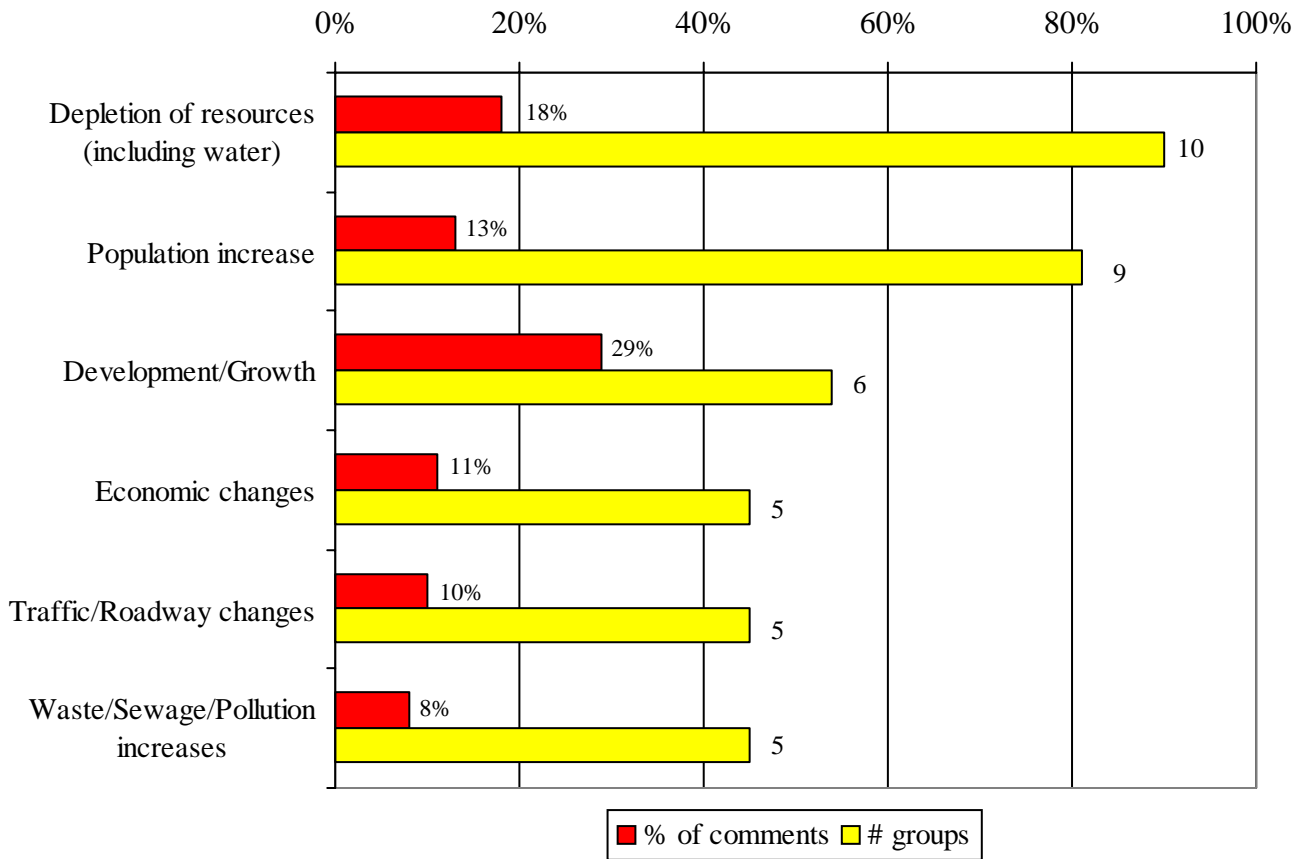
At this meeting, 108 participants in 11 individual discussion groups responded to four agenda discussion items related to future growth/visions for the area surrounding the City of Benson – including Changes Expected, Characteristics *Not* to Be Changed, Hopes & Fears and Desired Growth. Groups were asked to write down their feedback/responses to the four topics on flipcharts and/or maps provided. These responses were provided to FMR Associates to aggregate, quantify, tabulate and analyze.

Summary of Findings

The five Summary Displays included in this letter represent a categorization of responses made during the sessions, broken out in **two different ways**: by ***percentage of comments*** (number of like responses made overall divided by the total number of comments made regarding the specific discussion item) and ***number of groups*** (the total number of groups in which a similar comment was made). Each Summary Display below has a corresponding Detailed Display (in the Appendix accompanying this letter) with a tabulation of individual comments made across the 11 discussion groups.

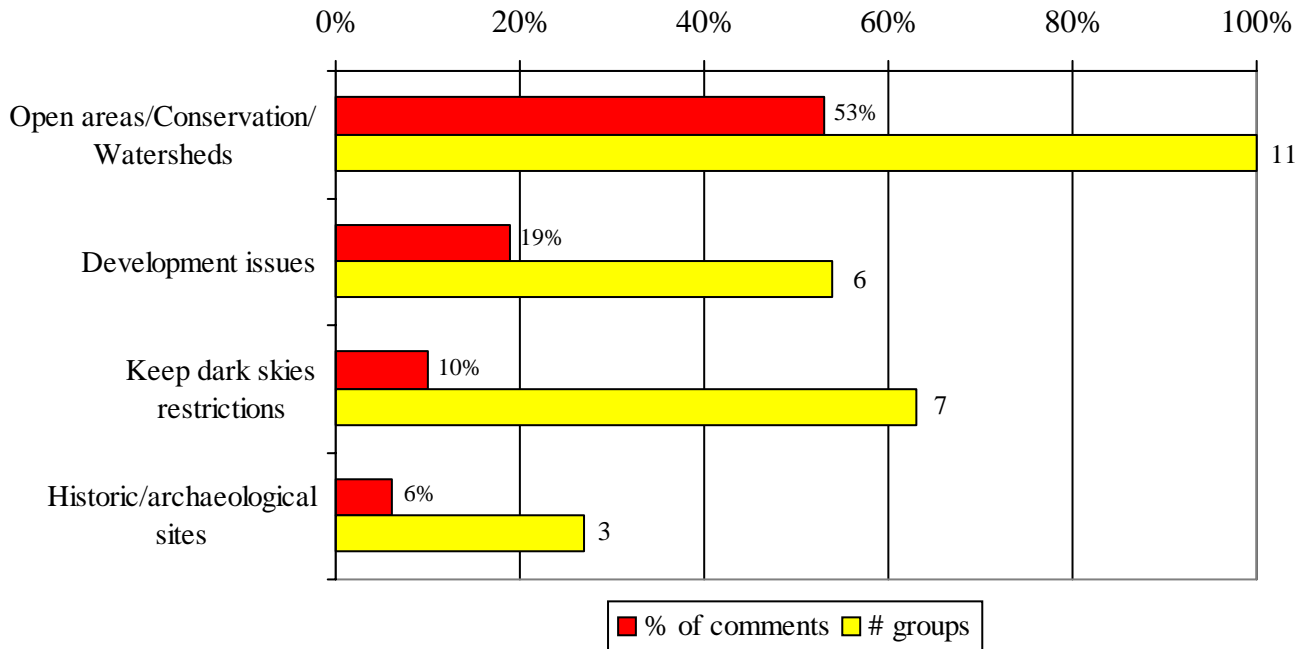
Changes Expected (Summary Display 1) – The primary change expected (mentioned in 10 of 11 discussion groups and among 18% of overall comments) related to the **depletion of natural resources**, chiefly related to future water availability concerns due to increased usage. In six groups, another 29% referenced **development or growth** issues – more often related to unregulated planning or lack of controlled growth. There were also expected changes with respect to **population increases** (9 of 11 groups, 13% overall) and/or **economic changes** (5 of 11 groups, 11% overall). Economic change comments related to the opportunity for economic development and to mitigate increased taxes (including property taxes). About one of ten overall also expected changes related to **traffic/roadways** (5 of 11 groups, 10% overall) and/or **water/sewage/pollution** (5 of 11 groups, 8% overall). Increased traffic was the top traffic/roadway concern expressed, while increased pollution was the most common change with respect to water/sewage/pollution.

Summary Display 1 Changes Expected



Characteristics *Not* to Be Changed (Summary Display 2) – In all eleven groups (representing 53% of overall comments related to this agenda item), there were references to **protecting the natural environment**, with particular emphasis on retaining open areas and properly managing watersheds. Most often this related to keeping open areas for wildlife (including birding and hunting), while others made more general pleas for protecting native vegetation or “natural” desert. There were also comments related to the preservation of the San Pedro River, including protecting sensitive areas, and a desire to maintain open areas for recreation/agribusiness uses. Two of ten overall (in 6 of 11 discussion groups) referred to **development issues**, of these, respect for private rights was the most common theme (4 of 11 groups, 8% overall). One of ten (in 7 of 11 groups) expressed a desire to enforce existing restrictions with respect to **dark skies**. A few others (3 of 11 groups or 6% of total comments) indicated a preference for preserving **historic or archaeological sites**.

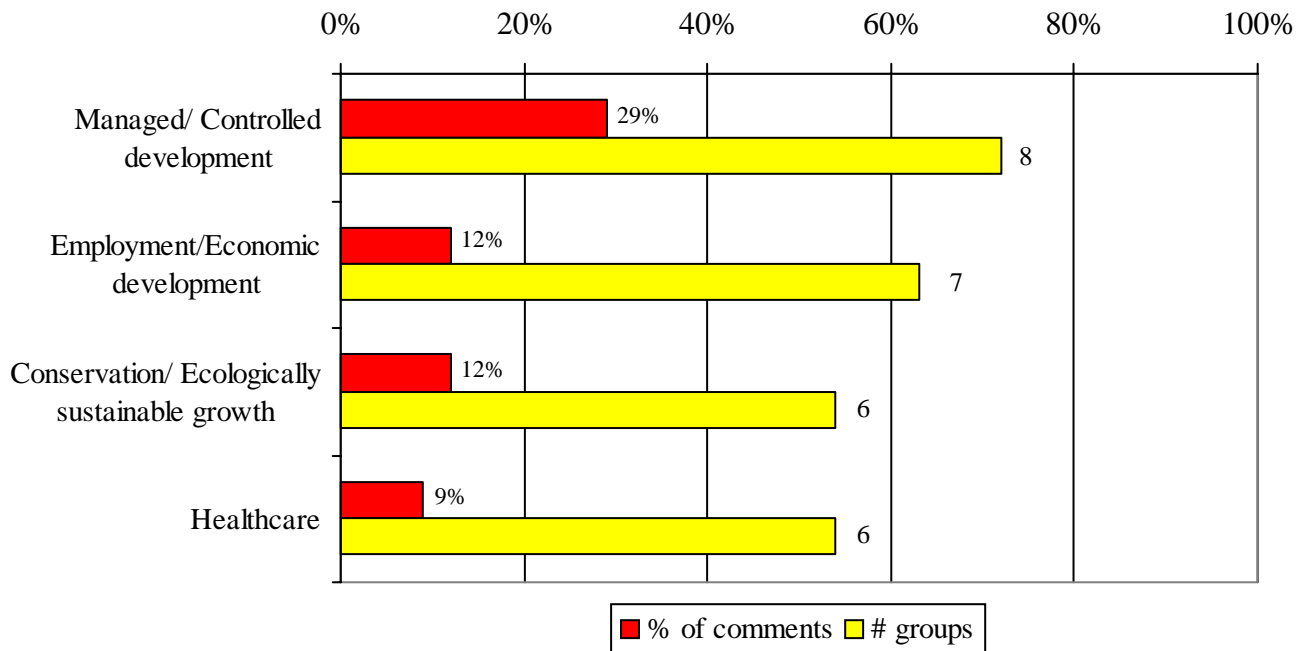
Summary Display 2 Characteristics *Not* to Be Changed



Hopes (Summary Display 3a) – In 8 of 11 groups (29% of all comments), the primary hope related to **managed/controlled development**. This included general pleas for controlled development, with secondary references to infill and maintaining the rural atmosphere around Benson. There were also significant (and similar) hopes expressed with respect to sustainable **employment/economic development** (7 of 11 groups, 12% overall) and/or **conservation/ecologically-minded growth** (6 of 11 groups, 12% overall). In terms of economic development, the hopes often related to jobs, including “clean” industry for job growth. In six groups (9% overall), there were **healthcare** oriented comments – particularly the hope of increased investment in healthcare and related services.

Summary Display 3a

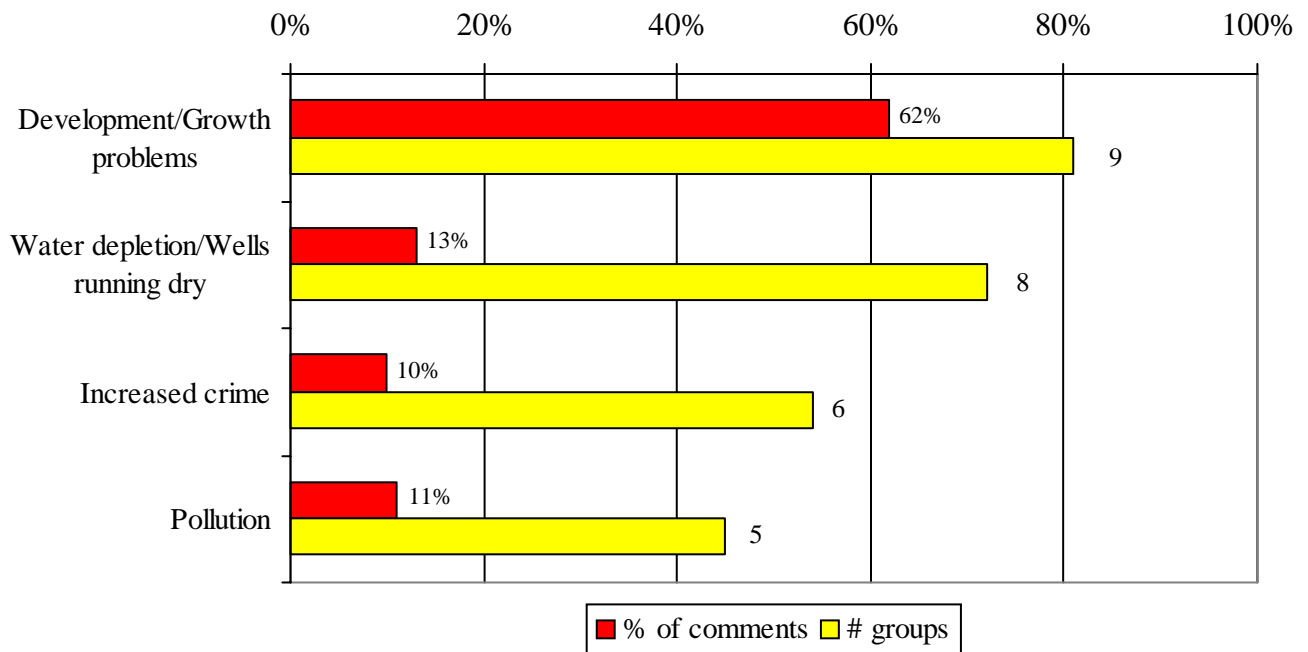
Hopes



Fears (Summary Display 3b) – The two most common fears related to **development/growth problems** (9 of 11 groups, 62% overall) and/or **water depletion/wells running dry** (8 of 11 groups, 13% overall). Of development or growth related fears, the primary concerns (62% of them) related to the loss of individual property rights/outside influences by special interests (8 of 11 groups, 17% overall) or focused on concerns with two development extremes: dense “cookie cutter” subdivisions/unregulated (“lot splits”) “wildcat” subdivisions (7 of 11 groups in total and 16% overall). There were also fears of **pollution** (5 of 11 groups, 11% overall) and/or **increased crime** (6 of 11 groups, 10% overall). Pollution concerns primarily involved air or water pollution, with references to noise/light or mining industry pollution.

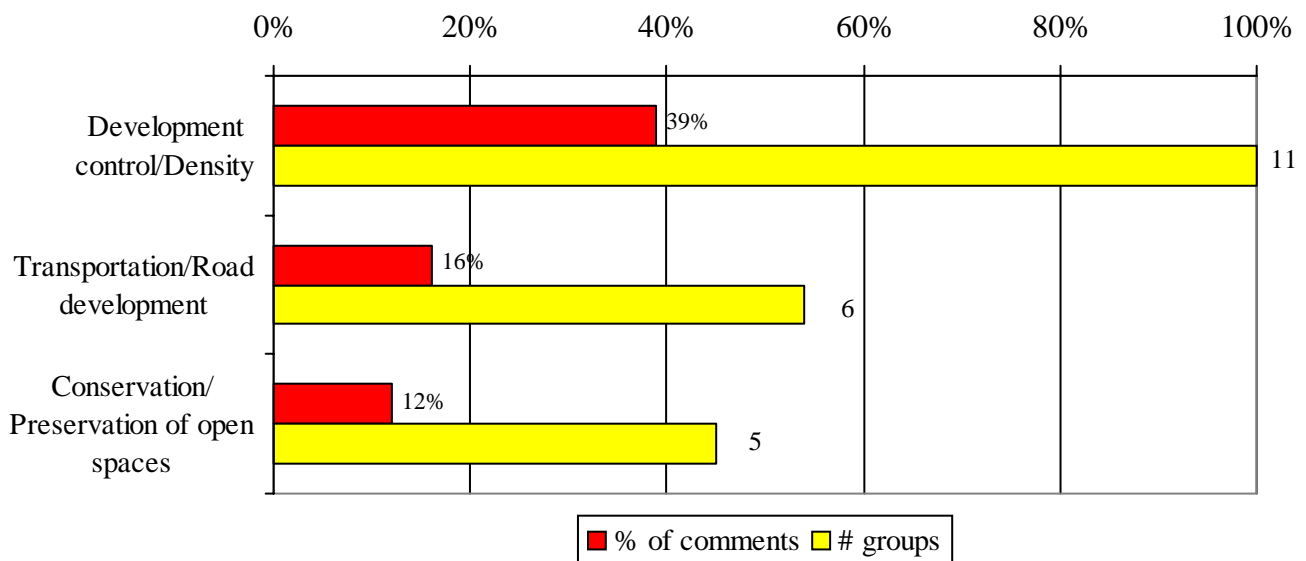
Summary Display 3b

Fears



Desired Growth (Summary Display 4) – This discussion topic generated the most individual comments, 93 in all (refer to Detailed Summary 4 in the Appendix for a complete listing). In all 11 groups (representing 39% of all comments related to this agenda item) there were comments related to **development and density control** with respect to preferred growth. These included a desire for major residential and commercial developments to be at or near the I-10 & Highway 90 corridors; with a preference for the location of commercial “large box store” developments, industrial and higher density residential developments to be at I-10/Highway 90 – and north to the railroad. There was also a desire to keep population densities near municipalities, with a preference for “smart growth” between Benson and St. David. Some added that growth should be on an infill basis where current vacancies and/or infrastructure exists. There were also a variety of comments related to **transportation/road development** (6 of 11 groups, 16% overall) – more often related to a bypass from Highway 80 to Highway 90 (Post Road alignment), as well as references to the addition of specific access roads and/or road improvements. Nearly as many offered a variety of comments related to **conservation/preservation of open spaces** (5 of 11 groups, 12% overall). Relatedly, some made specific comments concerning the San Pedro River (“save the San Pedro,” keep commercial development away) and preserving open spaces in the Cascabel area.

Summary Display 4 Desired Growth



Summary by Question

Based on these findings and analysis, the following summarizes, by question, the recommendations and observations/concerns of these Benson Town Hall Meeting participants:

1. **Expected Changes/Impacts** – The principal expectation is *growth is anticipated in this area*. As a result, there will be *increased demands on natural resources and the environment*, especially related to water availability and *increased stresses on infrastructure*.
2. **Characteristics Not to Be Changed** – Participants in all groups and a majority voiced the need for *conservation of open areas and the protection of watersheds and the natural environment*. Members of most groups also mentioned the need for maintenance of “*dark skies*” and *development issues* – with emphasis on proper planning and zoning while maintaining a balance with private rights.
3. **Hopes** – The most common observation was the desire for *well-managed growth*. Members of most groups indicated the hope for *sustainable employment/economic development/ecological growth*, while some suggested a desire for improvement and expansion of *healthcare services*.
4. **Fears** – The greatest concern was *development or growth problems* related to a variety of issues, but primarily the *loss of landowner rights due to influences from outside forces (such as special interest/environmentalists groups and governmental/non-governmental organizations)*. Others in a majority of groups voiced a “fear” of *water depletion* or *increased crime*. *Increasing volumes of “development extremes”* (“lot spits”/“wildcat subdivisions” vs. “cookie-cutter” subdivisions) were topics also roughly equally mentioned in seven of 11 groups. Pollution was mentioned in five of 11 groups.
5. **Desired Growth** – *Foresighted and active management of this anticipated growth* was the predominate message mentioned by all groups under numerous themes. Specifically, participants indicated the need for keeping high-density residential, commercial box stores and industrial development near the I-10 and Highway 90 intersection. *Transportation/Road development* and *conservation/preservation of open spaces* were also voiced by six groups each.

CONCLUSIONS

This exercise provided a wealth of valuable insight as over 300 individual comments were collected during this meeting. Even if the “countywide perspective” (Group 11) comments are excluded from the summary, the end result is the same: ***Growth in this area is expected.***

Indications of the ***opportunities for successful management*** of this growth are also plentiful in this study, not least of which was the sense of where development should and should not occur. As is typical, some of these opportunities are also in the form of more focused questions. Conclusively determining the answers to these questions would be a logical first-step in determining proper practices.

The obvious main conclusion reached by this exercise is that unless this anticipated growth is ***carefully projected, properly planned for and actively managed***, the end result will be worthy of the many valid concerns brought forth.

Growth Management

The summary opinions voiced here advocate that ***sustainability (both in terms of economic and ecologic viability), livability, and attractive growth must be emphasized during the advance planning for expected development.*** They also lead to the conclusion that in order to leave a worthy heritage for future generations, the basis for these decisions should rise above narrow or immediate interests and seek broader long-term community benefit. As a consequence, considered and preemptive management of this growth will be required to achieve this. If the means for this does not exist, what will need to occur for this to take place?

It appears that some of the concern about “unmanaged growth” could be attributable to exempt development (such as “wildcat” lot splitting). Does the *volume* of this type of development fulfill a market requirement, or is it a result of insensitive regulation/other forces? This type of development typically does not have the internal and external infrastructure (such as collective sewer/water, flood management and roadway improvements) of a non-exempt subdivision. Accordingly, if unintentional increases of this type of development exist, does this unduly and significantly contribute to sprawl/degrade natural resources, add to air/water/ground pollution, aggravate future infrastructure problems and compound public health/safety/welfare issues? Conversely,

are there mechanisms in place to encourage variety in development and to eliminate or reduce mass-produced appearances?

Along the same lines, as infrastructure has a direct relationship to density and affordability, what are the present and anticipated future development needs in the area? What will be required to meet these needs and are these/can these/will these be met? Additionally, the relatively high incidence of concern over “rights/outside influences” begs the question, “Are these concerns founded?” Regardless of the answer, the perceived lack of local autonomy/voice and similar issues should also be addressed.

The Environment/Natural Resources and Water

The predominate subject matter in this study deals with the “environment”, as it not only relates to the natural environment, but also to living, employment, social, economic and other societal-related environments. The responses were fairly evenly split, although they are intricately intertwined, but there is one clear key message: the built environments as well as the natural resource environments within this area should be at least as appealing in the future as they are today. What methods can be employed to assure this mutually beneficial coexistence? Additionally, is appropriate emphasis being placed on some of the other themed issues brought forth, such as the proper management and protection of the night sky, the watershed and native species?

Also of concern was sufficient water for development. Are these concerns founded? Is this an issue for both private and public wells? If there is adequate water for development, should proactive water conservation incentives and practices (such as reclamation and recharge) and/or controls be implemented anyway?

Open Space

Approximately half the discussion groups (in 4% of the gross consensus comments) stated a preference for the creation of open space (ancillary to major watercourses) in the context of promoting both public and ecological health. However, it is unclear if this “open space” references areas within subdivisions and between them, or if it relates to “the wide open spaces” in general. Another logical query is, “If open spaces are to be created, are there current mechanisms encouraging this? If so, do they allow for compensation to ownership for this dedication, along with continuous and proper stewardship by the ultimate beneficiaries?”

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Economic Development

The apparent directive would be to assist in the expansion of a stable, broad and sustainable economic base within this region, while supporting traditional regional economic sectors such as agriculture and local enterprise. Facilitating the right atmosphere and proper infrastructure will enhance the retention and expansion of existing businesses and provide an opportunity for new startup businesses. This will foster additional employment opportunities and increase their diversity, as well as attract jobs with salaries that pay above the county average and potentially infuse the local economy from the outside to a degree. Through cooperation and proper proactive management some other major concerns expressed in this study can be addressed: sales tax revenues could be increased/sales tax rates could be lowered (and/or public services could be enhanced) and the individual property tax burden may also be reduced/buffered as a result.

George, this summarizes our findings and recommendations as they relate to the most frequent and consistent “themes” voiced at the Benson Town Hall conducted in late 2007. I look forward to answering any questions that you or other project team members might have concerning this project.

Best regards,

Bruce Fohr
President

Detailed Display 1

Changes Expected

Less water/Increased water usage/Water availability concerns (10)
Population increase/growth (9)
Increased traffic (5)
Increased taxes and regulation (including property taxes) (4)
Increased pollution (4)
Increased crime (3)
Unregulated planning/lack of controlled growth (3)
More schools (2)
Changes in roadways and traffic movement (2)
More public services (2)
Increased waste/Sewage increase (2)
Health care (2)
Dark skies will no longer exist (2)
Outside investments (realtors/developers)/loss of local control (2)
Commercial development
More houses
Wildcat subdivisions
Changing economy from ranching to other kinds of jobs (other employment)
Increased economic growth
Increased strain on infrastructure
Depleting natural resources
Lack of economic development
Gas prices
Less wildlife
Less space for wind generators
More undocumented immigrants
Growth in Vail
Bedroom communities rather than self-sufficiency economically
Increase in ground heat levels
Lack of County enforcement – rules and regulations
Impractical solutions to simple problems (I-10 frontage)
Larger flood plain
Fire protection
Police

Detailed Display 2

Characteristics *Not* to be Changed

Enforcement of existing restriction/Dark skies (night sky enhancement) (7)
Open areas/corridors for wildlife (birding/hunting) (7)
Keep open spaces/vistas (4)
Preserve natural plants/native vegetation/natural desert (4)
Preservation of quality historic/archaeological sites/areas (3)
Protect current sensitive areas (San Pedro) (3)
Maintain character of/preserve San Pedro (3)
Property rights (3)
Open areas for recreation (2)
Keep RU-4 and conservation subdivisions (not high-density developments) (2)
Maintain “know your neighbors” lifestyle/Small rural communities (2)
Open areas for agriculture
Open space and rural economy
Maintain greenbelts – for open space
Preservation of watersheds (washes, San Pedro, springs)
Water rights
Washes and rivers
Available water
Sustainable water supply
River corridor
Clean environment – air and water
Maintain current conservation policies
Protect Kartchner Caverns
Growth should not equal sprawl
Maintain individual community feel
Don’t want to be a “bedroom” community
No skyscrapers
Preserve views
Prevent loss of tax base
Prevent noise pollution
Rural community roads should not become highways
Ranching (preserve working ranches)
Locally owned business
Retaining agricultural rights
Neighborhood traffic patterns (no bypasses)
Don’t trash the landscape
Preserve clean air/No more dust pollution
Outdoor non-motorized recreational opportunities on public lands
Continuing mixed-age communities
Positive environment for youth
Affordable housing (not government)
Public access to public property
Ft. Huachuca to remain

Detailed Display 3

Hopes and Fears

Hopes

Managed/controlled/orderly development (5)
Investment in health care/services (6)
Clean industry for job growth (3)
Better communication between government and residents (3)
Economic development/Jobs (3)
Infill (2)
Investment in education (2)
Reduce water wastefulness (2)
Wastewater facilities (2)
Maintain rural atmosphere (2)
Ecologically sustainable growth (2)
Varied living (zoning)
Have sense not to pave over everything
That we won't resemble Tucson, Phoenix, Vegas
Developer works with present community
Citizen review process needs to be strong
Plan for growth with necessary infrastructure
Avoid leapfrog development and sprawl
Controlled commercial box stores
Consider impact to adjacent properties
Improved small business environment
County takes over water control
Use of grey water
Increased recycling opportunities
Conservation subdivision
Source of renewable energy
Cochise County – unique
Tourism development – railroad museum (Benson)
Public transportation
Frontage road from J-6/Mescal to Benson
No new regional freeway through San Pedro river
Broadband phone lines
P.O. in J-6/Mescal
Recreational activities
Cohesive community
Parks
Respect private property rights
Maintain dark skies
Impact fees
Control border
Increase in property values
Shopping
Employment near where we live
Cochise County residents have more control
Improved community amenities – youth
Consideration of neighborhood roads – speed, volume and safety

Fears

Wells going dry/Less water (8)
Increased crime (6)
Increased pollution – air and water (5)
Landowners' rights taken away/loss of individual property rights (3)
At mercy of non-governmental organizations/special interest groups (3)
Environmentalist taking things to an extreme (2)
Cookie cutter subdivisions (2)
Wildcat subdivisions/Misrepresented clusters (2)
High-density development (2)
New highways through open land/I-10 bypass (2)
Will resemble Tucson, Phoenix, Vegas (2)
Increased traffic and decreased safety (2)
Energy costs
Agricultural activities pushed out of area (food costs go up and come from other counties)
Increased taxes
Impact fees too high
No increase in real estate tax
Increased noise/light pollution
Improper road planning
Loss of access to outdoor areas
Continued splitting of acreage
Unplanned growth with inadequate infrastructure
Leapfrog development/sprawl
Speculative development
Lack of consideration for impacts to adjacent properties
Annexation (city)
Tax base loss resulting in higher taxes (non-profit and government acquisitions)
San Pedro will be lost in time and growth
Mining/heavy-polluting industry
Big government intervention
Grandfathered covenants being disbanded
Overpopulated highways
Uncontrolled mobilization of hazardous substances
Losing local character
Losing our voice as the areas grow
Outside-dollar influence

Detailed Display 4

Desired Growth

Keep everything commercial away from San Pedro/Open space near San Pedro/Save the San Pedro (4)
Large box stores/retail services/industrial and commercial development at I-10/Hwy 90 (4)
Bypass from Hwy 80 to Hwy 90 (3)
Encourage small business instead of strip malls/No continuous strip malls along Hwy 90 (2)
Leave Cascabel area alone/open spaces in Cascabel area (2)
Densities to be kept near municipalities (2)
Low density residential/Smart growth Benson to St. David (2)
Fill in blank vacancies in Benson/Infill where infrastructure is available (2)
Commercial development should happen in Benson (clean industry)
Well-planned development
Keep zoning as is – housing and commercial deal with it as is
“Nodes” supporting residential mixed use with high density, medium and low density-commercial centers and industrial centers
Proactive infrastructure – not reactive
Control leapfrog development – St. David
Maintain respect for community “Vision Plan” for St. David
Expand St. David comp. plan westward up to Benson
Intelligent residential and commercial growth along I-10
Limit residential growth around airport
South Hwy 90 on west – low density residential
Overriding cluster development
Low density development near Kartchner Caverns
Combination of lot sizes based upon management area plans
Leave unincorporated St. David
Leave unincorporated J-6/Mescal
High density development - Hwy 90
Enforceable CC&Rs in new communities
Large lot acreage in St. David
Change school district lines
Let growth happen naturally
Maintain baseline for building codes while allowing for alternative materials (straw bale, solar)
Encourage alternative energy sources (solar/wind)
Water conservation encouraged
Conservation subdivisions to preserve rural lifestyles
Preserve wildlife corridors (major washes, San Pedro)
Water conservation education and programs
Residential development sensitive to water and soil
St. David wildlife corridors
No freeway in the San Pedro
Open space
Protect landowners down slope and river
Maintain night skies, friendly, enforce restrictions – Benson
High tech jobs developed using high-speed fiber optic industry
Jobs not just 4th Street
Access road to move traffic that doesn't have to go to town
Rails to trails to SPRNCA

-Detailed Display 4 continued on next page-

Detailed Display 4 (Cont'd)

Water company
Industrial warehouses near railroad NW of Benson
Leave Kipper Springs alone
Casino legalized gambling in Cochise County north on river
More family recreation
County parks
Equestrian center - north of Airport
Use intelligent technology to reclaim most water
Tax incentives for commercial building
Cochise College increase various technical training classes
Sheriff dept. – more employees for better service
Better fire and other emergency services – J-6/Mescal
Local area autonomy
Industry
Agriculture
Ranching
Keep county RU-4
Highway improvement to Hwy 80
Allow Post road to Hwy 80
Pave Post road for use by southern Benson, St. David residents
Clean up vacant lots on Hwy 80
No bypass – keep J6 community closed
Easy access roads J6 Mescal
Consolidate industrial areas of Hwy 90
Annex this land-west of Hwy 90
Mescal south, then east onto Post road toward St. David near river, north to I-10
I-10 access east and west of town
Fairgrounds north of I-10 west
I-10 east - light industry
Access road along I-10 from Benson to J6/Mescal
Railway switching yard NW of I-10
Water runoff control I-10 and Pomerene
Large box stores at Pomerene ramp, Ocotillo ramp or south I-10
Leave Pomerene unincorporated
Road from Benson to 302 exit