



ENVISIONING 2020
LAND USE PLANNING
IN
COCHISE COUNTY, ARIZONA

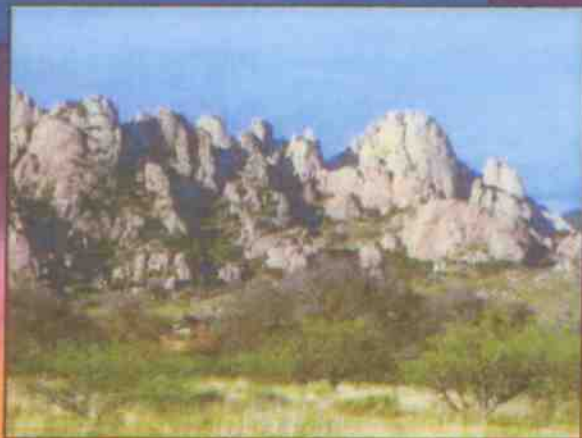




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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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SEPTEMBER 2008



ENVISIONING 2020

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If you don't much care where you're going, it doesn't matter which way you go. You're sure to get somewhere if you keep at it long enough. - The Cheshire Cat in *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll.

ENVISIONING 2020 – LAND USE PLANNING IN COCHISE COUNTY represents a proactive and collaborative vision for the future. What is a Vision? A Vision is a mental image that empowers individuals and communities by giving them foresight to make events happen and projects possible. Envisioning 2020 was an effort shaped by the people of Cochise County to help distinguish the scope and face of current and future growth in Cochise County over a 10-year horizon. The Cochise County Planning Department is pleased to present this report to Cochise County stakeholders, the Board of Supervisors, the Planning and Zoning Commission, the Boards of Adjustment and County Staff.

Project Description

Over the last decade, the west has been the fastest growing region in the nation, experiencing a rapid influx of people seeking better employment opportunities, higher standards of living and wide open spaces. Taken further, over that time, Arizona has vied with Nevada as the nation's fastest growing state, and although much of that growth has occurred in the urban centers of Phoenix and Tucson, growth has occurred to a lesser degree in other, more rural areas of the Arizona, including Cochise County. Although growth is not an inevitability, demographic projections suggest that there is the *likelihood* that Cochise County will experience increasing population over time as more people, particularly retirees, discover the beauty, tranquility and high quality of rural life that Cochise County offers. Consequently, as our population grows there is a compelling need to carefully plan - to "*grow smarter*."

Arizona's *Growing Smarter Legislation* directs communities to update their respective Comprehensive Plans at 10-year intervals. One of the purposes of this legislation is to more effectively plan for the impacts of population growth by creating a more meaningful and predictable land planning process through increased citizen involvement in the process.



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Thus, the core philosophy of *Envisioning 2020* is that in order to create an environment that is livable and desirable, residents must participate and buy into a plan for the future. The overarching approach of the project was to provide forums encouraging citizens to participate in the development of a Vision for their communities and the County as a whole (within the context of anticipated population growth). This process seeks to engage residents from a variety of backgrounds, interests and demographics in an organized effort designed to educate workshop participants about the planning process.

Perhaps more importantly, *Envisioning 2020* intends to establish citizen direction and priorities in shaping a preferred 2020 future and to conceive a long-term Vision and policy framework designed to achieve this Vision over time. To achieve that mission, community involvement inclusive of a cross-section of residents was sought; this was accomplished through a statistically valid random sample phone survey of Cochise County residents conducted by FMR Associates, Inc. of Tucson, as well as 13 widely publicized public workshops hosted throughout the County beginning in October 2007 and running through March 2008. Several sessions yielded only a few participants (*a low of seven*), while others attracted numerous participants (*a high of 108*). In all, *Envisioning 2020* attracted 448 self-selected participants, an average of 34 participants per workshop. In addition, *Envisioning 2020* aspires to:

- ◆ Democratize the process of growth management
- ◆ Generate new ideas and direction
- ◆ Safeguard Cochise County's quality of life
- ◆ Provide citizen input to policy makers
- ◆ Create ownership of the community development process
- ◆ Determine community values translatable into policies or standards

The methodology for *Envisioning 2020* was developed in the spring of 2007 and during this time an Outreach and Development Committee comprised of residents with diverse backgrounds was created to help Planning Staff coordinate workshops and oversee and steward process development. In addition, an independently contracted facilitator was hired to help in process development, to ensure that workshop participants remained focused, that the goals and objectives for each workshop were met, as well as to direct each *Envisioning 2020* workshop and summarize stakeholder comments. The phone survey is intended to complement the findings of the *Envisioning 2020* workshops, to offer additional insight about residents' values, as well as what residents feel are Cochise County's strengths and weaknesses. The survey consists of a 406-person, randomly-selected, statistically-grounded sample of 18 years and older male and female heads of household.



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The sample size of 406 respondents gives the survey a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of just under 5%. This means that 95% of the time the results of the survey will not vary by more than 5 percentage points ($\pm 4.9\%$) from what would have been obtained by interviewing the total population of Cochise County. The survey provided a framework in helping to understand Cochise County's residents'/stakeholders' values today, as well as emerging trends that may influence our future. The results of the survey were posted to the Envisioning 2020 website in August 2007 prior to the kickoff workshop at the Huachuca City Elementary School in October 2007. Prominent themes that emerged from the phone survey include:

- ◆ Health care availability
- ◆ Living wage employment
- ◆ Property rights
- ◆ Providing clear conditions for managed growth
- ◆ Water conservation

A Vision for the communities in Cochise County will not be articulated overnight, however, the Envisioning 2020 process helped to identify common concerns and values. The Vision will take shape as communities plan, design and implement projects and activities that provide a glimpse of the future and that will incrementally help each community in achieving a Vision.

Publicity

The Envisioning 2020 publicity campaign was likely the most extensive for a County event, and included public service announcements and newspaper articles prior to each meeting. Cochise County provided an Envisioning 2020 website as a repository of information about meeting dates, times and locations, as well as a forum for reading Envisioning 2020 meeting notes and individual comments. We also used the following mediums to reach different segments of our County:

- ◆ Fliers in public and private buildings and mailed to key community members
- ◆ Fliers distributed to local schools
- ◆ Articles in local newspapers
- ◆ Development committee
- ◆ Email blasts to community representatives, organizations, and Envisioning 2020 Committee Members
- ◆ Word-of-mouth; word spread as the Envisioning 2020 effort evolved



Community Workshop Agenda

Each Envisioning 2020 workshop began with the facilitator explaining the ground rules for the workshop and what was described as "*Purpose and Givens*". This was an opportunity to explain the Envisioning 2020 project objectives, which is to identify important community assets, engage in discussions about hopes and fears regarding possible growth and identifying more specific preferred types of development. The facilitator solicited open "brain-storming" and comments within the context of "*Givens*" which are essentially the rules governing the planning process in Cochise County. In other words, the Envisioning 2020 workshops were not intended as a means of invoking direct changes to land use regulations, Comprehensive Plan Designations and/or zoning classifications. Rather, participants were made aware that any proposed changes to zoning classifications, for example, would require formal applications and additional public processes. Also, the facilitator emphasized that the Envisioning 2020 workshops were not a forum to discuss individual projects, rezoning requests, Special Use applications, or other specific proposals, so as to ensure that participants remained focused on the overall "Purpose", again, that being a discussion on conservation and growth at the macro scale. However, Staff was made available at each workshop at a separate location to address specific individual questions related to zoning, enforcement, permits, etc.



Planning Staff followed the facilitator's introduction by offering a brief background presentation, which provided general definitions of land use planning, the overall intent of planning and how the planning process functions in Cochise County. Statistics showing current population figures and future projections provided a reference point and perspective on growth in Arizona and Cochise County. A segment illustrating various rural development scenarios offered participants a means of visualizing land use concepts such as "lot-splitting" and "clustered development." Finally, a slide show and audio presentation narrated by ranch owner John Riggs discussed some of the land use issues many ranchers face in the current economic climate. Mr. Riggs described his Vision for his family's sprawling ranch located south of Dos Cabezas. It's a Vision that is a departure from the more typical, oft-termed "cookie cutter" development; rather, an alternative development scenario was presented, one that incorporates mixed uses and sustainable design concepts regarding water conservation, open space preservation and efficient transportation schemes. The visual and audio elements of the presentation were also intended to clarify the development options available in the rural areas of the County that may be incorporated into residential and mixed-use developments.



During the Envisioning 2020 sessions, the same four questions were posed to workshop participants. Participants were divided into separate smaller groups to foster communication, encourage brainstorming and discussion, and were asked to be as specific as possible. To encourage free discussion and diversity within each group, participants were "counted off" and the like numbered participants constituted one group. The groups were asked to comment freely amongst themselves, but to report to the larger group only those comments and ideas that consensus was reached. Consensus usually involves collaboration, rather than compromise. Instead of one opinion being adopted by a plurality, participants or stakeholders are brought together until a convergent decision is developed. Acting according to consensus guidelines enables a group to take advantage of all participants' ideas. Furthermore, people are more likely to implement decisions they accept, and consensus makes acceptance more likely. This approach provided a greater challenge and a more meaningful outcome, as each group strived to attain a consensus of ideas and articulated values.

Many areas of Cochise County have a unique community flavor, with the citizens of each community reflecting unique goals, desires and concerns, so those participants living outside the area of influence - *those representing a more Countywide perspective* - were stationed at separate tables. The four questions were crafted in a fashion to elicit clear, direct and impassioned responses about land uses by incorporating terms such as *changes, hope, fear and grow*. Also, the questions were designed to work in conjunction with provided maps and handouts in order to help facilitate organic visions for desired futures. The four questions/conversations include:

Workshop Question 1:

What changes are expected to impact the area?

The purpose of this activity was to help workshop participants to broaden their thinking about the forces that will affect their communities and Cochise County in the coming years. Participants were asked to brainstorm local, regional, national and global trends that they saw occurring that might influence their County, their community and the Vision that they wish to create. This question set the stage for discussions on how to best manage the identified changes expected.

Workshop Question 2:

What characteristics of the area should not be changed?

This question was intended as a means to identify their respective valued community or County assets - distinctions Cochise County residents are proud of, whether tangible, such as water resources or mountain vistas, or more obscure qualities, such as "rural character" or "small town feel." These are characteristics of the community that deserve protection, preservation and/or management.



Workshop Question 3:

“What do we fear or hope for as the community changes or grows?”

This question was intended to tap into the hopes, dreams and fears of stakeholders for their communities and Cochise County and to encourage them to discuss those hopes and fears with fellow participants. This question was intended to elicit passionate response - *What are you fearful of as your community/County grows? What do you hope for as your community/County grows?*

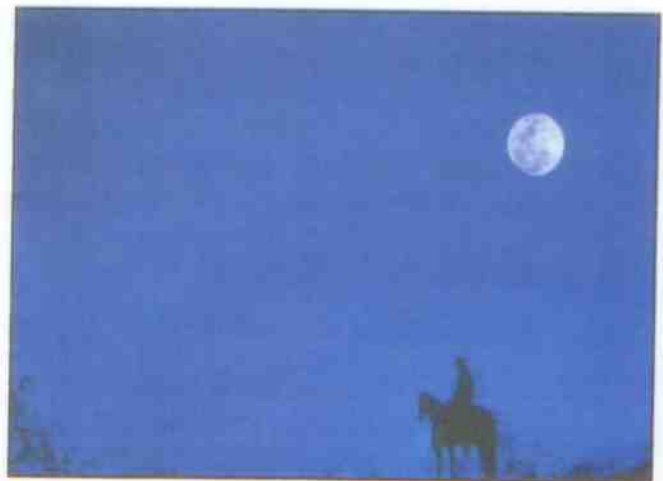
Workshop Question 4:

“What are your ideas for how the community should change or grow?”

If growth does come to our area, what form should it take? To what scale should we grow? Should we even grow at all?

Envisioning 2020 Workshop Summaries by Question

The following section of the Envisioning 2020 Report summarizes more specific or distinct responses to the four questions posed to participants at each workshop. Note that these comments reflect the consensus, ideas, opinions and values expressed by participants through the small group work sessions and reported to all participants. Ideas or comments expressed by participants of the small working groups that did not achieve consensus were encouraged to be submitted individually to Planning Staff via email or letter. Those individual comments are included in Appendix A and posted on the Envisioning 2020 website (http://cochise.az.gov/cochise_planning_zoning.aspx?id=1212)





Workshop 1— October 6, 2007: Huachuca City and Whetstone

(15 Participants)

Workshop Question 1:

What changes are expected to impact the area?

Changes expected that could have significant impact upon the Huachuca City and Whetstone areas are the possible development of the expansive Sands Ranch and the impact and pressure that more intense rezonings, if approved, would have on traffic, infrastructure, water, services and the overall quality of life.

Workshop Question 2:

What characteristics of the area should not be changed?

Participants indicated the importance of maintaining the rural character and lifestyle enjoyed by many residents, including maintaining large lots, open spaces, uncompromised vistas, dark night skies and the continuation of ranching activities. Also mentioned was the scenic quality of State Highway 82 west of State Highway 90, a community asset that is deserving of more recognition and protection. Several participants mentioned habitat and water conservation. There is concern that our water resources are unsustainable and that water taxation is close to becoming a reality. Also important is the continued support for Fort Huachuca to secure its future as the major economic engine in Cochise County.

Workshop Question 3:

What do we hope or fear as the community changes or grows?

As mentioned previously, participants are hopeful that water resources will remain available and sustainable and are hopeful for continued support for Fort Huachuca. Participants hope that more road improvements will be funded via a larger share of state road tax money. Some mentioned more intense zoning enforcement in order to ensure separation of incompatible land uses and limiting commercial uses to the Highway 90 corridor. The greatest fears relate to the negative impacts of unregulated or unmanaged growth on infrastructure, the effects of agriculture on water resources, reduced services and compromised quality of life. Unsustainable water resources, water taxation, and the impacts on Fort Huachuca were also mentioned.

Workshop Question 4:

What are your ideas for how the community should change or grow?

An array of ideas were suggested, such as the creation of a town center in the vicinity of the Highways 82 and 90 intersection, separating incompatible uses, limiting commercial uses to the Highway 90 corridor and more intense zoning enforcement.

