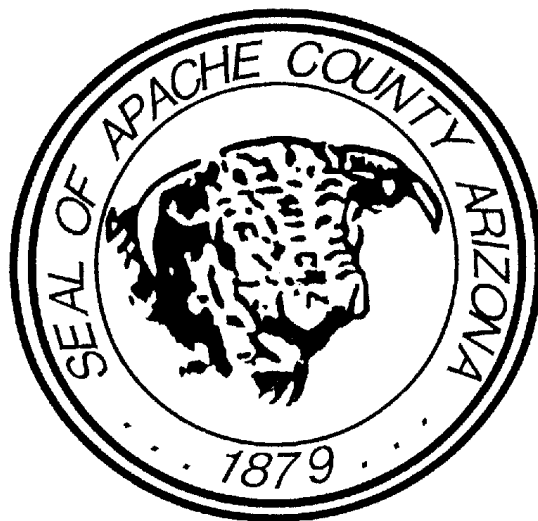


Apache County
Comprehensive Plan
Public Information/Public Participation Program

“The Best Way to Predict Your Future
is to Create It.”



Adopted by the Apache County Board of Supervisors June 1, 1999

Apache County Development and Community Services
Planning & Zoning Division
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Goal

The Public Information/Public Participation (PI/PP) program is established to involve and inform the public in the process of formulating, writing and implementing the Apache County Comprehensive Plan. The PI/PP program is a crucial element to a successful Comprehensive Plan.

Compliance with Arizona Revised Statutes

A.R.S. 11-806(D)(1) reads, "The Board of Supervisors shall adopt written procedures to provide effective, early and continuous public participation in the development and major amendment of comprehensive plans from all geographic, ethnic and economic areas of the county. The procedures shall provide for:

1. The broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives;
- b. The opportunity for written comments;
3. Public hearings after effective notice;
- d. Open discussions, communications programs and information services;
5. Consideration of public comments."

The Board of Supervisors also is mandated to fulfill A.R.S. 11-806(D)(2), which reads, "Consult and advise with public officials and agencies, municipalities, school districts, associations of governments, public land management agencies, other appropriate government jurisdictions, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations, property owners, and citizens generally, to secure the maximum coordination of plans and to indicate properly located sites for all public purposes of the plan."

Role of County Staff

The staff of Apache County Planning & Zoning will assume the following roles for the Apache County Comprehensive Plan project:

- A professional resource;
- Facilitators; and,
- Moderators.

PI/PP Program Format

The PI/PP program is divided into categories. The following sections are designed to overlap and work in conjunction with each other to produce a comprehensive and effective PI/PP program.

- 1) Composition and Maintenance of a Core Group Contact List
- 2) Public Gatherings (Hearings, Meetings and Workshops)
- 3) Media (Conventional and Unconventional)
- 4) Public Comment Retrieval

5) Public Outreach (Conventional and Electronic)

Composition and Maintenance of a Core Group Contact List

Formulation of the Comprehensive Plan will require extensive public notification that will be addressed within the Media section. A successful Comprehensive Plan would benefit from the establishment of a core group of interested parties, both special interest and general public, that will receive special notice of public gatherings, bulletins, surveys and other miscellaneous items. The core group will be a valuable source of interested, socially responsible and dedicated agencies and individuals. Their role will be more active than the general public's, due to their special interest in the project and the community. The core group will act as a focus group for the project.

The core group will be built from numerous sources, and additions will be made throughout the Comprehensive Plan process. Staff will build the initial list. At any time during the Comprehensive Plan process, any interested party can request to be added to the list. An individual wishing not to be on the list can ask to be removed. Also, staff will monitor participation by the core group to determine if agencies or individuals have lost interest in the project. To insure success with the core group's participation with the Comprehensive Plan project, information and documentation will be tailored to fit groups needs.

The initial list will contain, but will not be limited to, the following:

Elected officials (county, municipalities, state and regional); Appointed public officials (county, municipalities, state and regional); State agencies; Homeowners' associations; Tribal governments; Special interest groups; Arizona State planning associations; Developers; utilities; Natural Resource Conservation Service; fire districts; irrigation districts; school districts; Northland Pioneer College; neighboring municipalities and counties (including those in New Mexico); Federal agencies; Springerville and St. John's airport operators; large scale property owners; service organizations; realtors and realtor associations; businesses and business organizations; Chambers of Commerce; churches; and those individuals, agencies and groups who have shown interest in previous planning activities.

Methods of distribution to accomplish this task are:

Mailing

Items, such as public gathering notification postcards, newsletters or bulletins, and surveys can be mailed to the core group of interested parties. Staff will concentrate on bulk rate mailings, postcards and single-sheet mailings to minimize cost and time expenditures. All surveys can be returned using a pre-addressed postage paid envelope, via fax or e-mail.

FAX

In hopes of increasing the amount and speed in which information is distributed to the

core group of interested parties, staff will fax documents to those willing and able to receive faxes of public gathering notification, newsletters or bulletins, and surveys. Only those interested parties specifically requesting information by fax will be added to this list. No unsolicited faxes will be sent. Also, interested parties can return completed surveys via fax. As a matter of practicality and convenience, fax documents will be kept to a single page. The use of a fax machine will be one alternative in an effort to reduce notification cost and paper usage.

E-mail

Using e-mail to distribute information to the core group of interested parties will realize and exceed all the benefits of faxing information. As with faxing, staff will use e-mail to those willing and able to receive e-mail of public gathering notification, newsletters or bulletins, and surveys. Only those interested parties specifically requesting information by e-mail will be added to this list. No unsolicited e-mail will be sent. Also, interested parties can return completed surveys via e-mail. The Comprehensive Plan will have a dedicated e-mail address, for example GenPlan@co.apache.az.us. All activities involving an electronic element will be approved and coordinated with the Apache County Information Technology Department.

Citizens Groups

In addition to the core group, the Comprehensive Plan project will utilize Citizens Groups. These groups will be composed of Apache County citizens and will be direct links to the public for the Comprehensive Plan project. This concept will involve multiple groups for different areas of the County. The groups will consist of volunteer members who will make suggestions to Planning staff for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission. The group will have regularly scheduled meetings and should also plan to attend other public gatherings. The Board of Supervisors may appoint volunteers to individual citizen groups in order to maintain a consistent balance and good mix of individuals.

Public Gatherings

A successful Comprehensive Plan has more public interaction than single land use issues requiring standard public hearings. In addition to the mandatory public hearings, the process will include meeting with affected communities. The purpose of public gatherings is to develop working relationships, establish meaningful lines of communication, spur education, fulfill the community's will to design its own future, and to foster a means to implement the Comprehensive Plan.

Notification

Minimal public notice, as required by Arizona Revised Statute, will be completed for each applicable action under this Statute. However, for all future public gatherings, information and notice will take place to encourage attendance and participation.

The core group of interested parties discussed above will be notified by mail, fax or e-mail. Other members of the public will be notified by the following:

- A legal display ad will appear in the White Mountain Independent and Apache County Observer at least fifteen (15) days prior to each meeting;
- Press releases will be sent to all forms of media in the area;
- A public gathering schedule with agendas will be posted on the Comprehensive Plan webpage;
- Flyers will be posted in public offices and locations, as well as businesses;
- Area newsletters and bulletins will advertise gatherings.

Location and Time

Public gatherings, excluding Planning & Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors' public hearings, will occur in various locations throughout the County. This is especially true for public meetings or workshops in which the topic will affect a specific area of the County. Such gatherings should occur in the subject area.

The locations for public gatherings should be centrally located for easy access. Locations will be non-intimidating, such as community centers, activity halls, or schools, to encourage attendance and participation resulting in a successful Comprehensive Plan. The staff will provide reasonable special needs accommodations, upon request, for all persons attending public gatherings. Snacks and drinks will be provided to encourage attendance and participation.

Gatherings will be held at various times and days, again to encourage attendance and participation. Public gatherings will be held on both weekdays and weekends at morning, afternoon and evening times to accommodate a wide variety of needs and situations. Staff will rely on feedback from the public and interested parties to determine optimal days and times for gatherings.

The Gatherings

Public hearings have an established format which will be used in the Comprehensive Plan process. However, other public gatherings will be held using varying formats.

Elected and appointed county officials may attend as many of the public gatherings as possible. Since the scope of the Comprehensive Plan process is quite large, county officials cannot rely solely on the information presented by staff or public comment received at public hearings.

Staff will act as information providers and moderators at public meetings. To maximize participation and results, Staff will provide a framework in which the meeting will occur. Staff has researched several gathering processes which can be used, depending on the type of gathering and what issues are being discussed. Presentations will vary depending on the type of gathering and the issues being discussed. Staff will primarily use a multimedia approach to presentations to keep gatherings interesting.

Meeting moderators are responsible for the pace and length of each gathering. A well-run meeting will encourage attendance and participation.

Workshops

Workshops may require special considerations. Workshops are labor intensive. Workshop participants will be required to sign up or make an appointment to attend.

Workshops and formats can include formats such as mobile or walking workshops. This format would lend itself to those gatherings for a specific area of the County. For example, a walking tour of the Alpine or Greer area, with staff, a member of the Board of Supervisors, several Planning Commissioners, and most importantly, residents of Alpine or Greer.

Media (Conventional and Unconventional)

A successful Comprehensive Plan project will utilize a variety of media sources, both conventional and unconventional, to publicize the Comprehensive Plan process and obtain broad-based participation. The media will be used as both an information distribution and gathering tool.

Information to the Media

The Comprehensive Plan process will utilize the following methods to inform the media throughout the process.

- 1) Media kits will be distributed to all media sources in the early stages of the process. The media kits will be updated periodically to insure the media has current and available information on the project. The media kit will act as a reference guide for the entire project and can be used in conjunction with press releases and conferences and interviews. The media kit will include the name of a contact person for the project.
- 2) Press releases will be used for “highlight” events during the Comprehensive Plan process, such as public gatherings with the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors, workshops and public review and comment periods. The press release will include the name of a contact person for the project.
- 3) News conferences may be used to notify the press about the most important events of the Comprehensive Plan process, such as the Board of Supervisors’ final review and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan and its publication. The staff will notify the media with a written announcement for the press conference. The press conference will be typically held at the Board of Supervisors’ Auditorium located at 75 W. Cleveland, St. Johns. The speaker or project representative must be well prepared and printed information will be provided to the media.

Other Media Opportunities

Public Services Announcements (PSAs) may be used to generate interest in the project and inform interested parties about upcoming events. The regional media outlets will be contacted regarding the submission of PSAs. Standard PSA format is either a 10 or 30 second spot submitted in written form. The staff can prepare a prerecorded spot,

preferably using the voice of a well-known person. For example, an elected official, the county manager, or former Sheriff Art Lee.

The Comprehensive Plan process may employ guest appearances on local radio and television shows and the use of the cable public access channel. Media appearances can be done by staff and elected or appointed officials. Appearances will be used to generate interest in the project, gather information and promote support for the Comprehensive Plan.

The regional print media will be used to generate interest in the project and inform interested parties about upcoming events. All public gatherings will be advertised by legal advertisement as required by Arizona Revised Statutes. The Comprehensive Plan process may also employ special population publications such as the Navajo Times.

Methods that have been effective in other areas and could be adopted here include: 1) A Comprehensive Plan supplement in local newspapers to promote interest and awareness. Cost would be a factor, but perhaps local businesses or homeowners associations would help underwrite some cost. 2) The publication of an interest survey (clip and mail) which could be returned by phone or fax. 3) Area event calendars may be used to notify the public about upcoming events.

Promotional Opportunity

The Comprehensive Plan process is required by Arizona Revised Statutes to be adopted by December 31, 2001. One challenge the Comprehensive Plan process will face is how to maintain interest throughout the process. Promotional items may be used to maintain interest in the process. These can be given out at public gatherings and to individuals who complete and return surveys. Response information will be included on all promotional items, such as e-mail address, info-by-fax number and a Comprehensive Plan hot line number. A Comprehensive Plan logo contest could result in a specific logo for the Plan.

Public Comment Retrieval

To be successful, the Comprehensive Plan should represent the views of interested parties and citizens in Apache County. Public comment will include suggestions, points of view, support, opposition and constructive comments regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the process.

Public Comment Periods

Public comments can be received at any point in the Comprehensive Plan process, whether formally or informally. The Comprehensive Plan process will include several formal public review and comment periods. The draft document will be available throughout the County for review by the public and comment can be received in various ways, such as written, fax or e-mail.

Public comment will be accepted in several documentable forms, such as comments given at a public gathering where recordings are being taken, in writing, over the

recorded telephone hotline and through an electronic format like e-mail.

Surveys may be used especially for specific area elements of the Comprehensive Plan and unique situations. Surveys can be sent or made available to any interested party who wishes to complete one. The contact lists of interested parties will be the primary resources for survey responses. Surveys will be made available at several public locations, on demand by mail or fax, and on the Comprehensive Plan web page. Completed surveys can be returned via mail, fax or the Internet. Upon request, the County may provide a pre-addressed postage paid envelope to aid in the convenience of returning surveys.

Public Outreach

A successful public outreach element is pivotal for a Comprehensive Plan project. Public outreach encompasses community and children's education, information distribution, fostering of public support and encouraging a sense of community.

Education

The general public will need an introduction to a variety of Comprehensive Plan project issues, as well as planning and community development. The PI/PP program will be directed towards educating those involved in the process of formulating, writing and implementing the Apache County Comprehensive Plan. The content of the PI/PP program will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- What is a Comprehensive Plan and why does Apache County need one;
- An understanding of the formulation, writing and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan;
- The impacts on land use and development in Apache County as a result of the Plan;
- Developing and implementing a monitoring component, both during Plan development and later during implementation.

A strong commitment to education throughout the Comprehensive Plan process will have lasting benefits during each phase of the process. The Comprehensive Plan process is a complex undertaking that is heavily dependent on public participation.

Information Distribution

The distribution of information throughout the Comprehensive Plan process is extremely important to insure successful public participation, education about the process, gain public support and foster a sense of community effort.

The media will play a pivotal part in the distribution of information concerning the Comprehensive Plan Process. The media's role is discussed in the Media Section.

The Comprehensive Plan process will use "Information Repositories" to distribute information to interested parties. Printed information will be located at convenient

locations throughout the County, including the County Development office, the area Chambers of Commerce, and County libraries. A majority of the information will be available in easily understandable pamphlets and brochures.

An interested party will have the ability to phone, fax or e-mail a request for information to the Planning & Zoning offices.

Training after Adoption

The Planning & Zoning staff will instruct other County staff, property owners, realtors, developers and others in the use of the Comprehensive Plan.

Web Page and Internet

The Internet provides the Comprehensive Plan process with a unique opportunity in regards to the PI/PP program. This electronic format will provide avenues of information distribution and public participation not available with similar projects. The Comprehensive Plan process will have its own web page that will be linked to the Apache County web pages. The Comprehensive Plan web page will contain the following information:

- public gathering information, including dates, times, locations and agendas;
- minutes from previous public gatherings;
- draft documents;
- lists of contacts including elected and appointed officials, and staff;
- surveys may be completed and submitted on line;
- Comprehensive Plan e-mail address; and,
- current and future chronology and/or time line.

The Comprehensive Plan's dedicated e-mail address will allow information requests and public comments to be received electronically. Staff will encourage individuals who do not have the time to attend public gatherings or put their comments in writing to participate in the Comprehensive Plan process.

Comprehensive Plan Newsletter

A quarterly newsletter will promote awareness of the Comprehensive Plan project and encourage participation. Issues may be mailed, faxed, or e-mailed to the contact list of interested parties and copies can be made available as information repositories. The newsletter will report on upcoming events and public gatherings as well as providing interesting and helpful information. Detachable survey cards can be made a part of the newsletter to encourage survey responses.

Hotline

A voice mail line can be established for the Comprehensive Plan process. Interested parties can hear about upcoming events and gatherings, request information, and leave comments concerning the Comprehensive Plan.

Contact Agency

Apache County Development and Community Services

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520-337-7526 (phone)

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