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Purpose, Authorization and Administration

Purpose

The General Plan provides general goals, objectives and strategies for guiding Tempe's planning and redevelopment through 2030, with community based goals that enhance the quality of life and reflect a vital, sustainable, attractive and unique city. The General Plan must be general enough to be consistently applied throughout the municipality. The purpose of the General Plan is to assist the residents, city Council, boards and commissions, staff and developers through the development process by presenting the city goals, objectives and strategies by which land is planned, developed and used. This includes basic policies for circulation, recreation, public services, economic development and other elements that impact the quality of where and how we live, learn, work and spend free time. The city Council and Planning and Zoning Commission use the Plan to evaluate proposed developments, policy changes and funding and budget decisions. The city staff uses the Plan to evaluate proposed developments, provide creative recommendations, develop specific area and redevelopment plans, evaluate trends, revise development regulations and identify capital improvements needed to attain the goals of the plan. Residents and neighborhood groups use the Plan to understand Tempe's long-range plans in order to protect private property values and quality of life in smaller geographic areas.

Authorization

The Federal Standards in Planning Act and Standards in Zoning Acts of 1928 enabled states to delegate to local jurisdictions the authority to plan for their communities. Arizona Revised Statute 9-461.05 Chapter 204 requires that every city prepare a comprehensive, long-range, general plan for the future development of the municipality. The general plan consists of a statement of community goals and development policies. It includes maps, diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles and standards. By state law it also is required to have specific planning elements: circulation, environmental conservation, recreation and open space, public facilities and services (including safety), water, housing, preservation, rehabilitation and redevelopment, growth areas and cost of development. It also is required that the public participates in the development, review and approval of the plan through a documented public participation process. Lastly, the plan must identify processes for adoption, implementation and revision of the General Plan, including definitions for amendments and major amendments.

Long-range impact as a guiding policy document

Tempe's General Plan is based on community-based goals and objectives that include quality of life issues throughout the city. Legally, this plan has state-required elements to cover local and regional issues. Tempe's General Plan must consider the larger Valley community in its planning policies. The General Plan promotes the community's vision by establishing policies, goals and strategies within the required elements. These elements also include consideration of regional issues, but are designed to be specific to Tempe. The General Plan represents goals and policies to guide the community through a 20 to 25-year period. Because of this long-range view, the plan must be general enough to apply to the whole city and flexible enough to respond to changes in the economy, environment or community. Keeping everything the same through rigid application of the plan is not responsive to unforeseen challenges or opportunities in a dynamic community.

Administration

The General Plan should be considered a living document, as long-range decisions will need to be periodically reconsidered to reflect new conditions. Each elected city Council will represent collective changes in the community's needs and perspectives, and will modify policies to reflect their constituents. The General Plan is an important tool, reflecting changing perspectives and attitudes.

The General Plan should be referenced for every proposed General Plan amendment. At the time of preliminary submittal, the applicant shall refer to the General Plan, and complete the General Plan amendment form. This form is a tool for staff, boards and commissions and council to review a project on its merits of meeting the goals and objectives of the General Plan. A copy of this form is included in the conclusion of the General Plan.

An annual General Plan report should be compiled to monitor the status of the General Plan, any amendments made, an assessment of the goals and objectives, and a progress statement on the achievement of the plan implementation. Problem areas or suggested updates should be detailed for city Council consideration at an annual public hearing. At a minimum, every decade the document will be reviewed and revised through a formal public process. As with any flexible policy document, there is room for interpretation of the policies and goals in order to meet the overall objectives. Under the advisement of the Development Review Commission and city staff, the city Council has the final interpretation of this document.

Tempe General Plan History

Zoning was initially the only method used in dealing with land use, and primarily was used to exclude incompatible uses. But as Tempe grew, zoning did not consider other planning issues that impacted land use, such as circulation, environmental impacts, economic development, public services, and regional impacts. Zoning is one implementation tool for land use planning at the parcel level, but a General Plan can address quality of life issues with planning at a larger scale and over a longer period of time. The General Plan can maintain Tempe as a well-planned, desirable place to live, work, learn and spend free time.

To that end, in mid-July 1966, the city Council asked its Planning and Zoning Commission and a broad-based committee of concerned residents to focus on growth and development issues and develop specific community objectives. The city Council retained the consulting firm of Van Cleave and Associates to assist the community in its vision and strategies to deal with the next 20 years of Tempe's growth. The first General Plan for the City of Tempe was adopted in 1967.

This Plan led to a planning program that was strengthened by the initial adoption of the Design Review Ordinance, the adoption of the Subdivision Ordinance and substantive revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. These actions reflected a firm commitment to dealing with unprecedented growth that would span a decade.

In 1972, elected and appointed officials realized the positive results of their initial commitment to the 1967 General Plan, and the need for an update. The consulting firm of Simon Eisner and Associates was commissioned to write the new General Plan. This General Plan dealt more specifically with the pressing issue of residential needs and densities, public facilities and more detailed projected land use for commercial and industrial uses. Tempe emerged with a balance of varied facilities, as well as the goods and services needed by the total community, while maintaining opportunities for others to participate in or expand their part in a growing marketplace.

By the mid-1970s, the basic physical character of Tempe was taking shape. However, new opportunities and new issues faced the city Council. A revised guide was needed to assist the decision-making process. Therefore, city staff was directed to develop a new General Plan which was subsequently adopted in 1978. The 1978 General Plan was more comprehensive than its predecessors. Extensive community participation led to a broader-based acceptance of the document as it moved through the process toward adoption.

In 1983 an amendment was made to stimulate development and create development standards for unique, unifying urban design elements in a sparsely developed, 5.5 square mile area in the southwest part of the city. This amended General Plan served the city Council well. However, a major issue was becoming evident: by 1985 about 20 percent of Tempe's land was still vacant and the city was approaching build out. city Council directed staff to prepare a forward-looking plan that would carry the city to build-out. In 1989, the city Council adopted General Plan 2000, encouraging the remaining vacant land to be developed with mixed-use and growth node concepts.

Approaching 90 percent build-out in 1996, the city Council determined a need for a new General Plan. Focusing on land redevelopment, intensification of land use through re-use, infill and increased maintenance and management practices, city Council gave direction to create General Plan 2020. The city Council, through its Community and Economic Development Committee, sought out extensive public input for this new general plan. A focus group, consisting of residents, developers and business people, was brought together to discuss the character and direction of General Plan 2020. Through revisions of several draft documents, additional community comment was gathered through mailings to neighborhood representatives and announcements published in the local newspaper. After an extensive public hearing schedule, General Plan 2020 was adopted by city Council in 1997.

In 1998, the State of Arizona adopted Growing Smarter legislation to address regional growth issues. New state requirements included additional elements to plans and increased public participation in the planning process. Tempe's existing Plan included most of the new language of this legislation and used more public participation than the state requirements. In 2000, Growing Smarter Plus amended state legislation, adding another element, clarifying language in the law and establishing public participation processes in more detail, including the requirement of elections for major amendments to plans or new General Plans. Tempe was able to modify the existing General Plan for compliance with these changes without making any major amendments to the document. The land use element remained the same, other elements had title changes and other planning documents were referenced directly in the General Plan. General Plan 2020 was amended in 2001.

During the amendment process, *2000 Census* analysis provided additional demographic information about the community. During this same time, several major developments in Tempe fulfilled many goals of the Plan. Centerpoint (Phase V), Town Lake, Brickyard and Hayden Ferry Lakeside (Phase I) established new intensities in economic development. Continued growth around Tempe was also shifting Tempe's position in the region, requiring significant strategic analysis for long range planning. city Council directed staff to develop a public participation plan for a completely new General Plan, to take the city to a vision of 2030.

General plans often decorate the shelves of city halls with little application or use after the adoption process has been completed. Tempe has been more fortunate in that, through the involvement and interaction of elected and appointed officials and its residents, it has developed the kinds of general plans that have frayed edges and worn pages from actual use. The strategies involve the use and development of a variety of tools that have been described in each element of the General Plan. These strategies are intended to help attain the objectives, and ultimately transform the goal into reality.

How the General Plan Relates to Other Planning Tools

Plans

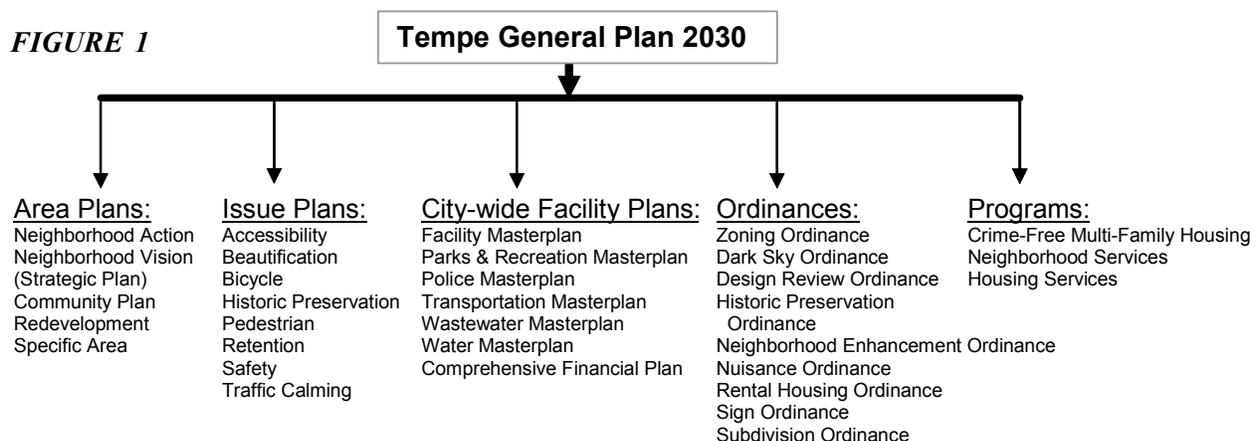
The General Plan is one of many tools used to guide decision-making. It is the umbrella document over many other planning documents. A General Plan may include references to comprehensive plans or master plans, which often relate to infrastructure such as the *Water/Wastewater Master Plan* or the *Comprehensive Transportation Plan*. These plans focus on the specifics of one issue (water) or a group of related issues (different forms of transportation), as the issues pertain to the entire city. Likewise, a General Plan may reference strategic, specific and redevelopment plans that apply to smaller areas of the community. These plans cover specific issues or comprehensive planning for a particular area. However, these plans are not exclusively the policy statement for a specific area; they work in conjunction with the General Plan and other plans. The General Plan is a comprehensive policy document that serves as the broad foundation for all plans, and references them as tools for implementing long-range community goals.

Ordinances and Zoning

In addition to the different types of plans described, the *Zoning Ordinance* is the primary tool used to implement the General Plan. The basic purpose of zoning is to segregate seemingly incompatible uses. The *Zoning Ordinance* describes the intent, character and composition of each of the zoning districts and provides detailed development requirements. It has very specific legal rules about how a site is developed, including a zoning map which identifies existing specific land zoning and allowed densities. This is different from the General Plan's existing land use map, which reflects current land uses (which may be different than the zoning if the use is old enough to precede the zoning). The zoning map is also different from the General Plan's projected land use map, which is a vision for general land uses in the future. For Tempe, these three maps may look very similar because most of the land in Tempe already is developed, and has zoning that matches the land use. A few areas of the city have established land uses that were allowed (grandfathered) prior to current zoning. The projected land use map guides changes to the zoning map. However, zoning cannot be changed by the General Plan, only land use. To change zoning, a property owner must apply to amend the zoning map, and go through a public notification and hearing process that follows strict rules. When the request to change zoning is in conflict with the General Plan, the plan must be amended first. The strategies in the General Plan also guide the policy decisions made with the *Zoning Ordinance*, such as variance approvals or denials.

The city uses ordinances and programs as implementation tools to meet the goals and objectives of the General Plan (see *Figure 1* below). Each of these reflects the General Plan and can be modified as necessary to reflect new General Plan policies. These ordinances and programs are defined in more detail in the *Land Use Element*. *Figure 1* shows the relationship between the General Plan, other plans, the *Zoning Ordinance*, other ordinances, and programs used to implement the General Plan.

FIGURE 1



Summary of General Plan 2030 Public Participation Plan

In 2002, city Council approved the *Public Participation Plan* outlining the process used for developing this new plan. A Technical Task Force of employees from different departments was assembled to collect information, draft elements, and review the document for technical feasibility. An Advisory Team of resident, business and non-profit leaders were appointed by Council to draft elements, gather public comments, and advise staff on changes to the document. Members of various boards and commissions were also involved in drafting specific elements, reviewing these elements in relation to one another and recommending changes for consistency and readability. (See the appendix for participant acknowledgements.)

Goal:

To create, adopt and ratify a new General Plan with extensive public involvement representative of our diverse community.

Objectives

- Diverse public outreach
- Information gathering
- Vision formation

Process Participants:

- City Council – reviews current conditions, develops vision, reviews public comments, provides input, reviews drafts, directs city staff and adopts final document.
- Council subcommittee – (by Council direction) assists with developing goals and objectives, reviews public comments, review drafts and provide input and direct staff.
- Planning & Zoning Commission – hosts informal public meetings and formal public hearings resulting in a recommendation to city Council.
- Advisory team – diverse members representing community stakeholders appointed by city Council to advise staff during the development and review of the document.
- Public – reviews existing conditions, participates in formal survey or informal questionnaire, participates in public meetings, communicates with staff to identify issues, reviews drafts, provides input and votes.
- The following public resources were specifically asked to provide input and review the plan:
 - Boards and commissions
 - Neighborhoods and homeowner associations and affiliate organizations
 - Civic and religious groups
 - Educational groups
 - Employment groups (large and small Tempe businesses)
 - Business organizations
 - Social services
 - Utility companies
 - Adjacent municipalities and regional agencies
 - Community Design & Development Division - collects and analyzes data, coordinates with city staff and public, organizes and prepares the plan.
 - Technical Task Force – city department staff analyzes data, provides technical assistance in developing goals, objectives and strategies, coordinates elements with other city planning documents.
 - Outside technical advisors - utility companies, Maricopa Association of Governments, and other municipalities provide technical assistance and identify regional issues.
 - Consultant – conducts a scientific resident survey.

This process was a combination of several traditional community-planning approaches.

- Issues – Starting with a comprehensive survey that identifies current community issues and needs.
- Trends – Followed by an analysis of our statistical trends and projections to identify future needs.
- Goals – Based on the issues and trends, an Advisory Team developed goals and objectives to present to the community. An extensive series of public meetings will review a draft outline of the plan, assist with plan content and provide input on drafts of the plan.

The first public process consisted of 62 days of information gathering, including a consultant-conducted phone survey to identify community-wide issues and 17 advertised meetings to discuss proposed elements and gather public information to create a comprehensive community document. This was followed by 56 days of public meetings with the Advisory Team reviewing public comments and drafting the document. The draft was available for public comment for 94 days (April 1-August 8). Announcement of the draft and invitation to two spring open houses was mailed to every property address in Tempe. During this time, 17 additional advertised public meetings were held to introduce the public to the draft and invite them to provide comments in writing on the draft. Additional meetings were held with specific groups upon their request. 400 copies of the plan were distributed to staff, adjacent cities, utility companies, school districts, developers, residents and other members of the public. The document was also made available on-line, and at the Tempe and ASU libraries. Approximately 65 individuals or groups provided comments on the draft. Each comment was documented in writing, and reviewed by the staff Technical Task Force and Advisory Team. Responses are provided to each comment, explaining how their comment was incorporated into the second draft, or why it was not. The second draft was available for 55 days (September 19-November 13) during the public hearing process. The final draft (graphic version of second draft, with editorial corrections) was available during the Council hearings. The Planning and Zoning Commission had three hearings, and forwarded recommended amendments to City Council for two hearings. Council approved the recommended amendments to the final draft November 13, and Adopted the final document December 4. The result is a new general plan developed with extensive public participation, and written for a public election May 18, 2004.

General Plan Amendment Process

The City of Tempe maintains a policy of periodic review of the General Plan. This periodic review process allows for reasonable changes, referred to as amendments to the General Plan based on public input, Board and Commission recommendations, as well as economic and environmental conditions. This process is also essential in keeping any adopted General Plan viable and assures that the Plan is in concert with planning and development policies of the Mayor and city Council. The General Plan amendment process defines a course of action for both public and private interests. An amendment is made through an established process beginning with a formal request to make a change or amendment to the adopted General Plan.

Determination of major amendment

Pursuant to Arizona legislation, a major amendment is a substantial alteration of the municipality's land use mixture or balance as established in the municipality's existing general plan land use element. For major amendments, State legislation also requires that the plan must have two or more public hearings before the Planning and Zoning Commission and city Council, and must be adopted by two-thirds of the city Council. It is the responsibility of the Development Services Manager to determine if a proposed change is significant enough to require a General Plan major amendment and process. A proposed plan or project would require a major amendment to the General Plan if any one of the following apply:

- A Specific Plan which decreases any land use category within the specified area by one percent
- The plan or project results in significant alteration to or deviation from the *Water Master Plan*
- The plan or project results in significant alteration to or deviation from the *Comprehensive Transportation Plan*
- The plan or project DECREASES the acreage of any projected land use at the time of application by the following criteria:
 - Residential land use by one percent
 - Open Space land use by one percent
 - Any other land use category by two percent

(For the acreage resulting in a major amendment, see the land use element of projected land uses, *Table 2* on page 68, which is subject to update. Calculation will be made with the most updated data at the time of application.)

The complexity of the proposed amendment and/or attendant issues will determine the extent and nature of support material needed for the amendment. The Development Services Manager will also make this determination.

Criteria for considering any amendment to the General Plan:

1. Written justification for the amendment should consider long-term and short-term public benefit and how the amendment, considering Land Use Principles, will help the City attain applicable objectives of the General Plan.
2. If the proposed amendment is only to the General Plan's text, there should be objective discussion of the amendment's long-term and short-term public benefit and the larger issue of its impact on the city attaining applicable objectives of the General Plan.
3. If the proposed amendment impacts the General Plan's Projected Land Use Map only, there should be objective discussion of the amendment's impact on the projected land use within a minimum of a half-mile of the property.
4. With a proposed amendment to the General Plan Projected Land Use Map, the applicant/developer's written discussion on the proposed amendment should respond to the Land Use Principles in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The principles are presented on the next page, in a generalized request/response format.

- a. Describe the public benefit of the proposed amendment in terms of increase/decrease in intensity and its impact on adjacent land uses versus the impact of the present land use designation.
 - b. Describe the public benefit of the proposed amendment in terms of impact on the city's infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, utilities, streets, in terms of anticipated traffic generation, projected carrying capacity, projected volume, need for more streets, city services, etc.) versus the impact of the present land use designation.
 - c. Describe the proposed development quality of life in terms of how its components reflect unique site design, building design, landscaping; integrate or provide access between varied uses; deal creatively with the automobile; and reduce/eliminate physical barriers, as well as provide residential, employment and shopping opportunities.
 - d. Describe the use of open space, parks or green belts, and how the development separates as well as links residential and nonresidential component(s), if the proposed development incorporates a residential component. If applicable, describe how the proposed development impacts existing parks.
 - e. Describe the proposed development in terms of supporting regional and local transit objectives for arterial streets; implementing the goals and objectives of the *Tempe Transit Plan*; describe the internal street system in terms of supporting the above goals and objectives and incorporating uniquely designed transit facilities along the arterial streets.
 - f. Describe the proposed amendment in terms of effects on the school districts (enrollments and facilities).
5. If there are concerns, consideration of the proposed amendment shall be granted only if potentially negative influences are mitigated and deemed acceptable by the city Council.

Any amendment must follow the following process:

1. The Development Services Manager, the Public Works Manager and the city Council subcommittee review a proposed amendment.
2. With the submission of a formal application, the Development Services Director will prepare a staff report on the proposed amendment, with a recommendation and support material for consideration by the Planning and Zoning Commission.
3. The Planning and Zoning Commission will hold a minimum of two public hearings on a proposed major amendment or a minimum of one public hearing on a minor amendment and forward a recommendation to the city Council.
4. The city Council, with the recommendation of the Planning and Zoning Commission and attendant support material, will hold a public hearing on the proposed amendment. The material will include a Resolution to adopt the amendment to the General Plan.
5. If the city Council approves the proposed amendment, the Resolution is the formal acknowledgment of the Council amending the General Plan.

Note that the specific legal requirements for hearings, notification and public participation are delineated in the zoning ordinance.

Document Organization

The first chapter provided an introduction to Tempe, including its history, regional relationships and statistics and demographics. The second chapter provided an introduction to the General Plan, its history, relationship to other planning documents and process. The remainder of the General Plan is divided into eight chapters representing different planning issues, followed by an appendix of additional information. In some cases, the chapters are elements of the plan; in other cases the elements are incorporated into a larger chapter of similar issues. State law requires the majority of these elements, the other elements are reflective of community values for the expected quality of life in Tempe.

(Elements shown in parentheses are state required, but may have different names in this document).

III. Land Use Design & Development

(includes Land Use, Historic Preservation, Housing and Redevelopment elements)

IV. Economics & Growth

(includes Cost of Development and Growth Areas elements)

V. Conservation

(includes Environment and Water elements)

VI. Transportation

(includes Circulation and Bicycle elements)

VII. Open Space, Recreational & Cultural Amenities

(includes Open Space and Recreation elements)

VIII. Public Facilities & Services

(includes Public Buildings, Public Services and Public Safety elements)