

Report of the

EIGHTY-EIGHTH ARIZONA TOWN HALL

**“ARIZONA’S RAPID GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT:
NATURAL RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE”**

Prescott, Arizona

April 9 – 12, 2006

Explosive growth and development throughout the state are reshaping Arizona as it approaches the celebration of its first 100 years of statehood. Population growth and demographic changes in urban, suburban and rural areas are reflected in more extensive and intensive use of land, which in turn present challenges and opportunities regarding transportation systems, adequate water and energy, clean air and affordable housing.

Questions with profound and far-reaching implications arise given the unique pattern of land ownership in Arizona where 28% is tribal, 42% federal, 13% state and only 18% is privately owned. How will the very features of Arizona’s natural and built environment that have contributed most strongly to the state’s expansion be impacted by growth they fostered? What stewardship of Arizona’s natural resources is needed to ensure sustainability and how should it be implemented? What coordination is needed among federal, state, local and tribal governments? How can current and future transportation and housing needs best be planned for and met? How might Arizona’s public and private sectors provide appropriate leadership, laws, policies and financial resources to support and encourage desirable growth?

On April 9, 2006, the 88th Arizona Town Hall convened in Prescott and considered these issues over the ensuing three days. The conclusions and recommendations contained in this report represent the consensus reached by the 148 Town Hall participants. Although not every participant would agree with every conclusion or recommendation, this report reflects the significant degree of consensus reached at the 88th Arizona Town Hall regarding the implications of Arizona’s rapid growth and development for the state’s natural resources and infrastructure.

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ARIZONA'S POPULATION EXPLOSION AND DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES

People are drawn to Arizona by sunshine, the cultural heritage, climatic diversity, open space vistas and unique geographic features that provide access to recreational opportunities in desert and mountain landscapes. Historically, the health benefits of clean air and the availability of undeveloped land in a relatively young state set expectations of wide-open opportunities. Proximity to California, Nevada and Mexico encourages migration. With the exception of wildfires, the absence of natural disasters such as earthquakes and hurricanes adds to the state's appeal, as does the sense that Arizona's relaxed lifestyle and employment opportunities contribute to a higher quality of life than many other regions of the country.

Features of Arizona's built environment that have contributed to rapid population growth include freeway corridors, affordable water, developable land, attractive and historically affordable housing and commercial space, air conditioning, proximity to employment opportunities and cultural amenities.

Arizona has struggled to balance the benefits of population and economic growth with preservation of the features that attract people to Arizona. Explosive growth and sprawl have resulted in an array of interconnected impacts on those features. Traffic congestion diminishes quality of life as it contributes to air pollution, which in turn reduces the visibility of the state's natural beauty. The rapid influx of new residents has contributed to higher housing costs and increased consumption of potable water and energy resources. Environmental impacts include the creation of heat islands, diminished air quality, fragmentation of habitat, loss of lowland rivers and streams, loss of grasslands and the invasion of non-native species.

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Arizona has had mixed success in managing growth and should take adequate steps to ensure future statewide effectiveness. Examples of proactive growth management include the Central Arizona Project (CAP) and assured water supply requirements in the state's major metropolitan areas through the activities of the Active Management Areas (AMAs) and the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan adopted by Pima County to preserve open spaces. Unresolved challenges include issues such as wildcat subdivisions and unregulated lot splits as well as ensuring water supplies for developments planned outside the AMAs. Concerns in some sectors about the appropriate balance between managed and market-driven growth might be addressed through the sharing of "best practices" among the state's communities and interested parties.

A growth rate that has far exceeded projections in the past decade has forced government leaders and planners into a reactive position. Inadequate funding for staffing and the need for additional planning tools hinder the progress of careful planning. Competition among

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governmental entities, the lack of unified regional or statewide approaches and political expediency also have impeded coordinated and effective management.

Carrying Capacity of Natural Resources, Infrastructure and Public Services

Carrying capacity indicates the size of the population or community that can be supported indefinitely by the available resources and services. Current levels of air and water pollution, inadequate water supplies in some areas, and the loss of natural habitats, biodiversity and agricultural lands raise concerns that Arizona may have exceeded its carrying capacity in these areas. However, carrying capacity is a dynamic concept: the draw on available resources varies with population size, consumption levels and regional differences. Implementation of new technology and resource conservation consistent with living in an arid state can increase carrying capacity, as can shifts in lifestyle such as working closer to home, water conservation, and using carpools and public transportation.

Arizona's carrying capacity with regard to infrastructure and public services is under significant strain. Remedies to transportation problems will depend on cooperative planning and increased funding. Conversion of agricultural lands to residential developments may result in decreased water consumption. In addition, the political and economic challenges of transporting water to areas in need are substantial. Approvals to establish new energy transmission and distribution corridors have not kept up with current and projected population growth.

Current Arizona Corporation Commission practices and procedures tend to inhibit and delay needed utility infrastructure. Consideration should be given to encouraging the Arizona Corporation Commission to participate in and implement changes that will facilitate integrated long-term utility infrastructure planning, siting and investment.

The extent to which foreseeable limits to growth can be projected and used for planning purposes varies among the urban, suburban and rural areas of the state, and among the various natural resources and built infrastructures and services. Effective planning depends on a cooperative approach to integrate regional and statewide visions with the desire of local governments to be able to guide development in response to their unique situations. Cost-benefit analyses are needed to articulate the trade-offs between financial burdens and quality of life. A significant factor in both the projection and the reality of Arizona's carrying capacity will be the interplay of the demands of a growing population with the willingness to finance a level of infrastructure and services that preserves the state's natural environment and its attractiveness as a place to live and work.

Estimating and Projecting Future Growth in Arizona

Arizona is in urgent need of accurate population estimates and projections for planning purposes. Current estimates use outdated U.S. Census and Arizona Department of Economic

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Security (DES) data. The accuracy of census data is compromised by the challenges of counting undocumented aliens, seasonal residents and individuals who fail to respond to census inquiries.

Arizona's capacity for developing such information should be improved by developing uniform methodologies to collect reliable, timely data that include population and economic growth leading indicators. The work of the Governor's Arizona Data Estimates and Projections Task Force (ADEPT), created to enhance the development of accurate population estimates and projections and labor market information in the state, must be completed and the data provided. ADEPT findings regarding best practices used in other states to make population estimates and projections should be implemented, as appropriate, in Arizona.

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A separate dedicated group or agency should be designated, have sufficient staffing and funding to accomplish these improvements, and should collaborate with the private sector and college and university experts. The data could then be used by the public and private sectors to develop accurate models of the impact of growth in diverse areas of the state and of the infrastructure needed to support such growth. Accurate census data is very important for the correct allocation of state-shared revenues to county and city governments.

Demographic, Population and Economic Changes

Demographic, population and economic shifts both induce and respond to changes in natural resources and infrastructure. Active lifestyles and longer healthy life spans are increasing demand for hiking and biking trails and other open space recreation areas, even as built amenities such as golf courses continue to attract tourists and new residents. Newcomers, including those who are more culturally diverse and multigenerational, will change and may enhance the character of the community.

Demographic and infrastructure changes play off against each other. For example, the Phoenix light rail project has resulted in greater interest in vertical housing and business development along the route. Renewed interest in urban living is demonstrated by the movement of baby boomers and young professionals into inner city areas. Technology can facilitate working-from-home options that may ease infrastructure demands.

Arizona's aging population places new demands on the infrastructure, particularly with respect to health care facilities, transportation and a desire for self-sufficient communities that meet the needs of residents with limited mobility and those unable to drive. Some expressed concern that older residents may not be willing to pay for the educational improvements necessary to support a knowledge-based economy. The variation in ages also places an increasing strain on public facilities as the often incompatible recreational needs of diverse

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groups, such as baby boomers and children, compete for increasingly scarce available space and resources.

Native American communities are growing in economic strength, in part through revenues from casinos and the value of water rights. Increases in economic and political influence, along with greater proximity to urban areas, give tribal leaders a larger role in planning for growth. In turn, other communities should engage in increased communication and closer partnerships with tribal communities.

Arizona can accommodate these multiple streams of change through better coordination of government and private sector growth planning across municipal and county lines.

THE STEWARDSHIP OF ARIZONA'S NATURAL RESOURCES (LAND, WATER, AIR AND ENERGY)

Growing Smarter/Growing Smarter Plus

The Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus legislation generally has been successful in helping municipalities and counties take a long-term and regional perspective on growth by considering multiple elements when drafting and implementing general plans. Requirements to plan for water, housing and air quality have raised awareness of these issues. This legislation has assisted some rural and metropolitan communities in planning for the efficient and effective use of natural resources. The Governor's Growing Smarter Oversight Council has done a good job developing guiding principles for growth; Town Hall endorses the recommendations made by this Council.

Specific accomplishments of the legislation mentioned by some panels included increased joint regional planning, higher public awareness of general plans through notice requirements, greater neighborhood participation in planning, increased consumer protections through mandatory disclosure requirements and development of a planning checklist for Arizona communities.

Implementing Effective Statewide Planning

Future statewide planning should take into consideration the varying needs, resources and perspectives of urban, rural and tribal communities. It can best be implemented through an open conversation with the legislature. Tailoring local authority to meet local needs related to land use and water planning can help address the inherent tension between the desire for local control and the

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regional perspective required for coordinated planning. The creation of an ongoing dialogue and increased collaboration among urban, rural and tribal communities, the legislature and federal agencies would help shape effective statewide planning.

The overlapping of planning areas for different jurisdictions complicates productive discussions and decision-making. Additional tools, including enforcement mechanisms and technical assistance, are needed to implement growth management plans.

One panel suggested that a statewide group of local and regional stakeholders, such as existing Councils of Governments (COGs), in cooperation with the Governor's office, should take a leadership role in advancing planning and growth management issues, and not wait for the State Legislature to solve such problems. Another panel suggested creating a single point of responsibility at the state level.

Use of Lands for Public Purposes

Federal Role

The federal government plays an important and multi-faceted role in regulating and providing land for public purposes in Arizona. Federal management for conservation, recreation and tourism impacts the economy. Federal legislation, such as the Endangered Species Act (ESA), provides a number of tools that have fostered a cooperative approach to conservation. Effective management of federal lands is critical for the protection of healthy forests and watersheds and sustainable ecosystems.

State Trust Lands

Management of state trust land is severely constrained by requirements of the state constitution and the federal enabling act that preclude setting land aside for conservation purposes. Substantial reform of state trust land regulations is strongly encouraged, including a

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constitutional amendment that would allow the State Land Department to integrate state trust land with desirable growth and conservation strategies, including tools for conveyance, dedication and planning of open space.

Opportunities include dedicating rights of way on state lands slated for development, conveying land for non-monetary compensation such as density transfers, using a portion of trust-generated revenue to fund the State Land Department and infrastructure improvements necessitated by development of trust lands, and authorizing the Department to plan for and dedicate open space.

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Balancing Public Needs and Private Property Rights

The legislature plays a key role in striking a balance between public needs and respect for private property rights. All levels of government have important roles to play in addressing encroachment issues in high impact areas such as airports and military bases. Workable solutions such as land swaps should be developed to preserve Arizona military bases. Legislation should ensure fair treatment of all entities, with provisions for purchase of development rights or land trading. Public utility, transportation, wildlife and other necessary public use corridors need to be identified early and acquired prior to development to promote public acceptance of such corridors.

Counties should be given the authority to regulate all lot-splitting of any size within their jurisdiction.

Counties should be given the authority to regulate all lot-splitting of any size within their jurisdiction. Arizona should adopt legislation to strengthen the ability of counties to effectively regulate and require formal development planning

for all lot splits. Curbing unregulated developments could help address problems related to inadequate infrastructure, increased air and water pollution stemming from unpaved roads, lack of sewer systems or drainage considerations and to mitigate impacts from unregulated water withdrawals.

Arizona's Water Supply

Arizona should invest additional resources in developing and implementing the policies and planning needed to strengthen the protection of the state's water supply while also protecting the state's perennial streams. A stronger and better funded Department of Water Resources (DWR) should play a leading role in coordinating statewide planning and providing reliable water-related statistics. In particular, more data on water resources are needed outside the Active Management Areas.

Increased demand management and conservation can help Arizona meet its water needs for future growth, development and the economic vitality of communities. Town Hall acknowledges that effluent currently plays an important role in meeting water management objectives, particularly in Active Management Areas, and recognizes that it will play a key role in meeting Arizona's future water needs both inside and outside of AMAs. Concerns persist about the health and environmental impacts of effluent-related pollutants and public resistance. Further development of underground water storage facilities and desalination should be considered as other options for

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increasing the supply of high quality water. Agricultural use of water provides a buffer against future water shortages; such uses could be reallocated to support future growth.

Most participants recommend landscape restrictions, sub-metering, tiered water rates and low-flow plumbing fixtures to reduce consumption. Communities interested in implementing such measures can follow the examples of cities such as Flagstaff, Payson and Scottsdale that have implemented successful conservation measures.

The Colorado River provides an important source of water to Arizona. However, its future availability is not assured. Some of Arizona's allotments of Colorado River water have low priority. Our state should take all possible steps to ensure continued availability. Better education about Colorado River issues would build public support for water conservation.

The allocation, distribution and cost of water can be integrated into Arizona's overall planning through better coordination among the state's water regulation entities and all levels of government, including tribal governments. There should be conjunctive (joint) management of ground and surface water. Counties and local jurisdictions need expanded powers to

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incorporate water resource planning concerns into land use decisions, including the monitoring and managing of groundwater, and restrictions on developments in areas with inadequate water supplies. As recommended by the 85th Arizona

Town Hall, all domestic wells outside of AMAs should be metered. There is concern that the current pricing structure of water does not provide an incentive for prudent use, and that implementation of effective tiered rates often is hampered by Corporation Commission regulations, practices and recent appellate court decisions.

Energy Resources and Delivery Systems

Arizona has significant limitations in obtaining gasoline because the state lacks any production capacity, and has faced difficulties in managing supplies and maintaining distribution. A lack of redundancy in the pipeline system means that any disruption interrupts the distribution of gasoline. To ensure an adequate supply for current and future needs, Arizona should conduct a statewide inventory of the location and condition of pipelines and strongly encourage the correction of any infrastructure problems that are identified. The Governor's new growth committee could be made responsible for gathering and evaluating information about current conditions, and the need for additional pipeline capacity should be investigated.

Planning for transmission corridors and substation sites should be conducted earlier in the development process than has been the case in the past. Increased consultation and cooperation are needed among utilities, local governments, the Corporation Commission, and federal

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interstate transmission authorities. The public and property owners must be educated about the cost and location of corridors, which often cross residential and environmentally sensitive areas. Co-location of new transmission facilities in existing corridors and along interstate routes should be encouraged.

Public awareness and incentives for energy conservation should be increased. New construction should implement energy-saving features to control the energy required for heating and cooling. Wider implementation of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards should be encouraged.

Arizona should better promote alternatives to current power sources. The state needs public and private leadership to provide for incentives and encourage the development of broad and diverse new energy supplies. The fact that Arizona has sunshine over a

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considerable area of the state for a significant portion of the year provides the greatest opportunity for the use of solar energy; incentives should be expanded to encourage such use. Additional renewable energy sources such as wind and biomass power, and the production of biodiesel fuel and geothermal energy also should be promoted with incentives.

Where utility mandates exist, all utilities outside the jurisdiction of the Arizona Corporation Commission should be encouraged to enact standards achieving comparable results. Legislative leaders also should be encouraged to dialogue with governmental utilities regarding such standards.

Arizona should increase reliance on nuclear energy. It was acknowledged that this approach would require environmentally responsible plans for the disposal of nuclear waste.

Air Quality

The implementation of mandatory air quality standards has resulted in some improvements, but air pollution remains a serious problem in Arizona, impacting public health and visibility. Although the brown cloud over Phoenix is a notorious example, air pollution impacts areas throughout the state. The major pollution sources are vehicle and industry emissions and blowing dust, largely from new construction, unpaved roads, and agriculture. Both sources are difficult to control, and the state must provide adequate funding for the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) to find approaches and tools that will be successful in meeting federal standards.

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Some suggested that Arizona may need to enforce stricter vehicle emission standards. Others advocated expansion of automobile emissions testing to all counties in Arizona, especially in light of increasing numbers of commuters traveling from rural to urban communities. The agricultural exemption from PM₁₀ (coarse particulates) regulations in non-attainment areas of the state should be eliminated. Another approach could include closer cooperation between the U. S. government and the federal government of Mexico to encourage Mexican reduction of PM₁₀ emissions.

Urban planning approaches can reduce vehicle miles traveled by locating places to shop and work near residential areas. Encouraging the use of public transportation and telecommuting also could serve to reduce traffic congestion. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities can promote non-polluting transportation.

BUILDING AN ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ARIZONA (TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING)

Approaches to Transportation Planning

Arizona's transportation system has not kept pace with the needs of a growing population. Historically, transportation funding and construction have lagged behind the construction of new developments so that capacity is inadequate as soon as the infrastructure is completed. Freeway construction has often chased development instead of leading the way. Transportation planners must be given the ability and tools to plan in advance of growth.

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Many believed that transportation planning should be coordinated at a statewide and regional level, in part to minimize the competition among various levels of government seeking to shift the cost of transportation infrastructure to other bodies. Transportation planning needs are different for rural and urban communities, and tensions should be addressed through good coordination and communication about needs and concerns among the various levels of government.

The implementation of long-term transportation plans requires considerable funding flexibility to accommodate cost fluctuations. To the extent that funding and construction capacity will permit, the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) 20-year plan should be accelerated.

Integration of Land Use and Transportation Planning

Arizona must integrate land use and transportation planning. This should include coordination among all levels of government, including tribal governments, and all stakeholders, including the general public. Consumers' perspectives and social and human needs are an important part of the transportation and land use equation. The state's public participation process for planning and approving road-way improvements is effective in bringing stakeholders to the table, but can break down when compromise is not reached. A mechanism is needed to quickly resolve such impasses since the costs of projects escalate rapidly with each postponement.

Arizona must integrate land use and transportation planning.

Some participants felt a mechanism may be necessary to preserve and acquire right-of-way corridors and enable local governments to protect these planned corridors and prevent unwanted construction and interference with statewide and regional transportation plans. As more state trust lands come into play, some said that the State Land Trust should be given the authority to dedicate rights of way for transportation infrastructure.

Integrated transportation and land use planning should minimize miles traveled. Job centers should be developed closer to residential communities. Utilization of public transportation might be expanded by planning that encourages higher density housing along public transportation routes and transit-oriented development.

Funding the Transportation Infrastructure

Gasoline taxes should be raised and indexed to inflation. Indexing of fuel taxes is necessary to replace the buying power that has been lost due to vehicle efficiency and high costs of construction and maintenance. Despite anticipated public resistance, additional dollars are essential to fix Arizona's current transportation problems and ensure adequate future capacity.

Some noted that local governments have carried a heavy burden in funding transportation improvements. The need for additional dollars should be addressed at the state level by increasing HELP (Highway Enhancement Loan Program), GAN (Grant Anticipated Notes), ballot initiative, or through a significant portion of the current budget surplus. Monies in the Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF) should be used only for its initial purposes and funds drawn down to pay for other programs, such as those of the Department of Public Safety (DPS), should be restored.

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transportation taxes. Some advocated for legislative changes that would increase the bonding capacity of cities and local governments to fund roads. Others suggested the encouragement of alternative modes of transportation might result in access to federal funding. While some recommended exploring a statewide property tax to support bond financing of road expansion, others questioned the political viability of such a tax and the benefits to rural Arizonans. Improvement districts should be developed in which both public and private funds could be used, and tax increment financing (TIF) at the state level should be permitted.

There is strong support for augmenting funding from a variety of private sources. One possibility is the imposition of impact fees, although some noted that such fees may impede the state's goals regarding affordable housing. Other recommendations for alternative sources of revenue included income, property and sales taxes; establishment of improvement districts; public-private partnerships; a statewide transportation sales tax; more frequent collection of driver's license renewal fees; and toll roads that use new electronic toll technology.

Some recommended that developments built prior to the construction of adequate transportation infrastructure should be required to disclose this fact to homebuyers and other stakeholders. Others supported imposing requirements on the issuance of building permits or certificates of occupancy for new commercial and residential developments to ensure that adequate new infrastructure elements are completed at the time of construction. Further, the approval process and construction schedule to build roads should be streamlined and accelerated to avoid excessive development delays and traffic congestion related to such development.

Improvements to the Transportation Planning System

Ongoing, proactive transportation plans that can flex to accommodate emerging needs are necessary, and should include roads, mass transit (including buses and rails), corridor planning, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, airports and freight railroads. Building new freeways is not the sole solution, although some encouraged exploration of new technologies to enable freeways to handle higher speeds and capacities.

Mass transit and the connectivity to such must be expanded and made more accessible, frequent, convenient, safe and efficient to induce people to switch from

cars to public transportation. Alternative means of moving freight to relieve freeway congestion should be considered.

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Planning for and expansion of Arizona's transportation system should be streamlined. Arizona's existing transportation planning system is not adequately understood by the general public, and the slow speed of the process frequently frustrates citizens. More education should

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be provided about transportation needs and stresses on the current system, and citizens should be encouraged to become active in the planning process at the local and county levels.

Statewide and Regional Transportation Projects

Arizona must recognize the importance of its statewide and regional transportation infrastructure to the state's economic development, and economic development planners should be included in planning discussions. A cost-benefit analysis of projects such as the CANAMEX corridor and a potential connection from Mexican seaports to Arizona and points beyond should be conducted from a regional economic perspective. Dedicated transportation research funding should be made available.

Freight shipping from Mexico and future Mexican seaports will play an increasingly important role in Arizona's future. However, existing ports of entry are already overburdened, and existing highways would need to be improved to accommodate expanded freight travel. Interest was expressed in a potential commercial toll road bypass of Nogales to facilitate U.S.-

Mexico trade. Some participants said that new corridors are needed to connect ports of entry to existing freeways without routing traffic through Tucson.

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As highlighted by its designation as one of America's ten most dynamic commercial corridors (the "Sun Corridor"), alternative modes and alternative funding

mechanisms should be explored to create a state-of-the-art system for movement of people and goods between Tucson and Phoenix and their respective airports.

All statewide road expansion and transportation improvements should employ the most efficient technologies, whether they are satellite airports, rail, multi-modal, the promotion of fuel-efficient vehicles, or other approaches.

Rural areas have substantial needs for transportation infrastructure improvements; the age and condition of current roads pose serious safety problems. This is a statewide issue since urban dwellers travel through rural areas for recreation, which is one of the major features that makes Arizona an attractive place to live and work.

Affordable Housing

While the price of real estate in Arizona has exploded in the past few years, the median income for Arizonans has not kept pace. Access to affordable housing is a critical problem that has been exacerbated by the conversion of rental units to condominiums as property values continue to rise.

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Communities should focus on the need to provide workers with access to affordable, good-quality housing, in or near the communities in which they are employed. Many low- and moderate-income citizens of Arizona do not have access to such housing, yet it is a critical part of a thriving community.

In many of Arizona's communities there is a lack of workforce housing. Individuals such as teachers, health care workers, peace officers, service workers and others must commute very long distances between affordable homes and workplaces. This phenomenon has become known as "drive 'til you qualify." The situation decreases quality of life, increases workers' transportation costs, puts additional strains on the transportation infrastructure and makes it more difficult to meet air quality standards. Economic development, employee retention and business diversification are impeded when qualified workers are unwilling to put up with long commutes and ever-increasing congestion.

Developers should be required or provided with incentives to build mixed-income housing. Zoning codes should be reviewed and revised as needed. Some suggested that the Growing Smarter statutes should be amended to include more specific planning requirements for adequate affordable housing.

Availability of workforce housing should be encouraged through funding by multiple sources. These may include use of community development block grants or other federal funds, public-private partnerships, tax credits, nonprofit sources and local tax dollars. Arizona's Congressional Delegation should be urged to support full funding of the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), as this is a major source of funding for affordable housing programs. Financial assistance might come in the form of housing allowances, eviction prevention funds, housing rehabilitation, grants or loans, sweat equity programs or low-cost financing for low- and moderate-income buyers.

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Potential approaches to promoting affordable housing include establishing municipal and county housing trusts and incentives to employers to provide assisted housing programs. Town Hall recommends that state trust land reform efforts include provisions creating tools that could facilitate the use of trust land to promote affordable housing. Communities should be encouraged to facilitate affordable housing through the use of manufactured homes and multi-family homes. For example, to expedite creation of affordable housing, a community or county could pre-approve manufactured home designs to ensure compatibility with typical site-built styles in the jurisdiction. In-fill in urban areas, including the creation of mixed-use and affordable housing units in formerly commercial buildings, is another viable option.

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Public policy considerations related to workforce housing include payment of adequate wages and development of an efficient and accessible public transportation system. Some participants said that high density and affordable housing should be distributed throughout communities, rather than centralized in specific areas, and that all communities should be encouraged to require that a portion of the housing stock be kept affordable. Measures should be enacted to ensure that housing will remain affordable beyond the first generation of buyers.

FINDING PERSPECTIVE TO ADDRESS ARIZONA'S GROWTH

Comprehensive and Integrated Planning

Separate infrastructure planning efforts for land use, water, transportation, energy, air quality and housing in our rapidly growing state limits our ability to reap the fiscal and strategic benefits that come from an integrated approach. The recently proposed Growing Smarter Guiding Principles provide an excellent framework for comprehensive management of Arizona's growth and development, and should be broadly communicated to communities throughout the state. Local governments should actively use these guiding principles as they make growth-related decisions.

State trust land reform is essential to accomplish effective and integrated regional and statewide planning.

It is essential that local, county and state governments, in communication with tribal leaders and the federal government, commit to investing time and resources in a systematic approach to planning future development and use of natural resources. All communities and entities must be aware of the impact of their decisions on their neighbors. Special districts and overlay zones may be effective approaches to addressing issues in a more integrated way. State trust land reform is essential to accomplish effective and integrated regional and statewide planning.

Arizona should adopt a statewide blueprint for future growth in key sectors, starting with a compilation and review of all existing general and comprehensive plans. The review's purpose would be to highlight areas in need of attention and facilitate resolution of jurisdictional conflicts. The process would respect the fact that many issues are properly entrusted to local decision-making. The rapid pace of development warrants a state-wide summit among state, local, federal and tribal governments, conservation agencies and the development community to create this blueprint. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service and other major federal land managers in the state and tribal leaders should be part of the process, and consideration should be given to the appropriate mix of development and preservation of wildlife habitat and riparian areas in formulating plans.

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Such a plan should assimilate and build upon the work already being done by efforts such as the Governor's 10-year economic plan, the Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan, the Growing Smarter Oversight Council, the Governor's new growth committee, and the plans of various local, state and federal agencies. Councils of Governments, the County Supervisors Association, the League of Arizona Cities and Towns and the Arizona Department of Commerce could take an active role in bringing parties together and facilitating information exchanges. The plan should be reviewed regularly to identify challenges and concerns and report back to constituent agencies and jurisdictions regarding conflicts and missed opportunities.

A primary objective of the plan would be to foster collaborative and regional approaches to growth issues. Economically integrated areas such as the "Sun Corridor," a recently coined term for the diagonal area that stretches from Prescott through Phoenix and Tucson, southeast to Sierra Vista and Nogales, must look beyond jurisdictional boundaries to accomplish meaningful planning. The Councils of Governments provide a model of successful collaboration and information-sharing.

The effective implementation of plans is a critical issue. Competition and lack of cooperation among interlinked jurisdictions can impede implementation. Plans should specify the ways in which implementation will create economic benefits and avoid unintended consequences for all concerned.

A single point-of-contact reporting to the governor could be a resource to local governments. Some suggested creating an adequately funded state planning office that would coordinate statewide planning and serve as an information and "best practices" clearinghouse. This office also would be responsible for generating demographic estimates and projections, act as a data repository, and facilitate coordination among federal, state, local and tribal governments. Such an office would need appropriate authority to carry out its mission, and benchmarks could be set to measure the effectiveness of local planning efforts.

The state should consider creating a "heritage blueprint" that articulates what makes Arizona a special place and what we are trying to protect and maintain by gathering community input and working in conjunction with the state agencies responsible for historic preservation, game and fish, conservation and related issues. This effort should be informed by a survey to determine those values of greatest importance to Arizona residents.

Growth in Arizona's Rural Counties

Rural communities seeking to preserve their character in the face of rapid growth must develop a clear vision of what they are, what makes them unique, and what they want to become. This sense of identity can then help align the community's view of its priorities with decisions regarding future growth. The requirements of the Growing Smarter statutes can support this

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process, and citizens should become engaged in designing a community-specific vision for the future.

Arizona's rural areas should have the opportunity to retain a rural character despite the desire of some newcomers to duplicate the amenities of the urban areas they left behind. Integrating the look of existing buildings and new development is one approach to maintaining a sense of a unified community; another is preserving historical buildings and sites. Night sky ordinances should be considered to preserve the rural character of the area.

Rural identities are intertwined with land use patterns. Preservation of economically and ecologically viable ranches is a key element to maintaining the character. Leases of state trust land and federal land for ranching are essential in many areas to preserve the ranching industry.

Counties need legislation that provides increased authority to control lot splits and develop overlay districts to effectively manage growth, including protection of wildlife habitat and riparian systems.

Fast-Growing Rural Counties

To cope with the demands of rapid growth, fast-growing rural counties should be nimble and dynamic in their planning. They should ensure that planning and zoning controls are in place prior to the onset of development projects. To appropriately manage water, rural counties must be given tools, funding for comprehensive studies, and adequate authority. This includes authority comparable to that existing in Active Management Areas such as the ability to require

To appropriately manage water, rural counties must be given tools, funding for comprehensive studies, and adequate authority.

that new developments have a 100-year adequate water supply. This is especially important in areas with unregulated exempt wells that have the potential to deplete aquifers.

Conservation easements and land purchases for wildlife preservation have been effective in maintaining open spaces in some communities. Many of Arizona's fast-growing communities are adjacent to the wildland-urban interface, often with limited ingress and egress. Communities must address the potential of wildfire in their community plans. Collaboration with the State Land Trust, federal land management agencies and tribal communities should be an important component of growth planning.

Slow-Growing Counties

Slow-growing rural communities may face significant difficulties in resisting the plans of developers and big-box retail establishments. These communities should be encouraged to access

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resources and tools that empower them to engage in active self-determination. The Arizona Planning Association and the League of Arizona Cities and Towns could serve to disseminate best practices statewide. Small communities can tap the resources of Councils of Governments for grant writing for economic development projects. In addition, the State Department of Commerce (DOC), through its statewide planning office, offers tools and technical assistance that should be expanded. The DOC has been responsive to rural communities in providing assistance in economic development and community planning.

Desirable Growth

Desirable growth is proactive, orderly, efficient, consensus-based and sustainable without degradation of water supplies, other natural resources or the environment. Off-site regional infrastructure improvements and development must occur hand in hand. Each community should have a unique character and should make appropriate provisions for education, parks, recreation, open space, transportation, accessible human services and high quality of life. Economic diversity and vitality, good jobs at good wages, and affordable workforce housing are critical elements of desirable growth. Employment and business should be dispersed throughout communities.

Economic diversity and vitality, good jobs at good wages, and affordable workforce housing are critical elements of desirable growth.

The characteristics of desirable growth will vary by locale and demographics and evolve over time. Positive outcomes depend on leaders with vision who are responsive to local voices, but also committed to broader goals of community good. Desirable growth requires monitoring and study: communities should plan, learn, revise and adjust based on accurate data in a process of adaptive management.

To promote desirable growth, all affected parties should be encouraged to participate in the planning process from the earliest stages.

To promote desirable growth, all affected parties should be encouraged to participate in the planning process from the earliest stages.

Local governments should use appropriate zoning, overlays and other land use tools to preserve local character and self-identity. Recognizing the impact of special interest groups and lobbyists on the legislative process, it is recommended that specific efforts be made to inform such groups of the 88th Town Hall's findings in order to achieve a better balance of interests of all Arizonans. The Legislature should respect and not preempt appropriate local decisions and control. The redesign of inner cities with urban infill and mixed-use housing also can help encourage desirable growth. This would require communication with the public about the benefits of designing such inner city neighborhoods and the quality of life they could provide.

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The sustainability achieved through desirable growth can help ensure that the quality of life that we leave for future generations and the standard of living they experience is even better than that of Arizona today. Well-planned and managed growth can preserve Arizona's environment and habitats, open spaces and recreational opportunities, and still provide affordable workforce housing, quality governmental services and a strong economy.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES IN PLANNING FOR ARIZONA'S CONTINUED GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

At the conclusion of two days of concentrated discussion, participants in each of the five Town Hall discussion panels evaluated the major objectives to be accomplished in the areas of land use, water resources, transportation, air quality, energy resources and affordable housing. The results of their individual panel findings were then synthesized into the following six sets of priorities. While the priorities are listed in each category, it should be noted that the theme of this entire Town Hall was to develop an overall perspective of what Arizona needs to do to build the best possible state for the future. Therefore, each of the six areas of priorities are interrelated and should be considered as integral parts of developing that overall perspective for Arizona's future.

For readers who are interested in the more lengthy and detailed list of priorities developed by each of the five panels, those lists can be found on the Arizona Town Hall's website www.aztownhall.org/reports.html.

SYNTHESIS OF ALL FIVE TOWN HALL PANELS

Land Use

1. Use an integrated approach to regional and corridor planning.
2. Implement state trust land reform to promote desirable growth and conservation strategies.
3. Establish sustainable and flexible zoning codes.

Water Resources

1. Maximize conservation strategies and efforts.
2. Develop strategies for sustainable future water supplies.
3. Develop measurement and regulation of resources, particularly outside Active Management Areas.

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Transportation

1. Develop collaborative, inter-regional planning for multiple modes of transportation.
2. Increase assured dedicated funding.
3. Integrate transportation and land use planning.

Air Quality

1. Meet and surpass existing standards through Arizona Department of Environmental Quality enforcement and adequate funding.
2. Reduce auto emissions through incentives, transportation planning and stricter regulations.
3. Utilize incentives to reduce all forms of air pollution, including coarse particulates (PM₁₀).

Energy Resources

1. Develop clean and renewable energy sources.
2. Increase reliance on nuclear energy, incorporating environmentally responsible plans for waste disposal.
3. Increase conservation and demand-side management programs.

Affordable Housing

1. Plan for full range of housing opportunities.
2. Use incentives for developers and employers.
3. Encourage density and urban infill.

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