



City of Prescott

General Plan Review Committee

June 26, 2024 | 2:00 PM
201 N. Montezuma Street
Council Chambers, 3rd Floor
Prescott, AZ 86301

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sapio called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Terry Sapio, Chair
Don Michelman, Vice-Chair
Andre Carman
Mary Frederickson
JD Greenberg
Ralph Hess
Jim Huffman
Thomas Hutchison
James McCarver - Arrived at 2:16 p.m.
Rod Moyer - Excused
Tom Reilly

3. OPEN CALL TO THE PUBLIC

None.

4. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

A. Approval of the May 29, 2024 General Plan Committee Meeting Minutes.

Chair Sapio commented that he would like to make an addition to page six, specifically to change the last sentence of the MLK paragraph in the introduction from "will not condone" to "does not condone".

Member Hess requested to add that Mr. Helbling was asked if the change was acceptable, and Mr. Helbling acknowledged it was for now and he would confer with the MLK Jr. Committee. He also requested to add that Mr. Helbling is part of the Prescott MLK Jr. Peace and Justice Committee.

MOTION BY CHAIR SAPIO TO APPROVE THE MAY 29, 2024 GENERAL PLAN COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES WITH UPDATES AS REQUESTED; SECONDED BY VICE-CHAIR MICHELMAN: PASSED (8 - 0) MEMBER GREENBERG ABSTAINED.

B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the Great Places and Neighborhoods Chapter of the General Plan.

Tammy DeWitt, Community Planner, introduced the section for review.

Member Hutchison questioned if the General Plan accomplishes what is laid out in the introduction.

Ms. DeWitt responded they will get to that in the review of the sections.

Member Huffman asked what is the relation between the General Plan and the City Charter, is there a direct connection between the two.

Ms. DeWitt responded there is not a direct connection.

Ms. DeWitt moved on to review the land use maps. The land use map has been shared with the state Land Department to keep them involved. She advised two layers were removed from the map that were not used.

Member Hess commented that the land development code refers to open space and recreational space as separate distinctions. He also suggested that active and passive recreation/open space should be identified.

Ms. DeWitt responded that at this time the city does not have the ability to differentiate between the two on the land use map.

Member Greenberg commented that agriculture or ranching areas should show on the land use map.

Ms. DeWitt commented that agriculture is not a zoning designation in the city or the county.

George Worley, Planning Manager, added they might be able to split the differences out between recreation and open space areas in the future. He added to keep in mind that the land use map is for future use of the land.

Member Greenberg commented that we need to work on identifying the areas more specifically as open space versus recreation.

Member Reilly asked what defines the recreation areas as active or passive.

Councilman Ted Gambogi discussed the 25% open space designation requirement that applies to any new development. He has been in communication with the Recreational Services Department to inquire if it was possible to calculate the total amount of open space in Prescott.

Ms. DeWitt commented they are working on getting the open space total area number.

Member Hess added that if the terms are not defined in the land development code, the recreation industry has the description of active and passive recreation. Passive means little to no maintenance of the area.

Member Huffman asked if the AVO (Airport Vicinity Overlay) is approved will that show on the land use map.

Ms. DeWitt responded that it would appear on a different map in the airport area of the General Plan.

Member Hess commented that he thinks they need to define the spaces separately due to possible future uses for example Glassford Hills park will have different uses.

Vice-Chair Michelman said he is concerned that if property is annexed into the city, will the current designation it holds will be the same once it is part of the city.

Ms. DeWitt responded that the land would go through a rezoning process at that time.

Vice Chair Michelman asked for clarification on commercial designations.

Ms. DeWitt responded that industrial does not allow residential.

Member Greenberg commented that she would like to add the preservation of wildlife corridors into the Recreation open space paragraph.

Member Hess recommended links to plans that are mentioned in the General Plan.

Member Hess recommended changing words in strategy 3 by removing "encourage" and leave it as "use", in strategy 5.2 could replace "encourage" with "incentivize".

Member Reilly added he thinks "incentivize" should not be used since it might mean asking the city for money, should leave it out or use a different word.

Member Greenberg inquired whether the General Plan includes provisions to ensure that addresses are clearly visible for safety purposes.

Member Reilly answered that it is a requirement in the building code currently to have address clearly displayed.

Member Carman added that "incentivize" is not necessarily a monetary incentive.

Member Reilly commented that they can indicate it will not be a monetary incentive.

Ms. DeWitt moved the Committee on to the next section for review, Historic Preservation.

Member Huffman requested a link be added to the State Historic Preservation Office.

Member Frederickson pointed out a sentence seems to be unfinished, acronym reference needs to be defined or spelled out.

Mr. Worley added that the consultant will also help add in links that may have been missed, make sure sentences are complete and acronyms spelled out.

Member Reilly commented on Goal 1, that it should be notated as primarily owner driven.

Member Hess recommended in Strategy 3.3 to remove "consider".

Member Huffman asked for a description of GIS (Geographic Information System) and a link to Arizona Steward Program.

Ms. DeWitt moved to the next section of Recreation for review.

Member Greenberg commented trail connectivity needs to be a high priority and they should be aligned with wildlife corridors.

Member McCarver suggesting adding the pump track at Granite Creek Park to the specialty parks.

Member Reilly added he is looking for more information on seeking financial support and asked for further clarification on intent of Strategy 1.3 under Parks and Recreation Activities.

Member Greenberg advised need to find ways to make things easy to find for our City Council members to help them in making decisions.

Councilwoman Lois Fruhwirth added that the water policy doesn't consider potential contamination risks, such as water leaking into lakes or being polluted by businesses. Although they recognized the need to address these concerns in future planning, the current policy doesn't allow for it. The immediate decision was whether to grant water usage, despite these concerns not being covered by existing guidelines.

Ms. DeWitt stated that environmental concerns are addressed in the Environmental Quality section.

Member Hess commented that he would like to make sure the Glassford Dells regional park's name is referenced correctly in the General Plan and questioned if it is going to be a preserve or a park and if the city is providing park facilities.

Ms. DeWitt commented that it is listed under the upcoming projects and those details will be available as a plan for the Glassford Dells area comes forward.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth added that confusion stems from mixing city parks, like Watson Lake Park, with regional parks in planning documents. The speaker believes parks like Pioneer and Glassford Hill are regional and questions why city parks are categorized with them. This mix-up in terminology could cause confusion in the general plan.

Ms. DeWitt responded that she would double check with the Recreational Services Department.

Mr. Carman asked if the wildlife corridors are addressed in another part of the General Plan.

Ms. DeWitt confirmed it is covered in Connectivity.

Ms. DeWitt moved the Committee on to the next section of Trails and Greenways.

Vice-Chair Michelman asked for clarification on the length of the Prescott Circle Trail as it is mentioned in different lengths in different areas.

Member Frederickson commented she would like to add a goal that indicates Prescott is looking to coordinate with Prescott Valley in the vision of what the jointly owned Glassford Hill area is going to look like.

Member Huffman recommended to use a different word other than "encourage" in Strategy 3.1.

Member Greenberg commented that she would like the developers to connect to existing wildlife corridors to help with wildlife preservation.

Member Reilly requested to add Yavapai Trails Association and Prescott Mountain Biking Alliance into Strategy 2.2.

Ms. DeWitt moved the committee on to the next section for review, Pedestrian and Bicycle circulation.

Member Huffman asked for clarification on "downtown greenways trail" and "Better on street bicycle accommodations" and requested a better explanation of what "Vision Zero" is.

Vice-Chair Michelman and Member Reilly suggested consolidation of repeated issues in different paragraphs and possibly reducing the number of goals and strategies by creating strategies that encompass the same ideas.

Councilman Gambogi, an experienced cyclist, commented that while the city and its police force can only do so much to ensure cyclist safety, cyclists themselves must obey traffic laws and take precautions, like wearing visible clothing. He noted that it's hard for drivers to see cyclists, and many residents have complained about cyclists riding three abreast, which is a law enforcement issue.

Member McCarver questioned a reference to a bicycle friendly community rating, do we have a current rating and do we know what it is.

Ms. DeWitt added that she will get additional clarification on the items requested and moved on to the next section, Dark Sky, Glare and Lighting.

Vice Chair Michelman asked about the different ways to measure light and if there was an all-encompassing way to address the topic.

Member Carman asked if it is necessary to say how light output is measured.

Ms. DeWitt responded the details are listed if the city adopts a dark sky ordinance that includes specific lumen measurements for building permits, similar to existing county regulations. This would be necessary if the community seeks official dark sky designation. However, it may be unnecessary to include these details in the General Plan at this time since the measurement methods are not yet determined.

Member Reilly suggested more inclusive language regarding safety in Strategy 1.2, street illumination.

Member Frederickson asked what "adopt a residential lighting code" would mean, would it apply to existing homes and what would enforcement look like.

Ms. DeWitt responded they would educate. To become a dark sky community, the National Dark Sky Association evaluates the areas needing adjustments. The community would then educate residents, encouraging them to reduce excessive lighting. This could involve outreach and offering incentives, like done with water resource programs, to help people convert their light fixtures.

Ms. DeWitt moved to the next section for review, Tree City USA. The idea of becoming a Tree City USA was supported in a community survey. Tree City USA promotes increasing tree coverage to create more shade and reduce the heat island effect, which is important for addressing climate change. Prescott Valley has been a Tree City for 20 years, and the initiative would benefit the community's image. The next step is to explore the requirements to achieve this designation.

Vice Chair Michelman asked if suggesting that trees shade buildings is conflicting with the Firewise rule of keeping trees 30 feet away from buildings.

Member Reilly added that while trees and shading are important, they must also comply with Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) rules and regulations. This requirement should be mentioned in the plans.

Ms. DeWitt added that they would encourage better tree coverage, especially in existing commercial developments and parking areas that currently lack landscaping.

Councilwoman Fruhwirth said they would also encourage the right trees, ones that do not use lots of water and don't attract bark beetles, so we are not causing another problem.

Member Greenberg commented that she understands the value of trees and agrees with encouraging the mall, college and other larger parking lot areas to have more trees.

Ms. DeWitt stated that when those parking areas are redone they are required to come into compliance with the current parking code which does require drought tolerant trees.

Member Huffman asked if any of the Tree City topics fit into the green environmental section.

Ms. DeWitt responded that it would be separate.

Member Reilly cautioned against the suggestion of creating another committee within the city and recommended that an existing department oversee the program. He also questioned the tree ordinance, would that only apply to trees in the public domain and not on private land.

Ms. DeWitt confirmed it would look at commercial and city properties.

Member of the public, Joanne Oellers, spoke as a representative of Save the Dells, she appreciates the new format of the General Plan as it connects the items together very well. They would like to include the indigenous name of the tribe in the Historical Preservation section and will get the name if the Committee is in favor of adding it. She continued with recommendations for a more integrated approach to city planning, emphasizing the need to consistently include environmental and wildlife considerations throughout the plan. They suggest expanding the role of the Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization (CYMPO) due to their recent initiatives to cover regional environmental needs, wildlife corridors, and air quality, not just transportation. They also recommend reinstating growth management goals from the 2015 plan, such as mitigating light pollution and site disturbance. Additionally, the speaker supports the dark sky initiative, highlighting its benefits for migrating birds and suggesting collaboration with programs like Audubon's "Lights Out" to enhance these efforts.

Member of the public, Deb Thalasis, asked for clarification on whether the proposed land use spaces in the 2015 plan were directly converted from county to city designations or if they were adjusted based on what they might become in the future.

Mr. Worley explained that the distinction lies between land use designation and zoning. Initially, when areas are brought in, their zoning must match the county zoning by state statute. However, they are later rezoned to ensure compatibility with the land use plan.

Ms. Thalasis recommended adding another strategy regarding parks and open space, and the city review and correct the zoning of park properties to ensure accuracy. In her research, some park properties have incorrect zonings. She emphasized the need for accurate zoning to assure the public that parks and open spaces are properly designated.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

C. Presentation & Discussion Regarding Major Plan Amendments.

Member Reilly asked what is broken, what do we need to fix.

Member Hess responded is that the difference in the size of the project and its proximity to other buildings or residences isn't relevant. The focus should be on whether there's a substantial alteration of the land use mixture or balance, not on the project's size.

Member Reilly asked if there has been an issue in the past with the current policy.

Ms. DeWitt said there has not been a problem since 2003 when this was in the plan.

Member Hess added he is concerned with the homes nearby within the vicinity that can be effected by the change.

Chair Sapio added that he is hearing both sides, he does not want to trigger a major plan amendment for every change in zoning.

Member Hess commented that there is a need to correct misinformation.

Member Reilly stated that the issue is that much of the land in Prescott isn't currently zoned for its highest and best use, with many old zoning designations still in place. Converting these would require a major plan amendment with Member Hess's proposed changes, even for small lots, creating a bureaucratic nightmare.

Chair Sapio added he does not want to create more work for not a great value in return.

Member McCarver asked Member Hess why did he feel there needed to be a change.

Member Hess responded the current criteria does not look at the proximity to nearby homes.

Chair Sapio commented that removing the elements you want to take out essentially removes the definition of what constitutes a substantial change. Without them, any change could be considered substantial.

Member Reilly added that If he wanted to rezone a small residential lot downtown

to commercial because it's on a major roadway would require a supermajority vote by the City Council, which isn't a substantial change. The term "substantial" in legislation allows each city to define what it means for them. Prescott defined "substantial" based on its unique needs, and removing that definition makes it harder to achieve goals in the General Plan, such as zoning adjustments and cleaning up historic districts. This change would make the process more burdensome.

Ms. Thalasis commented that the concern is that the plan doesn't address infill development and its potential impact on existing residences. Small differences, like between 40 acres and 39.5 acres, determine whether a project needs a major plan amendment, yet both can have significant effects. Infill development can be challenging to manage, especially in areas transitioning to commercial use. Local disputes often arise around these issues, and residents need assurance that their properties are protected. Without addressing infill development in the plan, these concerns remain unresolved.

Member McCarver asked why did the state statute not make the process more complicated, why did they keep it simple, there must have been some thought put into that by the legislature.

Member Hess responded that the good thing is they leave it to the local communities to decide the criteria.

Ms. DeWitt asked to help clarify, is there an acreage allowance.

Member Hess replied no, that would be a difference in degree not in kind.

Ms. DeWitt asked for a consensus to possibly move forward with. Will leave as is for now and see where it goes during the 60 day comment period and what they hear from the public.

This item was for discussion only, no formal action was taken.

5. UPDATES

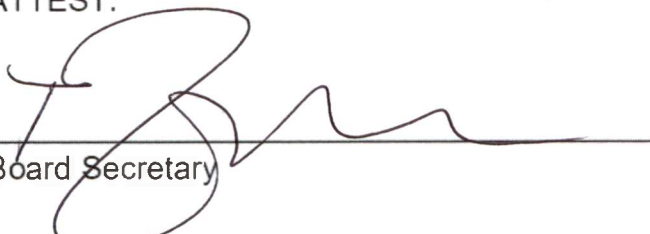
Ms. DeWitt informed the Committee that there will be two meetings next month, July 13th and July 30th.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Sapio adjourned the meeting at 4:48 p.m.

for Don Michelman
Terry Sapio, Chair

ATTEST:


Board Secretary