



# City of Prescott

## Council Subcommittee on General Plan Review

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February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026 | 2:00 PM  
201 N. Montezuma Street  
Council Chambers, 1st Floor  
Prescott, AZ 86301

### MINUTES

#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Cathey Rusing called the meeting to order at 2:11p.m.

#### 2. ROLL CALL

Cathey Rusing - Mayor  
Mary Frederickson – Councilwoman  
Patrick Grady – Councilman

#### STAFF PRESENT

Alex Bramlette, Planning Manager  
Matt Podracky, Deputy City Attorney  
Joseph Young, City Attorney  
Chelsea Walton, Comm. Development Dir.  
Sarah Thornhill, City Clerk  
Alane Moore, Senior City Attorney

#### 3. DISCUSSION & ACTION ITEMS

##### A. Discussion & Possible Action Regarding Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Subcommittee.

Committee Member Frederickson suggested that Committee Member Rusing serve as Chair in her capacity as Mayor.

Committee Member Grady expressed support for Committee Member Rusing serving as Chair but acknowledged the significant obligations associated with the Mayor's role. He stated that he would be willing to serve if Committee Member Rusing did not have the capacity to do so.

Committee Member Rusing accepted the nomination, noting her longstanding involvement with the General Plan.

Committee Member Frederickson moved to appoint Committee Member Rusing as Chair of the General Plan Subcommittee. Committee Member Grady seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Committee Member Rusing then nominated Committee Member Grady to serve as Vice-Chair.

Committee Member Rusing made a motion to appoint Committee Member Grady as Vice-Chair. Committee Member Frederickson seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

## **B. Presentation & Discussion Regarding the General Plan and Desired Next Steps for Adoption Process.**

The committee deliberates whether to establish either: A. 2015 General Plan; B. March 25, 2025 General Plan; OR C. June 24, 2025 General Plan as the baseline document for Subcommittee review and discussion moving forward.

Planning Manager Alex Bramlette and Community Development Director Chelsea Walton provided an overview of the General Plan process and the baseline document options before the Subcommittee.

### **Land Use Map Discussion**

Committee Member Rusing discussed long-term water policy and stated she identified changes to the land use map between prior versions and the March 25, 2025 version. Committee Member Rusing stated that the March 25, 2025 map included an expanded area of approximately 12 square miles, which included areas near Langs Valley, toward the base of Granite Mountain, and beyond Outer Loop Road.

Committee Member Rusing stated that residents in Langs Valley did not want to be annexed and the City did not desire to expand growth boundaries into those areas. Committee Member Rusing stated it was beneficial that the March 25, 2025 version was not adopted, as the map issue was discovered during review.

Committee Member Rusing stated that the June 24, 2025 version restored the land use map boundaries to align with the same overall size reflected in the 2015 General Plan. Committee Member Rusing stated she preferred beginning with the June 24, 2025 version to avoid revisiting previously resolved issues.

Discussion occurred regarding the land use amendment chart and the distinction between major and minor amendments. Committee Member Rusing stated there were still concerns with the chart and indicated it required additional review.

### **Anti-Discrimination Clause Discussion**

Committee Member Rusing raised concerns regarding the anti-discrimination language contained within the March and June versions of the draft plan. Committee Member Rusing stated the language did not change between the two versions and noted prior work had been completed to narrow language in that section.

Committee Member Rusing stated the Subcommittee should obtain input from the selected consultant regarding recommendations for that language.

### **Consultant Procurement Discussion**

Committee Member Grady asked whether there was a potential expedited process for engaging a consultant, rather than going through the RFP process.

Deputy City Attorney Matt Podracky explained that the General Plan consultant services would qualify as professional services. As such, professional services would allow the City to utilize direct selection rather than a formal solicitation process, enabling the City to negotiate directly with a consultant and expedite the process.

Committee Member Rusing expressed support for doing so as soon as possible, noting the importance of selecting a consultant who is familiar with Arizona and has experience preparing General Plans for other communities.

Mr. Podracky stated staff would work with the Community Development Department to identify consultants who may be a good fit based on experience and cost and would seek examples of their prior work.

Ms. Bramlette stated that onboarding a consultant could take approximately three to four months. Ms. Bramlette also noted that consultant fees may depend on the amount of work completed by the Subcommittee prior to engagement.

### **Ballot Timeline and Statutory Considerations**

Committee Members discussed election timelines and the feasibility of placing the General Plan on a future ballot, expressing a strong desire to place the General Plan on the November 2026 ballot. Committee Member Rusing expressed concern that a prolonged process may reduce public confidence and stated her preference would be to move forward as efficiently as possible.

Ms. Bramlette advised that based on the level of changes anticipated, the required public outreach, and public agency review timelines, staff's recommendation was that a November 2027 election was the more realistic timeframe for adoption and voter ratification.

Committee Member Grady stated that he believed the Subcommittee could potentially meet a November 2026 ballot deadline if final recommendations and ballot language were completed by the end of June 2026.

Senior Assistant City Attorney Alane Moore provided clarification regarding Arizona Revised Statutes § 9-461.06(K), which requires a municipality to either readopt an existing General Plan or adopt a new General Plan on or before the tenth anniversary of its most recent adoption. Ms. Moore stated that the City did not readopt the 2015 General Plan within the required timeframe and did not adopt and ratify a new General Plan pursuant to subsection M. Ms. Moore stated that, given the current posture, the more conservative approach would be to proceed through the full statutory adoption process, including a longer required public review period, to ensure transparency and reduce potential legal risk.

City Attorney Joseph Young stated that the City is currently out of compliance with state law due to failure to readopt or adopt and ratify a General Plan within the statutory timeframe. Mr. Young explained that Arizona Revised Statutes clearly provides that if a new General Plan is submitted to voters and fails, the previously adopted General Plan remains in effect. However, Mr. Young stated that the statute does not contain similar

language addressing a situation where a municipality fails to submit a General Plan to voters prior to expiration of the ten-year period. Mr. Young stated that the assumption that the prior plan remains in effect is not expressly stated in statute and that the law contemplates that a municipality will submit a plan to voters within the required timeframe.

### **Major Plan Amendment Map and Timeline Clarification**

Committee Member Rusing raised an additional concern regarding the major plan amendment map, noting that the map referenced open space and recreation areas being redesignated to very low density and commercial employment. Committee Member Rusing stated that the map appeared to be outdated and reiterated her focus on ensuring the land use map reflects accurate and current policy direction. Committee Member Rusing stated that she believed the June 24, 2025 version addressed some of those concerns but requested further review.

Committee Member Grady also questioned the previously presented adoption timelines, stating that staff had previously presented a timeline that would extend to 2027, as well as a timeline reflecting a minor plan amendment process with mandated deadlines. Committee Member Grady expressed confusion as to why the Subcommittee could not meet the earlier timeline, stating that there had been an understanding that the General Plan could potentially be placed before voters in 2026. He asked whether the current recommendation was based on the conclusion that the revisions would constitute more than a minor plan amendment.

Community Development Director Chelsea Walton stated that based on her experience working with the public throughout the General Plan process, the plan has received significant public attention. Ms. Walton stated that if the City appears to be rushing the process, it may negatively impact public confidence. Ms. Walton stated that her recommendation would be to pursue an RFP process to support a transparent and well-paced process, noting that the 2027 election timeline was the most likely outcome based on statutory requirements and public outreach needs.

Ms. Walton stated that due to legal review and the extent of revisions anticipated, the City would be required to complete statutory public engagement requirements, including a 60-day public comment period. Ms. Walton stated that given the need to finalize ballot language by the end of June to meet election deadlines, there would not be sufficient time to accommodate placement on the 2026 ballot.

Ms. Walton addressed Committee Member Rusing's earlier comments regarding revisions between the March and June versions of the plan. Ms. Walton stated that Council reviewed a version of the plan on March 11, 2025, and stated that Mayor Pro Tem Fruhwirth's revisions occurred between the March 11, 2025 version and the March 25, 2025 version.

Committee Member Rusing stated that the Subcommittee should attempt to target the November 2026 ballot and suggested that the consultant be asked to review the process and advise whether the November 2026 election timeline is feasible. Committee Member Rusing stated that if the consultant determines it is not feasible, the City could adjust to a later election date. Committee Member Rusing expressed concern that a

prolonged timeline may increase public skepticism and reduce voter support on the plan.

Committee Member Frederickson expressed support for attempting to place the General Plan on the November 2026 ballot. Committee Member Frederickson stated that the City did not meet the statutory deadline to place a plan before voters by the expiration of the 2015 plan and stated that addressing that lapse as soon as possible would be beneficial. Committee Member Frederickson stated that she believed the draft General Plan contains the statutory required elements and that consultant review could assist in refining the document. Committee Member Frederickson also discussed the value of coordinating the General Plan election with anticipated charter amendments and increased voter turnout.

Committee Members discussed whether the General Plan is required to be placed on the general election ballot, versus the primary. Mr. Podracky responded that the statute allows submission at a regularly scheduled municipal election or a special election, so it could be either.

Ms. Bramlette provided additional clarification regarding statutory deadlines, stating that in order to meet deadlines for a November 3, 2026 ballot measure, the required 60-day public comment period would need to be completed by the second week of June 2026. Sarah Thornhill, City Clerk, clarified that the plan and ballot language would need to be approved by Council on or before the June 23, 2026 agenda in order to meet the November 2026 ballot deadlines. Ms. Thornhill stated that the required public engagement period would therefore need to begin in April 2026 and that this timeline would not allow sufficient time for consultant onboarding and review prior to initiating the public process.

Committee Member Rusing requested that staff provide a revised adoption timeline outlining the required deadlines and milestones.

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### **Major vs. Minor Amendment Discussion**

Committee Members discussed the distinction between major and minor General Plan amendments, including whether certain revisions could be considered minor amendments.

Deputy City Attorney Matt Podracky stated that the definition of a major amendment is included in Arizona Revised Statutes § 9-461.06(H), which defines a major amendment as a substantial alteration of the municipality's land use mixture or balance as established in the land use element. Mr. Podracky stated that the municipality's General Plan should define the criteria for determining whether a proposed amendment constitutes a substantial alteration.

Committee Members discussed examples of changes that may be considered minor, including removal of non-land use references. Ms. Walton stated that minor amendments are not currently defined in the City's adopted General Plan, but that the draft plan includes definitions and criteria that may be used as reference.

Senior Assistant City Attorney Alane Moore stated that the discussion of major versus minor amendments presupposes the existence of an adopted General Plan. Ms. Moore stated that because the City did not readopt the 2015 General Plan within the statutory

ten-year period, the City is in a position where proceeding through the full statutory adoption process is the more conservative approach.

Committee Member Rusing stated the Subcommittee should proceed cautiously and supported moving forward under the conservative statutory approach.

### **Direction on Ballot Goal**

Following discussion, Committee Members stated the goal of placing a revised General Plan on the July 2027 Primary Ballot that will be overwhelmingly supported by the community.

Committee Member Rusing stated that it is important for the public to understand that portions of the General Plan, including the land use element, are legally binding.

### **Review Process and Next Steps**

Ms. Walton asked whether Committee Members wished to continue reviewing the General Plan prior to the consultant being retained. Committee Members agreed to continue reviewing the June 24, 2025 plan and to proceed through the document in sections during future meetings.

Committee Member Rusing requested that staff begin drafting an executive summary for the General Plan. Committee Member Frederickson stated an executive summary would be beneficial for the public. Ms. Walton stated staff would begin drafting an executive summary.

Committee Members discussed comparing the March 25, 2025 plan to the June 24, 2025 plan and identifying any provisions that may be recommended for inclusion in the baseline document.

Committee Members agreed that the next meeting discussion would include the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.

### **Direction to Staff – Consultant Scope and Executive Summary**

Ms. Walton stated staff would begin preparing a scope for direct selection of a consultant. Ms. Walton asked whether the Subcommittee wished to review and approve the scope prior to staff moving forward. Committee Member Rusing stated the Subcommittee did not need to review the scope, and staff could proceed while keeping the Subcommittee informed.

Committee Member Rusing requested that staff begin drafting an executive summary for the General Plan to improve accessibility for the public. Committee Member Frederickson concurred that an executive summary would be helpful. Ms. Walton stated staff would begin drafting an executive summary.

Committee Members discussed conducting Subcommittee review of the June 24, 2025 plan in sections, beginning at the start of the document. Committee Members agreed the next meeting discussion would focus on the Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2.

## **4. GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM STAFF**

Ms. Walton stated staff anticipated meetings on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Ms. Walton stated the next meeting was anticipated for February 25, followed by March 11, and April 8. Ms. Walton noted the March 25 meeting date would not be scheduled due to the Council break.

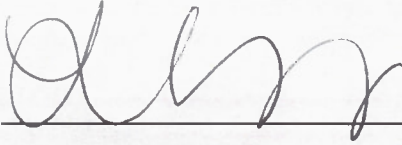
Ms. Walton noted staff would make best efforts to provide meeting materials in advance, but that civic clerk posting timelines may require a short turnaround.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to discuss, Committee Member Cathey Rusing adjourned the meeting at 4:22pm.

*Mayor Cathey Rusing, Chair 3/12/26*

Mayor Cathey Rusing, Chair



Lizzett Enriquez, Board Secretary