

Pinal County Comprehensive Plan

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Is growth inevitable? How much control do we, as SaddleBrooke residents, have over future developments in our county? What are the key issues, how much impact will current planning have on us, and how can we affect the process?

These are all questions that were raised and addressed at the February 27th meeting at DesertView Theater. This near-capacity crowd came to hear presentations made by Partners for Strategic Action, Inc. (PSA), a land use consulting firm hired by the Pinal County Board of Supervisors to assist in updating the County's 2001 Plan.

First and foremost, the comprehensive plan is a statement of policy about future developments. It is proactive, seeks to manage growth more effectively, and develops an implementation program. The overall philosophy of "we create our future" is clearly reflected in the intertwining circles that represents the guiding values: "open spaces and places, a sense of community, economic sustainability, quality education opportunities, healthy and happy residents, mobility and connectivity, and environmental stewardship."

The project is currently in the "Policy Framework" and "Alternatives Development and Analysis" phase. Public input to date has confirmed the following key points: "We are not Phoenix and we are not Tucson. Pinal County is and should remain different. We need to learn from others' mistakes. And, last but not least, we must be proactive and innovative."

Three alternatives (reduced from twenty-seven) have been discussed at length in public hearings, focus groups, stakeholder meetings, road shows and youth groups. Each considers the same population; however, the alternatives differ based on how each addresses economic and residential development, the treatment of open space, and transportation/infrastructure strategies. Choices will need to be made between population dispersion throughout the region and high density corridors along major highways.