



1. PLAN PURPOSE & ORGANIZATION

INTRODUCTION

The General Plan for the City of Cottonwood is intended to guide and direct future land use decisions in the City during the 10-year horizon of the plan (2003-2013). The plan is built upon the 1995 General Plan and an extensive review of the existing conditions and planning influences in the City and surrounding Verde Valley region.

The Planning and Zoning Commission developed this plan over a period of 24 months and solicited public input at open houses, workshops and various public meetings. The resulting plan embodies our hopes and dreams for the future:

- A City of opportunities, that is “respectful of its past and focused on its future”
- A prosperous and confident place that recognizes it is blessed with a tremendous physical beauty and location, willing and tolerant people and cooperative neighbors.
- A City that welcomes and relishes diversity and looks forward to the change that is inevitable.
- A city that is committed to managing change to maintain its core values.

WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

The general plan provides the basis for public policy concerning land use and facility development, and a general framework for public and private investment.

The plan establishes a common vision for the community, which in turn guides decision making by public officials. The vision is developed in response to input from citizens and appointed and elected officials about the community.

Compatibility of land uses is also addressed by the General Plan, which also serves as the basis for regional coordination with the plans and policies of other land jurisdictions, including Yavapai County, the United States Forest Service, the Arizona State Land Department and other agencies and individuals.

The General Plan results in a “do-list” of activities and projects that is monitored on a yearly basis by the City Council. The list may include recommendations for continued regional planning as well as for the later development of more specific “area plans,” community facilities, or codes and ordinances which may further the objectives identified by the plan.

REQUIREMENTS FOR GENERAL PLANS

Although a plan for the City was adopted in 1995, the “Growing Smarter” legislation approved by the Arizona legislature in 1998 (and amended in 2000), provided additional performance standards for general plans, as well as procedural requirements for zone changes, which are addressed by the Cottonwood Zoning Ordinance.

With respect to general plans, the Growing Smarter legislation also required adoption of a public involvement policy and plan amendment process. These policies are included in Chapter 14.

REQUIRED PLAN ELEMENTS

State law requires that the general plan include the following elements:

- Circulation
- Land Use
- Growth Areas
- Open Space
- Environmental Planning
- Water Resources
- Cost of Development



In addition, Cottonwood’s General Plan also includes elements devoted to:

- Housing
- Economic Development

Each plan element provides a vision statement, identifies key issues, and sets out goals, objectives and strategies.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

The Cottonwood General Plan includes the following essential ingredients:

- Plan Purpose & Organization
- Regional and Local Setting
- Importance of Planning
- Local Planning History & Public Involvement
- Community Vision Statement
- Plan Elements & Implementation
- Plan Administration
- Appendix

Each of the plan elements includes sections devoted to community vision, background information, related issues, goals and objectives. The elements also include an implementation matrix of action items which identify lead agencies and timelines codified as either a short term (ST) or long term (LT) project.

OTHER RELATED PLANNING

The plan also considers a variety of supportive background studies and plans, including:

- The City of Cottonwood Housing Strategy (adopted March 16, 2002);
- The City of Cottonwood Strategic Plan for Economic Development (adopted August 16, 2001);
- Verde Valley Forum Regional Planning and Growth Management Report (June, 1999);
- Verde Valley Forum Open Space Report (February, 2002);
- The Verde Valley Regional Transportation Study (1999);
- The Cottonwood Area Transportation Plan (December, 2002);
- The Cottonwood Airport Master Plan (draft 2002).
- The regional planning resolution titled, “Common Bonds – Principles for Cooperation in Land Use Planning and Growth Management in the Verde Valley,” adopted by the City Council October 7, 1998 (and by other Verde Valley municipalities and Yavapai County shortly thereafter.
- Old Town Market Study (Dec., 2001).
- Cottonwood Commercial Historic District (Pat Haigh Stein, 1999).

WHY COTTONWOOD’S GENERAL PLAN IS SO IMPORTANT

City planning enables a formal public process for identifying the issues that affect us the most, for developing a mutual community vision to serve as a guide for addressing those issues, and for public discussion of alternatives and solutions.

People often express concern about the future, the well-being of their community and of the quality of the environment they will leave behind for their descendents. And yet there are many issues that a growing community faces

and so many differences of opinion on how to handle them. One thing seems certain: Change will occur regardless. Without planning for it, we could lose our quality of life in the process, as well as a variety of precious and irreplaceable resources.

This plan can help ensure a diversity of jobs, housing, transportation and recreation. Successfully planned growth can also result in benefits and public improvements that a community may otherwise be unable to



accomplish on its own, a particularly relevant issue these days to cities all over Arizona.

There also exists a critical need for balance in planning for the future of a community that is as concerned about its heritage and small town qualities as it is about economic development and water resources.

It may therefore be important to develop a clear understanding of where we have been and where we are now, as well as where we are going and how we will get there.