



## 3. LOCAL PLANNING & PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

### HISTORY AND RECENT REVIEW OF COTTONWOOD'S GENERAL PLAN

The City of Cottonwood first prepared a General Plan in 1967. The Plan was updated in 1995 to address changing conditions and anticipated growth. Many changes have occurred in and around Cottonwood since the 1995 General Plan update. Population has increased at a substantial rate heightening demands for jobs and housing. Traffic has grown at a faster rate than population, spurring commercial development. Since 1998, annexations have increased the City's land base from 5.25 square miles to 15.75 square miles. In addition, many questions have been raised in response to pending bypass projects and possible land exchanges. As a result, land uses in many areas of the City have been evolving. The State's recent "Growing Smarter" legislation also required the City of Cottonwood to add several new elements to its General Plan. In the spring of 2001, the Cottonwood Planning & Zoning Commission (also acting as the steering committee for the plan review) directed Staff to begin the process of updating the General Plan. Since the last review of the General Plan in 1995, the City has developed a number of background studies devoted to regional issues, housing, economic development, traffic and open space (see Section 1). The housing and economic development plans also featured a lengthy public involvement process. The following is a summary of the public involvement process which supported the current General Plan.

#### **ADOPTION OF A CITIZEN REVIEW PROCESS**

The General Plan would not be a legitimate planning document without community participation in the formulation of the plan. The State of Arizona recently required the addition of a formal Citizen Review Process as well as guidelines about amending the plan. A Public Involvement and Plan Review and Amendment policy is established under the Plan Administration section in this document. The policy, observed in the current plan review, outlines the process and opportunities for public involvement, as well as the type and distribution of public notifications.

#### **Commission Review and Special Public Meetings**

In the Summer of 2001, discussion regarding the General Plan became part of monthly P&Z Commission meeting agendas and continued throughout the process of plan review. A series of public meetings and workshops were also hosted by City staff to provide information on the process and collect citizen input on issues. Three public work sessions were held over a six week period beginning on September 8, 2001. The meetings were intended to provide public information and opportunities for public input regarding issues.

These informational meetings also provided an overview of the General Plan's function, the history of the planning process in Cottonwood, and changes that have taken place since the adoption of the 1995 plan, including the requirements of recent legislation to add a series of new plan elements. To do so, it would be important to re-evaluate the community's vision and identify related community issues.

The meetings also explained how the planning process was started, set out a tentative process calendar for developing and reviewing the plan, the roles of the public, Staff and City officials in developing the new plan, and the new requirement for ratification by public vote.

Staff also discussed opportunities to submit written comments as well as available information, including background studies already initiated in anticipation of the General Plan update (i.e., housing, economic development, traffic, and open space planning); the manner of public notifications and input (including newsletters); and availability of draft plan elements.

#### **Community Survey / Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was distributed at work sessions and in the press as well as in association



with drop boxes, asking respondents for three things about the City respondents would “like to change,” and three things about the City they would like to “keep the same.” The resulting list of issues was remarkably long, despite asking each respondent for only their top 3 picks in each category (see Plan Appendix). The results of the questionnaire also became the basis for public discussion about local values and concerns.



# City of Cottonwood General Plan Update

Arizona's new "Growing Smarter" legislation requires that the City of Cottonwood adopt a new General Plan by the end of 2002. In addition to land use, circulation, housing and economic development issues, the City's plan will devote greater attention to specific "growth areas," environmental planning, open space, water resources, and costs of development (financing for public services and infrastructure). The plan will be voted on by residents in November of 2002. It must therefore be developed within the next 12 months!

## We Need Your Help!

### Public Involvement

The Cottonwood Planning and Zoning Commission has initiated a citizen involvement process in order to collect input from City residents and business owners regarding development of a new General Plan. The initial phase of this process, Issues Identification, will also extend through the end of 2001. During that time, City staff will be assembling a community assessment report. Early next year the Planning and Zoning Commission will begin development of a draft plan for presentation to the public. The Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council will take comments on the plan through the end of next Summer. The following methods of public information and involvement will be provided:

- **Newsletters:** City staff will distribute at least (3) newsletters during the process to residents and property owners in order to keep you updated.
- **Survey:** A community-wide citizen survey will be conducted before the end of this year.
- **Public Meetings:** A series of meetings and workshops will be hosted by City staff to provide information and collect citizen input on various issues. Discussion regarding the General Plan will also be part of monthly Planning and Zoning Commission meetings.
- **Comments:** Written comments will be accepted at any time throughout the process. Please address letters to: The City of Cottonwood, General Plan Update, 827 North Main Street, Cottonwood, AZ 86326.

### Current Projects...

The City has recently completed or is working on several community planning and development projects, including:

- The Focused Future II Strategic Plan for Economic Development:
- Mingus Avenue Extension project:
- Fir Street Improvement project:
- New traffic signals at 89A & 12th St.; 89A and Mingus Ave.; and Mingus Ave. & Main St.
- Waste Water Treatment Plan Expansion:
- New Public Safety Facility:
- North Willard Street sidewalk project.
- Railroad Wash Improvements:
- Cottonwood Housing Study:
- Housing Rehabilitation Program:
- Homeless Coalition of non-profit social service agencies:
- Main Street Program, Old Town Revitalization:
- Sizzlin' Salsa, Farmers' Market, Concerts, etc.:
- Dead Horse Trails Coalition, Jail Trail, Lime Kiln Trail.

### Plan Meetings:

- 10:00 AM, Saturday, September 8, 2001**  
Mingus Union High School Cafeteria  
1801 East Fir Street, Cottonwood
- 6:00 PM, Wednesday, September 19, 2001**  
Cottonwood Public Library  
100 South 6th Street, Cottonwood
- 6:00 PM, Wednesday, October 3, 2001**  
Cottonwood Civic Center  
805 North Main Street, Cottonwood

### For More Information...

Contact: George Gehlert, Planner  
City of Cottonwood  
Community Development Dept.  
827 N. Main St.  
Cottonwood, AZ 86326.  
Phone: 634-5505.  
Email: ggehlert@ci.cottonwood.az.us



Materials relating to the Cottonwood General Plan update may be viewed during normal business hours at the Cottonwood Community Development Department, 827 North Main Street in Cottonwood.

La Ciudad de Cottonwood pide la entrada pública como parte del Plan General de la Ciudad actualiza, anticipado ser completado dentro de los próximos 12 meses. El plan será la aprobación con sujeción a de votante como parte de la elección general en el noviembre, 2002. En este tiempo, la Ciudad pide que residentes identifiquen los asuntos que son importantes a ellos. Si usted apreciaría más información acerca de este proceso, por favor llama Marianna Jiménez, Secretaria Municipal, al 634-5526.

### What's Important to You?

If you moved away from Cottonwood for five years and came back, what are 3 things about the City that you hope would have changed for the better by then?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

If you moved away from Cottonwood for five years and came back, what are 3 things about the City that you hope would have stayed the same?

- 1) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) \_\_\_\_\_

Cut out and send to: City of Cottonwood, General Plan Update, 827 N. Main Street, Cottonwood, AZ 86326. Results to be announced.

Please also send us your contact info if you would like to receive mail notices of future meetings:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Physical Location \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

[ ] Check here if you live outside the City of Cottonwood.

Fig. 3-1  
This full page ad, announcing the start of the General Plan review process, was printed in the Cottonwood Journal EXTRA on September 5, 2001. The ad was one of a series of local press releases and other forms of publicity used to keep the public

The ad also included a short questionnaire asking residents to identify issues they felt were important. Specifically, the survey asked readers to identify 3 things about the City they would keep the same; and 3 things about



### Submittal of Public Comments

Public comments were accepted throughout the process. "Drop boxes" were also placed around the City to receive survey responses and encourage other written comments. Locations included Cottonwood City Hall (827 N. Main); Community Development Dept. (821 N. Main); and the Cottonwood Public Library (100 S. 6<sup>th</sup> St.).

### 60 Day Review and Public Open Houses

A 60-day public review process was held prior to consideration of the final plan by the Planning & Zoning Commission and the City Council. As part of this process, the draft General Plan document was copied to the City Council, P&Z Commission, NACOG, Department of Commerce, Town of Clarkdale, Town of Camp Verde and other agencies as required by the Public Involvement policy, as well as to any other agency or individual that requests a copy.

### Public Displays and Open Houses

During the 60-day review, City staff held a series of open houses, meetings and work sessions to present basic ideas associated with the plan and to provide other information and answer questions. A number of exhibits were also placed around the city for publicity and to advertise the plan components.

### Adoption by Public Hearing

Ultimately, the final Plan was subject to formal public review by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and by the City Council. The Commission approved the Plan on November 17, 2003. Adoption by the City Council occurred on December 16, 2003.

### Public Vote

The final plan was subject to ratification by public vote on May 18, 2004. Publicity and Fact Sheets regarding the ballot and the General Plan content are required by Statute to be made available for public review in advance of the election.

### General Availability of Information

Materials relating to the General Plan were made available throughout the process at the Cottonwood Planning and Building / Community Development Department during normal business hours. The City also maintained a website for the General Plan where draft plan elements were posted as well as meeting notices and minutes detailing all plan related discussions. The draft and final plans were also posted on the City's website.

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

#### Postings, Ads and Press Releases

A formal public involvement process was initiated with the publication of a full page advertisement in the Cottonwood Journal EXTRA on September 5, 2001. Public postings regarding plan meetings, survey and plan review appeared throughout the process in various locations around the City.

Fig. 3-2: Due to the City's considerable Hispanic population, many public notices were also provided in Spanish.

**AUDIENCIA PÚBLICO DEL PLAN GENERAL DE LA CIUDAD DE COTTONWOOD**

El Comisión de Planificación de la Ciudad de Cottonwood tendrá una serie de audiencias públicas para iniciar la discusión para actualizar el pendiente Plan General de Cottonwood esperado ser completado dentro de 12 meses. El plan será usado por los oficiales de la ciudad en sus revistas de propósitos del desarrollo de finca y el adelantamiento de facilidades públicas (carminos, drenaje municipal, aguas residuales, servicios de bomberos y policía, servicios humanos.) El plan final será aprobado por los votantes como parte de la Elección General en Noviembre de 2002. Las reuniones siguientes se han planeado para proporcionar información público con respecto a este proceso:

- 10:00 de la mañana, el Sábado, 8 de Septiembre de 2001 en la cafetería de la Preparatoria Mingus Union, localizada en 1801 E. Fir Street en Cottonwood;
- 8:00 de la tarde, el Miércoles, 19 de Septiembre de 2001 en la Biblioteca Pública de Cottonwood, localizada en 100 S. 6<sup>th</sup> Street en Cottonwood;
- 8:00 de la tarde, el Miércoles, 3 de Octubre de 2001 en el Centro Cívico de Cottonwood, localizado en 805 N. Main Street en Cottonwood.

Todas personas interesadas son invitadas a asistir estas reuniones. Las materias que relacionan al progreso del actualización de Plan General está disponible para la revisión de las 8:00 de la mañana a las 5:00 de la tarde, de lunes a viernes, en el Departamento de Desarrollo de la Comunidad de la Ciudad de Cottonwood en 821 North Main Street, Cottonwood, Arizona 86326. Para recibir más información acerca de este proceso, por favor llame Marianna Jiménez, Secretaria Municipal, al 634-5526.





## Newsletters

Newsletters regarding the plan process were distributed city-wide to all City property owners (as indicated by the current Yavapai County Assessor’s database); registered Cottonwood business owners; and to all others who requested them. Newsletters were distributed in May and July of 2002 as a reminder of the planning process and to demonstrate preliminary issues and goals which had been identified (see following page). The third newsletter was distributed in September of 2003 to announce the availability of a draft plan as part of the 60-day public and agency review process.

## SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments were taken throughout the planning process at public meetings and in writing via drop boxes, U.S. Mail or over the counter at the Cottonwood Community Development Department.

City staff compiled all comments received for review by the public, the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. A complete summary of public comments is available as part of the General Plan Appendix.

The two methods of response provided a check against the overall list of issues. Whereas public meetings provided a chance to assemble an initial issues list, the write-in responses also provided an opportunity to weight the issues (total number of responses for each issue).

Although there was a great deal of similarity between comments received at meetings and those submitted individually in writing, the list of issues which resulted from write-ins was much larger. This may have been due to the independent nature of the response.

### **Things We’d Like to Change for the Better:**

**Traffic Control, Walk-ability, Aesthetics, Environmental Sensitivity, City Services, Recreation, Jobs & Shopping**

Comments received at public meetings showed heavy concern for better traffic

mitigation, less emphasis on auto oriented development and more emphasis on pedestrians and bicycles. Comments also supported more environmentally sensitive development, city beautification and revitalization. There was also significant concern for better water management, outdoor recreation opportunities, shopping and retail development.

Job development and shopping opportunities were also major concerns highlighted by the written comments received, as were traffic, environmental compatibility and other growth management issues. There were also many comments which supported a wide variety of City services, especially recreation.

### **Things We’d Like to Keep the Same:**

**Small town ties and friendliness, places of interaction, events, neighborhoods, emphasis on youth, parks and nature**

Comments received at public meetings showed concern for preserving the City’s small town amenities, home town feel and friendliness, places of human interaction, Old Town, neighborhoods, community events, pedestrian areas, library, youth programs, parks, and natural areas.

Two-thirds of written responses showed very strong concern for preserving the City’s “small town character” and friendliness, including events, accessibility to government services. The next most obvious trend in responses supported city parks, preservation of riverside, natural areas and qualities, and youth programs.



## General Plan Update

City of Cottonwood / Community Development Dept.  
827 North Main Street, Cottonwood, Arizona 86326

PSRRT STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
COTTONWOOD AZ  
PERMIT NO. 17

### July, 2002

Cottonwood's General Plan Update has moved to the draft plan stage. Highlights of the draft in progress are presented here for your comments.

CAR-RT-SORT  
POSTAL CUSTOMER  
COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA

PHOTOS BY  
BEACH'S ON LOCATION

Fig. 3-3: Following an initial phase of public involvement and community issue identification, newsletters were distributed city-wide to peak awareness of the planning process and to provide a preliminary summary of issues and plan

### General Plan Update Moves Into Next Phase

On June 17th, the Cottonwood Planning and Zoning Commission completed its initial review of issues and goals associated with the City's new General Plan. The next step is to create a draft plan based on input received to date.

City staff would like to assemble a complete draft by August 1st in order to meet with an election calendar that would result in a public vote on March 11, 2003. A series of plan elements will be created during the next two months, beyond which a 60-day public review process will be conducted. Hearing review will occur in October and November.

To give staff additional time to work on the plan, the Commission will return to its typical monthly meeting schedule, canceling their previously advertised work session on August 5th. The next Commission meeting will be held at 6:00 PM on Monday July 15, 2002. The public is encouraged to attend.

Materials relating to the ongoing General Plan update are available for review during nor-

## General Plan Update

City of Cottonwood / Community Development Dept.  
827 North Main Street, Cottonwood, Arizona 86326

PSRRT STD  
US POSTAGE PAID  
COTTONWOOD AZ  
PERMIT NO. 17

### May, 2002

Cottonwood's General Plan is the City's guide for future community decisions, both public and private.

CAR-RT-SORT  
POSTAL CUSTOMER  
COTTONWOOD, ARIZONA

PHOTOS BY  
BEACH'S ON LOCATION

### Respecting the Past, Focused on the Future

Small Town Qualities and Economic Development

The Cottonwood Planning and Zoning Commission began its development of a new General Plan for the City last Fall with a series of community workshops. A simple questionnaire was distributed that asked people what things they would like to see stay the same and what things they would like to see change for the better. Many people would like to preserve and enhance the "small town qualities" of Cottonwood. At the same time, many respondents would like to see better job and shopping opportunities. The General Plan will attempt to strike a balance between maintaining the best of the past and meeting the needs of the future.



THIS IS THE FIRST OF THREE NEWSLETTERS INTENDED TO HELP KEEP YOU INFORMED ABOUT THE CITY'S ONGOING GENERAL PLAN REVIEW PROCESS. THE PLAN WILL DESCRIBE THE CITY'S GOALS AND POLICIES ON THE ISSUES OF LAND USE, CIRCULATION, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE, WATER RESOURCES, INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, HOUSING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND GROWTH AREAS.



### Miscellaneous Comments

Following the initial process of public input, the Planning & Zoning Commission spent about 15 months reviewing background issues and developing a series of draft plan elements. The elements were discussed in monthly public meetings from the beginning of 2002 through the end of Spring, 2003. During that period, several other written comments were submitted. These comments were not provided in response to a questionnaire, rather they are statements submitted from individuals concerned about key issues.

Issues addressed by independent letters concerned the following:

- size of the City's boundary
- appropriateness of big box retail
- impact of residential areas on infrastructure
- containment of sprawl
- the development of a town center
- walk-ability of the community
- enhancing Old Town as the City core

- more youth programs
- Designation of new road corridors outside the City
- Affect of West Loop proposal on forest and natural areas outside the City

### SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

Public input received in the course of reviewing the General Plan correlated strongly with value statements made in the development of the 1995 plan. Although there was also some disparity with regard to the level and type of commercial activity respondents favored, there was marked concern for small town qualities and friendliness, issues of "community," aesthetics, events and other opportunities for interaction, neighborhoods, better walk-ability, more traffic control, better jobs and wages, housing affordability, city services and youth programs, parks and outdoor recreation and preserving the integrity of the natural environment.

# General Plan Update

City of Cottonwood / Community Development Dept.  
827 North Main Street, Cottonwood, Ariz. 86326

**September, 2003**

**The final draft of the Cottonwood General Plan is ready for review.**

