

CITY COUNCIL REPORT



Meeting Date: December 1, 2016
General Plan Element: *Community Involvement*
General Plan Goal: *Seek early and ongoing involvement in policy-making discussions*

ACTION

Review, discuss, and provide direction to staff regarding the General Plan Task Force recommended draft Scottsdale General Plan 2035, including changes to the Natural Open Space and Rural Neighborhoods land use categories and citizen response.

KEY ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Scottsdale is approaching its buildout/infill development phase as a community. With less vacant land to be developed, pressure to increase development density may rise.
- Community members have expressed the need for additional preservation of Natural Open Space and Rural Neighborhood areas located predominantly north of Deer Valley Road.
- Suggested changes to the draft General Plan 2035 include making changes to both the Natural Open Space and Rural Neighborhoods General Plan land use categories to further protect the rural desert character and lifestyle for these portions of the community.
- Since the August 30 discussion, staff has received feedback from the community and property owners on the proposed changes.

BACKGROUND

The current Scottsdale General Plan was adopted in 2001 and ratified by the voters in 2002. The Plan defines the community's goals for growth, development, character, mobility and a variety of other community aspects. Per State Statute, the city is required to update and ratify the General Plan every ten years. In March 2012, after three years of public input, the Scottsdale City Council sent an updated 2011 General Plan to the voters. However, the measure was defeated (52% to 48%), and thus, the 2001 General Plan remains in effect until the city adopts and ratifies a new General Plan.

Draft General Plan 2035 City Council Direction

In January 2013, City Council provided staff with direction on the public outreach, drafting and adoption/ratification timing associated with the process to update the Scottsdale General Plan. City Council unanimously directed staff to establish a citizen task force to oversee the drafting of a new Plan.

At a March 2014 study session, the Scottsdale City Council provided direction on the preliminary draft General Plan, as created by the Task Force. Ultimately, unanimous council direction to the Task Force included extending public outreach efforts regarding the draft Plan into 2015. In a June 2014 study session, the Scottsdale City Council further directed that the Task Force continue the process of creating a draft

General Plan for community, Planning Commission, and City Council consideration. Consequently, the General Plan Task Force continued working to draft a new General Plan through November 2014, at which time they released their final recommended draft General Plan 2035 to the Planning Commission. Upon the completion of their work, the Task Force ceased operating as a public body per the Council amended by-laws.

At a June 2015 public study session, the City Council discussed the community, board and commission comments received about the draft Plan. City Council directed staff to continue public discussions with key community members to identify potential compromises to the plan that would be brought back for the City Council to review. Public outreach on the draft plan continued through January 2016, and a number of small, less substantive changes have been suggested that staff will bring forward for both Planning Commission and City Council consideration during the draft Plan public hearing process. The larger, more substantive changes to the plan were suggested at a small, citizen group meeting (attendees included former Task Force and Coalition of Greater Scottsdale members) held in June 2016.

At an August 30, 2016 study session, City Council discussed the proposed changes from the citizen group meeting and directed staff to notify affected property owners of the proposed changes. On August 31, staff sent notification to property owners that would be affected by the proposed General Plan land use changes. Community Open Houses on the draft General Plan 2035 (including the proposed changes noted above) were held on September 6, 7 and 8 in south, central and north locations. The Planning Commission held a study session with a focus on proposed changes to the draft General Plan 2035 on September 14. Based on public response to the proposed land use changes, on September 23 the City Manager extended the timeline of the General Plan 2035 process from a tentative December 2016 City Council hearing to a 2017 City Council hearing and a May 2018 Special Election or November 2018 General Election (see Attachment 1 for details). This extension was to allow for additional community outreach, including additional Community Open Houses on the proposed land use changes that were held on November 9 and 15 in central and north locations.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED LAND USE CHANGES

The proposed changes to the General Plan amendment criteria are as follows:

- The Rural Neighborhoods General Plan land use category applies only to properties that are currently zoned at densities of one house per one to two acres.
- A new Desert Rural Neighborhoods General Plan land use category applies to all properties that are currently zoned one house per two or more acres. Additionally, based on the citizen group recommendation, a change from Desert Rural to Rural Neighborhoods should constitute a major General Plan amendment. These recommended changes would create a General Plan amendment process for the properties that currently are entitled at the one house per one to two acres (generally zoning districts R1-190 and R1-130) that does not exist today.
- Natural Open Space is a stand-alone, General Plan land use category, rather than grouped with Rural Neighborhoods as it is in both the 2001 and the draft 2035 General Plans. This separation would require that a change from Natural Open Space to Rural Neighborhoods would now be a major General Plan amendment, whereas currently, it is a non-major General Plan amendment.

RESPONSE TO PROPOSED LAND USE CHANGES

Since the August 30 study session, staff notified the affected property owners of the proposed changes and community open houses with a letter (mailed August 31) and a postcard (mailed October 18). Additionally,

staff has held five community open houses, one in conjunction with this year's lone major General Plan amendment project. The response, through November 10, has included the following:

- 35+ phone calls
- 50+ emails
- Three September open houses attended by about 60 people total
- November 9 open house attended by approximately 25 people

Staff has received phone calls, emails, and written comments from a number of residents and property owners. See Attachment 2 for a matrix of the comments received. Most often, they asked for additional information. Many expressed support or opposition to the proposed land use changes. These inquiries are summarized as follows:

- Owners or representatives of 72 affected parcels have expressed the following (see Attachment 3 for parcel location):
 - 7 parcels support the citizen group proposal
 - 21 parcels oppose the citizen group proposal
 - 44 parcels wanted additional information about the proposal
- Owners of 13 additional parcels, 12 of which have expressed support (see Attachments 3 and 4 for parcel location)

OPTIONS FOR MOVING FORWARD

Below are three options for moving forward with the proposed land use changes:

Option 1 – Task Force Recommended Draft language

Proceed with the Task Force Recommended Draft language that maintains the existing Rural Neighborhoods land use category.

Option 2 – Modified citizen group proposal

Move forward with the proposed new Desert Rural land use category that applies to properties that are currently zoned one house per two or more acres, but a change from this land use category to Rural Neighborhoods would require a **minor** General Plan amendment.

Option 3 – Citizen group proposal

Proceed with the citizen group proposal create a new Desert Rural land use category that applies to properties that are currently zoned one house per two or more acres. A change from this land use category to a more intensive land use would require a **major** General Plan amendment.

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT

Long Range Planning Services

STAFF CONTACT

Sara Javoronok
Project Coordination Liaison
Long Range Planning Services
(480) 312-7918
sjavoronok@scottsdaleaz.gov

APPROVED BY

Sara Javoronok, AICP, Project Coordination Liaison
(480) 312-7918, sjavoronok@scottsdaleaz.gov

Date

Erin Perreault, AICP, Long Range Planning Manager
(480) 312-7093, eperreault@scottsdaleaz.gov

Date

Randy Grant, Planning & Development Director
(480) 312-2664, rgrant@scottsdaleaz.gov

Date

ATTACHMENTS

1. Comments received on the draft General Plan 2035 from August 30-November 10.
2. Land Use Proposal Response – North of Deer Valley
3. Land Use Proposal Response – South of Deer Valley