

## **Section Thirteen—Public Participation**

**Public Information/Public Participation Program (PI/PP)** - This is a program that supplements the public participation requirements of *Growing Smarter Plus*. This program guides efforts to educate and involve citizens in long range planning processes.

### **13.1 Introduction**

On October 19, 1998, the Board of Supervisors adopted the *Yuma County 2010 Comprehensive Plan Public Information/Public Participation Program (PI/PP)*. This represents the county's commitment to involving residents and stakeholders in long range planning efforts. The PI/PP created opportunities for meaningful citizen participation and was an essential component to the development of *Yuma County 2010 Comprehensive Plan*.

Providing county residents with the necessary information to influence future planning decisions requires their continued and increased participation. Therefore, it is necessary to identify how the community will be informed and participate in future additions or modifications to The Plan. The purpose of this public participation element is three-fold:

- Identify key components and continued development of the PI/PP.
- Consider techniques to involve citizens in the review of the Plan that exceeds minimum levels of participation mandated by the State.
- Outline the process and public notification procedures in the review of any minor or major amendment to the Plan.

### **13.2 Regulatory Compliance**

Planning for public participation is authorized through legislative mandates and the *Growing Smarter Act*. The PI/PP procedures contained in this element are in compliance with Arizona Revised Statutes.

#### **Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 11**

Chapter 6 - County Planning and Zoning; Article 1:

§11-806. Powers and duties; comprehensive plan

D.1. The Board of Supervisors shall adopt written procedures to provide effective, early and continuous public participation in the development and major amendment of comprehensive plans from all geographic, ethnic and economic areas of the county. The procedures shall provide for: (a) The broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives

(b) The opportunity for written comments (c) Public hearings after effective notice (d) Open discussions, communication programs and information services, and (e) Consideration of public comments.

## **Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 11**

Chapter 6 - County Planning and Zoning; Article 2:

§11-824. Adoption and amendment of county plan by board of supervisors; expiration and re-adoption. A. The board of supervisors may adopt the county comprehensive plan as a whole or by successive actions adopt separate parts of the plan. The adoption or re-adoption of the comprehensive plan or any amendment to the plan shall be by resolution of the board. C. The adoption or re-adoption of, or a major amendment to, the county comprehensive plan shall be approved by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the board. All major amendments proposed for adoption to the comprehensive plan by the board shall be presented at a single public hearing during the calendar year the proposal is made. The adoption or re-adoption of a county plan, and any major amendment to a county plan, shall not be enacted as an emergency measure and is subject to referendum as provided by Article IV, Part 1, Section 1, Subsection (8), Constitution of Arizona, and Title 19, Chapter 1, Article 4.

### **13.3 PI/PP**

The PI/PP is designed to meet and exceed State requirements for citizen participation. It is divided into five categories. The categories overlap and work in conjunction with each other to produce a comprehensive and effective program.

#### **1) Composition and Maintenance of a Core Contact List:**

The core contact list includes interested parties, both special interest and general public. These parties are socially responsible and dedicated agencies and/or individuals whose role is more active than the general public's due to their special interest in the Plan and the community. Core contacts receive notice of public gatherings, bulletins, surveys and other miscellaneous items.

Outside of public agencies, **Citizens Advisory Groups (CAGs)** compose the majority of the core contacts. CAGs are made up of county citizens with varied areas of interest who serve as direct links to the Plan. Multiple CAGs exist for different areas of the county. A list of members is maintained.

#### **2) Public Gatherings:**

Public participation gatherings go beyond the mandatory public hearings and include open houses, stakeholder meetings and presentations to organizations

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throughout the county and region. The purpose of the extended public gatherings is to develop working relationships, establish lines of communication, increase education on the planning process, fulfill the community's will to design its own future and foster a means for understanding and implementing the Plan. Notification, location and time of public gatherings encourage attendance, participation and provide for accommodations of special needs.

### **3) Media:**

Development and implementation of the Plan utilizes a variety of media sources to publicize and obtain a broad-base of notification and participation. Both the media and the utilization of digital media platforms are used as information distribution and gathering tools and are critical in sustaining participation. Media outlets and digital media tools utilized for distribution of media kits, press releases, news conferences, Public Service Announcements, public notices and hearings include:

- Newspapers and Regional Print Media
- Vision 2020 Newsletter
- Radio
- Web page [www.yumacountyaz.gov/INDEX.aspx?page=221](http://www.yumacountyaz.gov/INDEX.aspx?page=221)
- Television
- Area Event Calendars and Bulletins
- Facebook [www.facebook.com/#!/yumacountyaz](http://www.facebook.com/#!/yumacountyaz)
- Twitter account [twitter.com/YumaCountyAZ](http://twitter.com/YumaCountyAZ)

The provisions of Spanish language materials and an interpreter are evaluated on a case by case basis and provisions to accommodate all requests are made.

### **4) Public Comment Retrieval:**

Public comment is needed to insure all interested parties and citizens of the county are well represented. Public comment includes suggestions, points of view, support, opposition and constructive comments regarding The Plan and the planning process. Public comment retrieval utilizes formal and informal means to draw information from individuals and agencies. Comments are received and documented through commentary, writing, telephone, e-mail, and social media postings. Documentable forms of retrieval used include:

- Email - [contact.dds@yumacountyaz.gov](mailto:contact.dds@yumacountyaz.gov)
- Surveys and mailings
- Outreach Programs
- Fax - (928) 817-5157
- Public Hearings
- Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/#!/yumacountyaz>
- Twitter account at: <https://twitter.com/YumaCountyAZ>

**5) Public Outreach:**

Public outreach encompasses community education and information distribution to foster public support and encourage a sense of community. Outreach programs utilize all facets of the PI/PP and focus on educating the public. Some outreach activities that can be conducted include, but are not limited to, radio shows, television, digital announcements on Facebook, Twitter or the Yuma County Webpage, and workshops simulating land use development.

### **13.4 Strategies to Strengthen the PI/PP**

Continuing education programs are critical. Sustaining multiple opportunities for the public to become involved in the development of the Plan and the planning process is equally important. For future planning activities the county needs to continue to identify and pursue other ways to increase public knowledge, participation and means to identify citizen issues.

**Community Planning Collaboration** - Citizens are involved in individual zoning and Yuma County Comprehensive Plan amendments through contact with the Planning Section. The Section oversees public information and education elements appropriate for collaboration. The Planning Staff is involved in the day to day role of administrating, interpreting and enforcing the changes brought about through implementation of the Plan.

**Citizen Review Process** - In compliance with Arizona Revised Statutes, Title 11, Chapter 6, the county provides guidelines for citizen review that notifies, informs and provides an opportunity for the public to comment prior to public hearing for zoning ordinance applications.

**CAGs** - CAGs have proven to be effective core contacts. Continued interaction, development and support of CAG's are important. CAG participants considered to display community leadership skills and a comprehensive and objective understanding of planning are considered key citizen planners. Future CAG programs need to continue to involve and mentor citizen planners.

**Bi-Annual Update** - Conducting workshops and open houses to ensure all interested individuals and groups in the community are actively involved in the bi-annual update and maintenance of the Plan elements is necessary.

**Media Support Program** - The Media Support Program needs to remain active after adoption of the Plan. Specific program features for each of the media to be utilized depend on the status of the Plan at any given time, access to media, staffing and available funding. Extending communications to core contacts and public agencies will remain a priority.

**Digital Media Outreach** - The inclusion and/or progression of digital forums and social media tools offers an excellent opportunity to directly and inexpensively connect with citizens of Yuma County and the public at large. The Planning Section will ensure all outreach activities including, but not limited to, land use amendments, Plan amendments and updates are promoted using both digital forums and social media tools such as the Yuma County Webpage, Facebook, and Twitter.

### **13.5 Amendment Process**

An amendment to the Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan may be initiated by: The Board of Supervisors, Planning and Zoning Commission or a private property owner. An application, narrative statement of the proposal and filing fee are required. Amendments to The Plan typically include the following:

- The incorporation of new elements as required by statute
- The re-adoption of the entire Comprehensive Plan every ten years.
- Revisions or updates to the text and/or maps of any existing element.

The Land Use Element is further categorized into two types of amendments: Minor Amendments and Major Amendments. Definitions, procedures and public hearing dates for minor and major amendments are outlined in the Land Use Element of the Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

**Public Hearings** - For all amendments to the Plan, one public hearing will be held by the Planning and Zoning Commission. A second public hearing will be held by the Board of Supervisors prior to action being taken on the proposed amendment.

Major Amendments to the *Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan* inclusive of the City/County Joint Land Use Plan thereof would be accomplished through a single standardized public hearing process. The Comprehensive Plan major amendment process would include a staff recommendation, Planning Commission recommendation and Board determination. Amendments to the City/County Joint Land Use Plan on parcels that fall under the jurisdiction of Yuma County will be heard under the same procedure as major amendments to the Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan. All major amendments proposed for adoption to the Comprehensive Plan by the Board of Supervisors shall be presented at a single public hearing during the calendar year the proposal was made in accordance with A.R.S. §11-822 and §11-824. The deadline to submit Major Amendments is June 15<sup>th</sup>.

**Notification** - For all Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan amendments, notification of the public hearings will be provided in accordance with State Law in the following manner:

- A.R.S. §11-822. Before recommending the plan or any part, amendment, extension or addition to the board of supervisors, the commission shall hold at least one public hearing thereon, after giving at least fifteen days notice thereof by one publication in a newspaper of general circulation in the county seat. In addition, the notice shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area to be affected, or adjacent thereto, if the area affected is other than the county seat.

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In addition to the above state notification requirement, the county and/or applicant will utilize techniques to disseminate the information to a larger audience. The techniques encouraged are listed below and are dependent on the type and significance of the proposed amendment.

- Mirror requirements outlined in A.R.S. §11-829 (C). Amendment of ordinance or change of zoning district boundaries; definition.
- The information regarding the amendment and scheduled public hearing be posted on the Department of Development Services Internet web-site and county television Channel (77) at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting.
- Provide opportunities for official comment through implementing Media Support Program, CAG and Outreach components of the PI/PP.
- Distribute proposals to a variety of stakeholders, organizations and individuals listed on the Core Contacts and Contact Agencies lists for initial review and comment prior to the first public hearing.
- Place copies of the proposed amendments on display at the County Administration building, Department of Development Services, Library Branches and Web Page.

As these are not state requirements, the failure of the county or applicant to perform any of the following actions or failure of the property owner to receive said notice to will not invalidate the amendment process.

**Planning and Zoning Commission Action** - Following the first public hearing, Planning and Zoning Commission forwards a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors. The report will be in writing and include the recommendations for approval or disapproval and a brief summary of the reasons for said recommendations. The Land Use Element of the Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan contains the differences between the Minor and Major Amendment processes.

**Board of Supervisor Action** - Upon receipt of the Commission's recommendation, the Board of Supervisors will hold a second public hearing. Notice of the time and place of the hearing will be provided in accordance with State law. Following the public hearing, the adoption or re-adoption of the Plan or any amendment will be by resolution. The adoption, re-adoption, or approval of a major amendment will require an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members of Board.

**Adoption and Ratification of the Yuma County 2020 Comprehensive Plan**  
The adoption or re-adoption of the Plan or any amendment shall be by resolution of the Board. Statutorily:

- A.R.S §11-824. Adoption and amendment of county plan by board of supervisors; expiration and re-adoption A county comprehensive plan, with any amendments, is effective for up to ten years from the date the plan was initially adopted or until the plan is re-adopted or a new plan is adopted pursuant to this subsection and becomes effective. On or before the tenth anniversary of the plan's most recent adoption the board shall either readopt the existing plan for an additional term of up to ten years or shall adopt a new county plan as provided by this article.