



Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

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Healthy People ♦ Healthy Economy ♦ Healthy Infrastructure ♦ Healthy Environment



THE PLANNING CENTER
a division of TPC Group, Inc.



Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan



Submitted to:

Town of Thatcher Mayor and Council

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Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan



Mayor and Council

Bob Rivera, Mayor
Aaron Allen, Vice Mayor
Randy Bryce, Councilmember
Jenny Howard, Councilmember
Ryan Rapier, Councilmember
Ashley Smith, Councilmember
Heston Welker, Councilmember

Planning and Zoning Commission

Ramon Morales, Chair
Jerry Hoopes, Vice Chair

Commissioners:

Eddy Carlton
David Griffin
Ray Tuttle
Bret Whitmer

Director/Administrator:

Tom Palmer

Town Manager

Heath Brown

Town Engineer

Tom Palmer





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Page
Table of Contents	1
Introduction and Overview	2
The Thatcher General Plan	2
Growing Smarter Act	2
Legislative Framework	2
Public Participation Plan	3
Public Participation Plan Goals	3
General Plan Public Participation Process	4
Public Participation Process	4
General Plan Teams	4
Mayor Public and Private Land Owners and Other Jurisdictions	5
Stakeholder Management	6
Volunteer-based Non-profit Groups	6
Meetings and Community Events Attendance	6
Additional Opportunities for Public Input	6
Town of Thatcher General Plan Public Involvement Policy	7
General Plan Major Milestones	10





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The first phase of the Town of Thatcher General Plan public outreach process includes the preparation and adoption by Mayor and Council of the Public Participation Plan, outlining the Town's strategy for involving community and stakeholder groups in the planning process. Public participation and input serve as the backbone of the General Plan. During the General Plan Update 18-month planning process, the Town of Thatcher is tasked with actively engaging the diverse interests of these groups through a variety of options and methods. Collaboration for all constituents supports success.



Thatcher General Plan

The Arizona Revised Statutes requires that each municipality adopt a comprehensive, long-range general plan to guide the community's physical development. The purpose of the general plan is to:

- Identify the community's goals and development priorities
- Express the community's vision
- Serve as a guide for local decision-making
- Fulfill legal requirements created by state law

The Town of Thatcher General Plan serves as the road map containing the vision, goals, policy direction, and implementation strategies to create a healthy community with a vibrant economic base.

Growing Smarter Act

Growing Smarter Plus legislation, which became effective in May 2000, builds upon the 1998 Growing Smarter Act. These requirements created a new framework for the land-planning process in cities and counties within the State of Arizona. The Town of Thatcher General Plan Update must meet Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus requirements and other applicable requirements outlined in Arizona Revised Statutes.

Legislative Framework

As part of the general plan update planning process, ARS 9-461.06 requires municipalities to adopt written procedures that provide:

- Broad dissemination of proposals and alternatives
- Opportunity for written comments
- Public hearings after effective notice
- Open discussions, communications programs and information services
- Consideration of public comments





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

The Arizona Revised Statutes also requires municipalities to consult with, advise and provide an opportunity for official comment by public officials and agencies, the county, school districts, associations of governments, public land management agencies, other appropriate government jurisdictions, public utility companies, civic, educational, professional and other organizations, property owners and citizens to secure maximum coordination of plans and to indicate properly located sites for all public purposes on the general plan.

Public Participation Plan

The Town of Thatcher General Plan will be prepared under the direction of the Town's planning agency, the Town of Thatcher Planning and Zoning Commission, and the Town of Thatcher Mayor and Council. In partnership with The Planning Center team, Town staff will be directly responsible for overseeing and managing the General Plan Update effort, facilitating public input and developing the Plan's content.

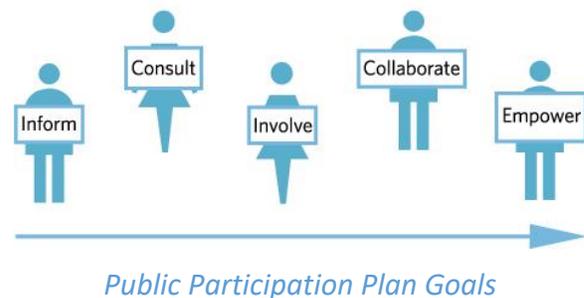
The following groups will play significant roles guiding the preparation of the General Plan:

- Residents
- Land Owners
- Major Employers
- Business Owners
- Public Service Providers
- Volunteer-based Nonprofit Groups
- Adjacent Jurisdictions
- Federal, State, Regional and Local Agencies
- Other Stakeholders

Public Participation Plan Goals

The success of the general plan process is based on increasing levels of community involvement which lead to capacity building by strengthening existing partnerships and forming new ones. The main goals of the Public Participation Plan are to:

- **Inform:** Distribution of information via Town's website, Town's Facebook, local library, local schools.
- **Consult:** Information sharing between all constituents and stakeholders.
- **Involve:** Community contributes their ideas in the preparation of decisions.
- **Collaborate:** Decision are made based on input of constituents and stakeholders.
- **Empower:** Involves constituents and stakeholders in the planning process





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

GENERAL PLAN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

Per Arizona Revised Statutes, the Public Participation Plan (PPP) is prepared during the early stages of the planning process and adopted by Mayor and Council. This Public Participation Plan includes outreach efforts to engage a wide variety of stakeholders, including residents, land owners, major employers, business owners, agencies, adjacent jurisdictions, interest groups, farmers, development and conservation entities, chamber of commerce and other stakeholders.

The public involvement process receives input from:



At these four levels the process offers ample opportunities to learn about the planning process, make informed decisions, provide input, review project outcomes and comment on findings throughout the different phases of the General Plan Update at major project milestones.

Community members and stakeholder groups can provide additional input during study sessions and public hearings in front of the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Town of Thatcher Mayor and Council.

Youth, homebound seniors, younger families and non-English speakers are usually less likely to attend organized meetings for a variety of valid reasons. Responding to the needs of these populations, the Project Team and Town ambassadors will do outreach to these groups in appropriate ways by attending and participating in community events, through electronic media contact, and visits to social meetings and gatherings.

General Plan Update Teams

The General Plan Update consists of four teams:



Project Management Team

The Project Management Team includes the Town of Thatcher Project Manager/Coordinator designated for this project, the Town Manager, and the Consultant Team's Principal-in-Charge/Project Manager.





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

The Project Management Team will meet on a regular basis (1 monthly meeting or conference call) to monitor General Plan progress, identify strategic issues associated with the Plan's development, and ensure that project goals and objectives are addressed in an appropriate and timely manner.

Consultant Team

The Consultant Team includes The Planning Center staff. The Consultant Team's role is to produce all the materials pertinent to the general plan preparation, attend and facilitate meetings and provide overall coordination throughout the duration of the process.

Project Team

The project team includes The Project Management Team, members of The Consultant Team, and staff representing the Town of Thatcher various departments at the discretion of the Town's Project Manager.

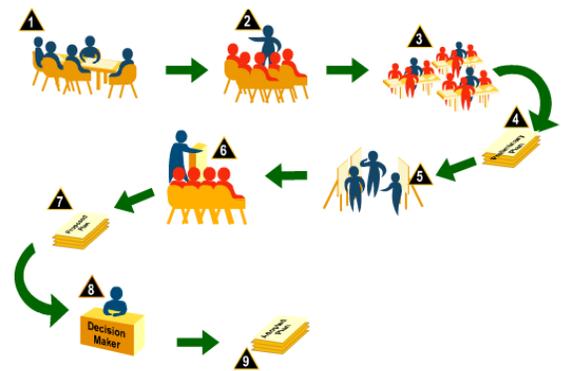
The Guidance Team

The Guidance Team provides guidance and technical advice to the Project Team. The Guidance Team is expected to actively engage in the creation of the Plan and identify strategies and policies to be included in the Plan. Four (4) meetings during the lifespan of the planning process at major milestones are anticipated.

The Guidance Team includes representatives from:

- Town of Thatcher Mayor & Council
- Town of Thatcher Planning & Zoning Commission
- Town Manager's office
- Town Engineer
- Adjacent jurisdictions (City of Safford, Graham County and Town of Pima)
- Southeastern Arizona Government Organization (SEAGO), the regional agency

- Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT)
- Graham County Flood Control
- Safford Airport
- School Districts
- Major Employers
- Public Land Owners (BLM, State Land Department, Military, Other)
- Chamber of Commerce
- Any other representative acting in a technical advisor capacity within the County or region



Public Participation Process

Major Public and Private Land Owners and Other Jurisdictions

Major land owners within the Town of Thatcher Planning Area including the Arizona State Land Department, the Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, school districts, Eastern Arizona College and other jurisdictions owning land in the Town of Thatcher, as well as owners of large tracts of land will have opportunities to provide comment and review at all stages of the planning process.

Alignment of planning efforts is key to preparing a General Plan that works for the Town, supports the region and can be successfully implemented and funded. Town Staff will offer to meet with all municipal, County, and special district jurisdictions receiving Town services or providing services to the Town.





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

SEAGO has been invited to participate in the planning process. School districts will be invited at key points in the planning process to discuss various aspects of the General Plan, solicit input, and coordinate with their planning efforts.

All pertinent agencies and jurisdictions will be formally invited to provide additional input during the required 60-day agency review prior to the Public Hearing phase of the project.

The Town will, as required by state law, inform known sand and gravel mine owners of its planning process and invite them to participate.

Public Service Providers

Physical infrastructure, healthcare, fire, police and emergency services, public and private utilities, local library, animal shelter and any other public service providers will have opportunities to provide comment and review throughout the planning process.

Stakeholder Management

The Town of Thatcher staff will compile and monitor a list of stakeholders, both external and internal to the Town, to determine whether targeted outreach efforts are appropriate. The Town will contact stakeholders and stakeholder groups regarding General Plan events or public meetings.

Stakeholder management is primarily the responsibility of the Project Management Team with direction from the Project Guidance Team.

Volunteer-based Non-profit Groups

Volunteer-based non-profit groups serving the community are vital to the success of the Thatcher General Plan Update. These groups will have ample opportunities to comment and review at all stages of the planning process. These organizations may also assist with the dissemination of digital materials and information to their members and networks.

Meetings and Community Events Attendance

Meetings and community events attendance can be requested by members of the public. Town staff will work with the interested parties (neighborhood groups, HOAs, business or trade groups, social service entities) to attend and engage with the group during the General Plan planning process. Engaging Town of Thatcher employees in meetings and events attendance is also important. Department employees are subject matter experts and the Project Team will seek their involvement in solutions and strategies.

Additional Opportunities for Public Input

The community is invited to provide input and comment throughout the different stages of the planning process, starting with the initial visioning process. The community is also invited to attend the Mayor and Council and Planning and Zoning Commission Joint Study Sessions at major project milestones. In addition, the community will be able to provide input during the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Mayor and Council public hearings.





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

TOWN OF THATCHER GENERAL PLAN PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT POLICY

ARS 9-461.06 requires municipalities in the State of Arizona to adopt a public involvement policy to guide the update and amendment of general plans. This policy describes the basic steps that the Town of Thatcher (the Town) will take to inform residents, business owners, and other stakeholders of updates and amendments to the Town of Thatcher General Plan (the General Plan) and to involve them in the general plan planning and decision-making processes.

The process described below does not limit the Town in taking other steps to inform or involve residents in the plan update process. Additional steps could include and are not limited to holding additional meetings, distributing information via website, newsletters, and social media, placing articles in Town publications or conducting surveys.

Public Involvement Goals and Policies

GOAL: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFECTIVE AND CONTINUOUS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THROUGHOUT THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE AND MAJOR AMENDMENTS PLANNING PROCESSES.

Policy 1:

Make reasonable efforts to involve the public and affected entities in the planning process of the General Plan update.

Policy 2:

Support open discussions, innovative planning processes, communication programs, and information services to encourage public involvement in the General Plan Update process.

Policy 3:

Provide effective, early and continuous public participation that encourages involvement from all geographic, ethnic and economic areas of the Town.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- a. Provide information about the General Plan through a variety of venues, which may include, but are not limited to:
 - ~ Information posted on the Town's web page and the Town's Facebook page;
 - ~ Information articles in Town newsletters or utility bills;
 - ~ Press releases to the local press, newspapers or newsletters of general circulation, or other media;
 - ~ Town-owned or public cable television or radio; and





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

- ~ Special engagements such as community festivals and events.
- b. Conduct one public meeting prior to the legislatively required Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council Public Hearings.
- c. Accept written comments at all public events and public hearings and in advance of hearings.
- d. Ensure outreach to members of the community who are Spanish speakers.
- e. Seek guidance from Town Staff and the Guidance Team to identify major stakeholders.
- f. Include seniors and youth in the public participation process.
- g. Keep the public informed about the General Plan process and provide opportunities for community participation in the development of the General Plan.
- h. Work with local press and other media to keep the General Plan planning process in the public eye.
- i. Form a General Plan Guidance Team early in the process to provide regular and ongoing technical support and expertise to the General Plan update process.
- j. Invite to the Guidance Team representatives from:
 - ~ Town Departments;
 - ~ Local, regional and state agencies;
 - ~ Southeastern Arizona Association of Governments (SEAGO);
 - ~ Adjacent jurisdictions;
 - ~ Other public institutions (such as school districts); and
 - ~ Major Employers
- k. Hold at least four (4) Guidance Team meetings during the preparation of the General Plan update at major project milestones.

Policy 4:

Provide effective notice of public hearings and meetings regarding the preparation of the General Plan and consideration of major amendments to the General Plan.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- a. Mail notice of the Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing as required by State Law to the following:
 - 1) Arizona State Land Department;
 - 2) Adjacent Jurisdictions;
 - 3) School Districts;
 - 4) Public Utility Companies;
 - 5) Graham County Flood Control District;
 - 6) SEAGO;
 - 7) Civic, Educational, Professional and Other Organizations;
 - 8) Property Owners and Residents; and
 - 9) Any other entities or individuals that notify the Town, in writing, of their desire to be notified about the preparation of the General Plan or major amendments to the General Plan.





Town of Thatcher General Plan Update Public Participation Plan

Policy 5:

Broadly disseminate proposals and alternatives in sustainable formats.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

- a. Make digital copies of the plan or major plan amendments available to the entities required by State Law and to members of the public who request a copy of the plan or major plan amendment.
- b. Publish at least once in a newspaper of general circulation a notice including a General Plan Schedule containing the date, time, and location of all public meetings regarding the preparation of the General Plan or major amendments to the General Plan.
- c. Make available digital copies of the draft and final plan and proposed major amendments to the General Plan for review at Town Hall, local library, the Town's website, and other appropriate locations identified by the Town.
- d. At least sixty (60) days before the General Plan or major amendment is noticed, the Town of Thatcher Planning Agency shall submit a digital copy for review and further comment as part of the **60-day Agency Review** period to:
 - 1) The Planning Agency of the County;
 - 2) Adjacent jurisdictions;
 - 3) SEAGO;
 - 4) The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT);
 - 5) The Arizona State Land Department (ASLD);
 - 6) The Arizona Commerce Authority;
 - 7) The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR); and
 - 8) The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ).
- 9) Provide a digital copy to any person or entity that requests in writing to receive a review copy.





Thatcher General Plan Major Milestones

PHASES 1-2 (January-March 2019)



Project Scoping

- Initial Project Scoping Meeting with Town
- Data/Maps Requests
- Public Participation Plan Preparation & Adoption
- Guidance Team Stakeholders List
- Guidance Team Members Invitation Letter

Document Review

- Existing General Plan Review

Meeting:

- **Scoping Meeting:** With Town of Thatcher Staff and Leadership to Finetune Project Scope and Schedule.

PHASE 3 (April-June 2019)



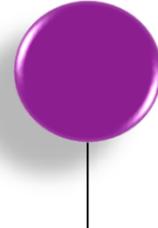
Background and Current Conditions

- Map Series Preparation
- Data Gathering and Analysis
- Physical and Regulatory Opportunities and Challenges
- Background and Current Conditions Report Preparation
- General Plan Matrix Preparation

Meetings:

- **Project Team Meeting 1:** General Plan Matrix Review 1
- **Guidance Team Meeting 1:** Project Overview
- **Community Open House:** Project Overview

PHASE 4 (July-September 2019)



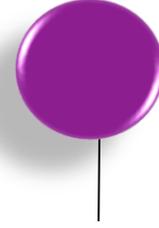
Community Meetings/ Visioning Process

- Prepare Visioning Process Strategy
- Coordinate advertising via Town Website and Facebook
- Prepare Fliers and Announcements for Town to distribute

Meetings:

- **Project Team Meeting 2:** General Plan Matrix Review (2)
- **Guidance Team Meeting 2:** Visioning Process
- **Community Open House 1:** General Plan Visioning Process
- **Community Open House 2:** Highway 70 Visioning Workshop

PHASE 5 (October-December 2019)



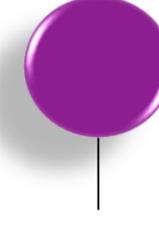
Growth Areas, Character Areas/Land Use Alternatives, Highway 70 Concepts

- Based on Background and Current Conditions Report and input, the Consultant will:
 - Work with Project Team to Delineate Planning Area, Define Growth Areas and Provide two Land Use Scenarios
 - Prepare initial concepts for Highway 70

Meetings:

- **Project Team Meeting 3:** Growth and Character Area Delineation and Land Use Alternatives
- **Guidance Team Meeting 3:** Review Growth Areas, Character Areas/Land Use Alternatives, and Highway 70 Concepts
- **Mayor and Council Study Session 1:** Review Growth Areas, Character Areas/Land Use Alternatives, and Highway 70 Concepts (open to Community)

PHASE 6 (January-April 2020)



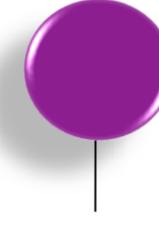
General Plan Draft 1

- Based on Background and Current Conditions Report and input, the Consultant will Prepare the Draft General Plan
- Incorporate input received during meetings in this phase in Draft 1.
- Submit General Plan Draft 1 to all public agencies for review and comments (**60-day Mandatory Agency Review**)
- Incorporate Highway 70 Revisions in General Plan Draft

Meetings:

- **Project Team Meeting 4:** Review Draft General Plan
- **Guidance Team Meeting 4:** Review Draft General Plan
- **Mayor and Council Study Session 2:** Review General Plan (open to Community)

Phases 7-8 (August-September 2020)



General Plan Final/ Adoption Public Hearings

- Incorporate/address comments received from reviewing agencies and Phase 6 meetings to produce the Final General Plan.
- Public hearing notices as per statutory requirements.

Meetings:

- **Planning and Zoning Commission Public Hearing:** Recommend General Plan to Mayor and Council for Adoption
- **Mayor and Council Public Hearing:** General Plan Adoption Public Hearing

Ongoing Project Coordination Communication/Conference Calls with Project Management Team

