

VISION STATEMENT

Apache County offers a rural character of natural beauty and abundance. This includes values such as independence, privacy and personal freedom that attract many seeking both permanent residence and seasonal refuge.

Apache County will continue to be a county that is primarily rural, made up of small communities with varying character and unique qualities. These communities offer places of peace and mutual tolerance, where citizens of differing backgrounds and beliefs respect each other's dignity, privacy, and freedoms. They communicate effectively and openly and work together toward common goals. They foster a sense of neighborliness, self-sufficiency and community pride that has long been a part of the County's character.

Apache County seeks to maintain its position as a balanced, family-oriented community, recreationally and socially active, promoting a high quality of life for all age groups and income levels within a stable and secure environment. The County's intention is to create a framework, through which a spirit and unique character are promoted and preserved, thereby meeting the needs of the unincorporated communities. The County encourages positive interactions and promotes public interest to create a fiscally stable, economically progressive foundation. The County will develop and implement services and programs that are responsive to the needs of the people to insure the long-term viability of Apache County.

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1.0 Overview

1.1 Role and Purpose of the Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan is Apache County's vision for the future. The plan's overall purpose is to promote the health, safety, convenience, and general welfare of the people. (A.R.S. §11-804).

To accomplish these purposes, Arizona law A.R.S. §11-804 requires that the comprehensive plan be developed to conserve the natural resources of the county and ensure efficient expenditure of public monies. And its primary use is to guide elected officials, appointed officials, and staff in the performance of their duties.

To accomplish these purposes, this plan addresses challenges facing the County and presents opportunities for the continuing success and diversity of the region by:

- Encouraging coordinated physical development in accordance with the present and future needs of the county.
- Promoting stewardship of and respect for the natural and cultural resources of the County.
- Guiding growth to achieve efficient expenditure of public funds.
- Protecting investments in private property.
- Encouraging economic growth and diversity.

This plan is the official guide for the physical development of the county, with the goal of accomplishing a coordinated, adjusted, and harmonious development of the area. As Apache County grows and changes, it demands careful planning to accommodate new residents and industry and to maintain the character and quality of life of the County that are important to current residents.

1.2 How to Use the Plan

The Comprehensive Plan provides a guide for decisions by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors concerning growth and development, including serving as a basis for decisions regarding updates to the zoning map and in approval of subdivision plats. It provides an understanding of existing and proposed land use for decision-makers, the public, and developers.

This Plan is strictly advisory in nature; it is not a regulatory document. Rather, it establishes a long range vision for development in Apache County. Its goals and policies aim for an "ideal" scenario, meaning that occasionally one goal may be in conflict with another goal. Circumstances may also arise that are not directly addressed by the Plan. For example, the issues related to the geography of a particular site or the circumstances of a specific proposal are rarely straightforward. As such, the Plan provides guidance in the decision-making process, but not the "final word".

One primary concern must be fair resolution of conflicting interests. All institutions--political, social, economic, and educational—need to work together to address their varied interests, values, desires, and the perception of what goals, objectives, and strategies are needed for growth and development in the county. Public involvement is essential in the development of these broadly stated goals.

These broad goals are the foundation on which land use policies and proposals have been constructed to help provide a means of addressing some of the specific and widely differing individual interests and for integrating them on a countywide basis through the vehicle of the Comprehensive Plan.

1.3 Structure of the Plan

1. Land Use Element

Given the vast area and primarily rural character of Apache County, the Land Use Element presents character areas that represent generalized land use, development, or preservation concepts that recognize and promote existing development patterns. The character areas take the place of more traditional land use categories as this Comprehensive Plan is intended to set a general framework for development in the County rather than establish a more precise guide that mirrors a zoning district map.

2. Infrastructure and Services Element

The Infrastructure and Services Element presents a vision for how Apache County government can fairly and efficiently use public funds to provide services to citizens.

3. Circulation Element

The Circulation Element plans for future circulation that will provide efficient and safe movement of persons and goods within and through Apache County. This system also is to be environmentally compatible with the surrounding conditions and supportive of economic development. Most of the development within the County has occurred, or will occur, along the major paved transportation corridors. As such, the circulation system is not only responsible for circulation but is also directing areas of growth within the County, with the intersections of well-traveled transportation routes being the locations of greatest growth potential.

1.4 Applicability

This Comprehensive Plan applies only to unincorporated areas of Apache County. The Plan does not apply to incorporated areas (Eagar, Springerville, St. Johns), land that is currently part of a Native American Reservation or within the boundaries of a reservation, and unincorporated property that is addressed in an adopted area or community plan. Given these exceptions, the Plan focuses primarily on the southern portion of the County, with the majority of the covered area lying south of Interstate 40.

The following area or community plans are being adopted or readopted and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. This Comprehensive Plan does not further address the land covered in the area plans; those plans are the controlling planning documents for their areas. The Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, discussed in Section [4.4], assigns no character areas to these areas but references the community plans.

Alpine Community Plan
Greer Community Plan
Nutrioso Community Plan
Concho Community Plan

Any other communities desiring to create a plan are encouraged to do so. Those plans can be adopted into this Comprehensive Plan through the amendment process.

1.5 Previous Comprehensive Plans

This Comprehensive Plan shall replace all previous Comprehensive Plans

1.6 Amendments to the Comprehensive Plan

An amendment to the Comprehensive Plan shall be necessary when a proposed land use for a property does not conform to land uses established in this Plan for that property's designated character area, discussed in the Land Use Element. The Board of Supervisors will establish a fee and a public hearing process for Comprehensive Plan amendments. The character areas included in this Plan allow a wide and extensive range of land uses; the most significant differences between the character areas are the permitted residential densities. Given this breadth of permissible uses in the character areas, few changes of land use will require a Comprehensive Plan amendment.

A Major Amendment is a substantial alteration of the County's land use mixture or balance as established in the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element for the area of the County to which the Comprehensive Plan applies. For purposes of this Plan, a Major Amendment shall involve a proposal to change the character area for property totaling at least 1,000 acres. A proposed amendment will also be a Major Amendment if it proposes a change from the Recreation, Highway Service, or Environmentally Sensitive Development Area character areas to any other character area and encompasses more than 100 acres. The public hearing process for a Major Amendment must satisfy the requirements of A.R.S. § 11-805.

1.7 History of the Comprehensive Plan and the Planning Process

The planning process is structured to emphasize public involvement and incorporate comments, ideas, and direction of the public into the plan. The Apache County Planning & Zoning Department prepared a Comprehensive Plan in 2001-2002, which was the result of over 100 public meetings. After further review of that effort, the County decided to complete extensive revisions of the plan, and held several more public meetings in 2003, where citizens made numerous suggestions and revisions to the plan. That plan was eventually finished and adopted in 2004.

Apache County started efforts to update the plan in 2015 with four community meetings held around the county. The project was put on hold for a time, and then restarted in 2017. Between February and August of 2017, the planning department held over 25 community meetings in Alpine, Nutrioso, Springerville, Vernon, the "Y", Concho, St. Johns, and Sanders. The comments and opinions in those meetings from citizens were recorded and incorporated into this plan. The planning efforts were also discussed on the county website, Facebook, and even radio. The Planning & Zoning Commission, which consists of 9 volunteers from the county, spent the next year working on the plan during their monthly meetings which were advertised and open to the public.

After posting a draft of the plan on the county website to get further comments from the public, the P&Z Commission finished the draft in the fall of 2018. A public hearing was held on _____ where the Commission (to be filled in later)

During this time, the communities of Greer and Concho also held multiple community meetings to create community plans to be incorporated in the Comprehensive Plan.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 History

The Tenth Territorial Legislative Assembly carved Apache County from Yavapai County on February 24, 1879. Yavapai County was one of Arizona's four original counties. Leaders of St. Johns and Globe petitioned for their communities to be the county seat. That honor was awarded temporarily to Snowflake, with the provision that an election would determine the permanent county seat. In November 1879, on the strength of votes from the mining town of Clifton, which was later included in Greenlee County, St. Johns was designated the county seat. In 1880, Springerville superceded St. Johns as the county seat for two years. St. Johns has been the County seat since 1882.

Apache County originally encompassed all of Navajo County, part of Gila County, and part of Graham County. The original area, which covered 20,940 square miles, began to be divided in 1881 when the area between the Black and Gila Rivers was placed in Graham County. Apache County also lost a significant amount of territory when Navajo County was formed in 1895. By that time, Apache County's area had decreased to its current 11,216 square miles.

2.2 Physical Setting

Apache County is located in the extreme northeastern part of Arizona and extends from the state's border with Utah southward over half the distance to the Mexican border. The County is bordered on the north by San Juan County, Utah; on the east by San Juan, McKinley, Valencia, and Catron Counties, New Mexico; on the south by Graham and Greenlee Counties, Arizona; and on the west by Navajo County, Arizona. Apache County is over 220 miles long and averages approximately 50 miles wide. It is the third largest county in Arizona, covering an area of 11,216 square miles.

All of Apache County lies above 4,000 feet in elevation; some areas exceed 8,000 feet. The White Mountains, in the southern part of the county, have peaks that exceed 10,000 feet; Mt. Baldy approaches 12,000 feet. Coniferous forests cover the higher regions of Apache County; most of the remainder of the County is either pinion and juniper woodlands or short grass plains, all interspersed with low mountains.

Most of Apache County is in the watershed of the Little Colorado River. Some areas on the southern flank of the White Mountains drain into the Salt River watershed of Central Arizona; the northern tip of the County belongs to the watershed of the San Juan River that flows through New Mexico and Utah before emptying into the Colorado River in southern Utah.

2.3 Demographics

The following table provides detailed information for both Apache County and Arizona from the most recent decennial census. As noted, the total population in Apache County in 2010 with projections in 2017 is 71,606.

POPULATION – CENSUS 2010 (WITH PROJECTIONS TO 2017)

Census Information	Apache County
Population	71,606
Population, Percent Change, 2010 - 2017	0.1%
Persons under 5 years old	6.9%
Persons under 18 years old	27.6%
Person 65 years old and over	14.9%
White persons	22.4%
Black or African American persons	0.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native persons	75.00%
Asian persons	0.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islanders	0.0%
Persons reporting some other race	1.80%
Persons reporting two or more races	1.6%
Female population	50.6%
Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin	6.3%
White persons, not of Hispanic/Latino origin	18.2%
High school graduates, persons 25 years and over, 2012-2016	78.2%
College graduates, persons 25 years and over, 2012-2016	11.1%
Housing units	32,867
Homeownership rate 2012-2016	76.9%
Households 2012-2016	19,351
Persons per household 2012-2016	3.67
Households with persons under 18 years	27.6%
Median household money income, 2016	\$32,460
Persons below poverty,	33.2%

2.4 Land Ownership/Governance

The vast majority of Apache County is not in private ownership. The White Mountain Apache, Navajo, and Zuni Indian Reservations cover more than 65 percent of the County; one-quarter of Arizona’s Native Americans live in the County. Approximately 21 percent of the land has remained in public ownership; the remaining 13 percent is privately owned.

In areas outside the Reservations and the National Forest, much land is held in a “checkerboard” pattern of sections of land. The State of Arizona owns significant blocks of land just north of the National Forest; some sizable parcels of contiguous sections are in private ownership or have been subdivided. The checkerboard pattern of ownership involves, in different parts of the County as illustrated in Exhibit 1, State, Federal, Reservation, and private land holdings. Some private holdings exist within the National Forest and within the Reservations.

Apache County contains three incorporated communities – St. Johns, the County seat, Eagar, and Springerville. Several other communities that are not within Reservation boundaries are unincorporated, including Alpine, Nutrioso, Vernon, Northwoods, Greer, Richville, Concho, Salado, Woodridge Ranch, Hunt, Witch Wells, Pinta, Navajo, Chambers, Sanders, and Lupton. As noted in Section 1.5, Greer, Alpine, Nutrioso, and Concho have area plans, and the County is completing the area plan for Vernon; these areas are not covered further in this Plan.

2.5 Economy/Industry

The economy of southern Apache County has historically been heavily land based, with agriculture, forestry, and outdoor recreation comprising the primary economic sectors. Two power plants – Salt River Project’s Coronado Generating Station northeast of St. Johns and Tucson Electric Power’s Springerville Power Plant northeast of Springerville-Eagar – were welcome additions to the County economy in the late 20th Century. Government, in its various Federal, State and local forms, is the largest employer in the County. Economic expansion will be a critical component of growth in the County and will also provide better opportunities for the County’s youth to remain in the area.

2.6 Climate

Aside from the White Mountains and the Chuska Mountains with micro-thermal snow forest climates, most of Apache County is a region of middle latitude and some subtropical steppes. Major portions of the County have an average annual precipitation of less than ten inches; however, none of the County is classified as desert.

2.7 Soils and Mineral Resources

The general soil map, Exhibit 2, illustrates the soil associations in the southern portion of Apache County. A soil association is defined as a landscape that has a distinctive proportional pattern of soils normally consisting of one or more major soils and at least one minor soil. The association is named for the major soil.

A soil map is useful only as a general guide in selecting land use suitability on a large scale. The soils in any one association commonly differ in slope, depth, stoniness, drainage, and other characteristics that impact management. More detailed field surveys to determine conditions at specific locations will be needed for planning purposes of a smaller nature.

Certain uses and activities are viewed as suitable and appropriate for each soil association. Generalized use lists are included below.

SOIL ASSOCIATION	PRIMARY USE
Rudd	Grazing
Thunderbird	Grazing; cinder cone extraction
Moenkopie-Sandstone Rock	Grazing; wildlife habitat
Tours-Jocity	Grazing; farming
Badland-Claysprings Clovis-Palma-Hubert	Limited grazing Grazing; small farming
Bush Valley-Cambern	Home sites; range; wildlife habitat; watershed; dry farming

Most of the mineral resources in Apache County are located within the Navajo Reservation. Three parts of the southern portion of the County are known to have mineral deposits. Helium fields are near the community of Navajo; bituminous and sub-bituminous coal have been identified southeast of Witch Wells and along the New Mexico border. Salt and potash deposits have been located between the Petrified Forest National Park and St. Johns. Carbon dioxide and helium deposits have been discovered between St. Johns and Springerville.

2.8 Natural Resources and Recreation

Apache County is rich with natural resources and recreational opportunities. Significant features include Canyon de Chelly National Monument, the Petrified Forest National Park, and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.

Canyon de Chelly and the Hubbell Trading Post are located on the Navajo Reservation and receive approximately 700,000 visitors annually. The Petrified Forest has over one million visitors annually.

Lyman Lake State Park, located south of St. Johns, offers picnicking, camping, and boating with launch ramp facilities. Native American petroglyphs are found on the surrounding lake canyon walls; nearly 150,000 people visit the Park during the summer months.

Both the Fort Apache Reservation and the Mt. Baldy Wilderness Area contribute to the recreational appeal of the County. The Mt. Baldy Wilderness Area is a natural habitat for animals. Hikers and equestrians enjoy the quiet atmosphere and unspoiled environment of both locations. Sunrise Lake, and its surroundings, have skiing facilities and lodging for winter recreation.

The presence of the National Forest, BLM property, and State land provides a variety of open space areas and recreational choices including lakes and streams, campgrounds, and hiking, and cross-country skiing areas. Many second homes have been built in the forested area, especially in and near Alpine, Greer, and Eagar.

Land Use Element

This Land Use Element contains the goals and policies that will guide Apache County in land use decisions going forward. The views on land use in Apache County are as diverse as the landscape and are often conflicting. So this Land Use Element provides ideas that are to be used only as guidelines, and are flexible enough to meet the needs of our diverse population. The County has chosen to focus on a few areas that can be useful county-wide and leave to the individual communities to determine their future on more location-specific issues. Communities are encouraged to create their own land use plans, called “community plans,” that can be implemented through zoning ordinances and other land use regulations.

From the public input received during community meetings, the only two topics of land use that gained consensus were the desire to preserve the rural character of our community, and the desire to clean up abandoned and trashy lots. Protection of property rights was a widespread desire as well, but people differed widely on how to protect them. Other desires included preserving the low regulation environment, protecting natural resources, and creating more trails and recreation areas.

As stated in the introduction, Arizona law also requires the county to achieve the following objectives through this comprehensive plan:

- a. Guiding and accomplishing a coordinated and harmonious development of the county,
- b. Conserving the natural resources of the county,
- c. Ensuring the efficient expenditure of public monies.

This Land Use Element seeks to achieve these objectives and the desires of the people. However, the concepts below are only guidelines, and are not to be read as strict regulations.

The vision of this Element is the protection of the existing community character while encouraging economic development. This plan also encourages continued stewardship of the land so new development will respect the traditions and customs of long-time residents. Ultimately, this Element is about preserving our quality of life and the positive characteristics of our community now and for future generations.

The Land Use Element contains these subsections:

- a. Character Areas
- b. Zoning
- c. Subdivision Ordinance
- d. Community Plans
- e. Improving the Appearance
- f. Preserving the Rural Character
- g. Preserving the Low Regulation Environment
- h. Preserving Forest Communities
- i. Federal Government Coordination
- j. Cost of Development
- k. Goals and Policies

a. CHARACTER AREAS

The Character Areas in this plan are generalized land use, development, or preservation areas that recognize and promote existing development patterns. The character areas take the place of more traditional land use categories as this Comprehensive Plan is intended to set a general framework for development in the County rather than establish a precise guide that mirrors a zoning district map. The character areas can be a suggested foundation for future zoning districts, or guidelines for decisions on rezoning and conditional use permits.

The character areas suggest regulations that the County could use to mitigate impacts between land uses, provide protection of existing land uses, give land owners and investors some assurance of what development is possible on their land and adjoining properties, and continue flexibility in the potential use of property. The character areas differ primarily in density and intensity of allowed uses, depending on the character of the land and community, such as being surrounded by national forest and pine trees, located along the interstate highway, or part of range land that has traditionally been used for ranching or agriculture.

(see Exhibit 1 for the map of Character Areas)

How Character Areas help us achieve our goals

These character areas can help us achieve several of the main purposes of this Comprehensive Plan.

a. Planning for future growth by guiding a coordinated and harmonious development of the county

To guide a coordinated and harmonious development, these character areas encourage new development to match the existing or traditional character of an area. For example, it encourages new development in the traditional range land to maintain large parcel sizes. They also suggest mitigating potential impacts of mixed land uses with setbacks, screening, landscaping and other standards, and clarifying how to be a good neighbor by establishing expectations up front.

But while the character areas suggest limiting parcel sizes in certain areas, they also encourage the use of a tool to use in conjunction called community master plans. A community master plan is a subdivision that plans and provides such things as roads, utility easements, drainage areas; reserves areas for schools, fire stations, and sheriff substations; and covers much of the cost of development. These community master planned areas would be allowed within most character areas, even in areas that require large parcel sizes. This provides flexibility to create subdivisions throughout the county, but ensures those subdivisions are well-planned, do not conflict with the traditional character of each area, and pay the cost of additional public improvements.

b. Protect natural resources

The character areas can protect natural resources in several ways, such as protecting environmentally sensitive areas, designating forest areas and grass lands, protecting watersheds, or limiting growth in places with insufficient groundwater.

c. Ensure the efficient expenditure of public funds

These character areas, if implemented, could help ensure the efficient use of public funds in a way that current zoning does not through such things as acreage size limitations, designating growth areas, and community master plans.

The acreage limitations along with community master plans would limit wildcat subdivisions that create parcels of land in areas that are poorly planned, have limited access, poor roads, long distances to other development, and very limited services. People that move into these rural areas quickly feel dissatisfied with poor roads or limited sheriff deputy coverage and then demand the same level of county services that more populated areas enjoy. Then it falls on the rest of the taxpayers to subsidize the provision of services to these rural subdivided lands, which is an inefficient way to spend public funds. So these character areas direct new growth and redevelopment to maximize the County's existing social and physical infrastructure.

Additionally, the community master plans would allow denser development to be built within the rural areas, but would require that the new development provide or pay for some of the services required by their new growth, instead of being paid for by the general taxpayer.

d. Protecting the rural character of the county

Protecting the rural character of the county is very important to the people living here. These character areas could protect large rural areas through measures such as acreage size limitations, directing growth to village centers, and preserving open space.

f. Provide greater flexibility to match the desires and historical uses of each area

The character areas, if implemented through zoning, would provide much more flexibility for communities to match land use regulations with the desires and historical uses of their areas. Under our current zoning scheme, nearly the entire county is one zone. And any changes to that one zone also affects nearly the entire county. That would not be a problem if every area wanted the same things. But because every area wants different things, and there is only one zone for all areas, we have had almost no changes in 30 years.

So breaking up the county into regions with similar desires and uses would create more flexibility. For example, some areas may want to loosen up rules such as height restrictions, setbacks, building codes, or allowing guest houses. But not every community wants those changes. Other areas want to add restrictions to limit growth, protect the forest, or preserve the rural feel. These character areas could provide the flexibility we currently lack by grouping like-minded areas together, and defining boundaries in which to be more creative with land use rules without affecting the whole county.

Detailed Character Area Descriptions

This Comprehensive Plan includes seven character areas discussed below. The character areas detail the types of land uses envisioned for different parts of the County. **As noted above, the Comprehensive Plan assigns no character area to the land currently covered in an adopted area or community plan or currently in a Native American Reservation.** Each of the character area descriptions lists the types of zoning districts that would be appropriate for the character area to help Apache County decision-makers implement the Plan. The zoning districts would list permitted land uses and other regulations, such as setbacks, lot coverage, noise and light restrictions, and other development standards; this Plan does not include that level of specific information. **The character areas discuss some possible regulations for zoning districts but are not to be read as regulatory.** A table in Section 1.1.8 compares residential densities and parcel sizes allowed in the character areas.

Rural Ranch

In general, the purpose of the Rural Ranch character area is to maintain the open character of land traditionally used for ranching in Apache County. A significant amount of the land designated as Rural Ranch has been divided into 36 or 40 acre parcels.

Development in Rural Ranch may not include lots smaller than twenty acres without 1) compliance with Apache County's subdivision regulations and 2) approval of a community master plan that addresses roadways, provision of water, sewer, sanitation, and other public services, and location of residential and nonresidential uses. Community master plans should include a minimum of 36 acres; residential density in a community master plan should not be more than one dwelling unit per 2 gross acres.

Rural Ranch may include both low density residential and limited commercial uses focused on adjacent highways. Commercial uses in Rural Ranch should be allowed only along paved or other appropriately surfaced access or rights-of-way and are encouraged at highway intersections. Any industrial or storage uses in Rural Ranch should be screened from views from rights-of-way.

Without a community master plan, the appropriate zoning in Rural Ranch should be limited to districts that meet the basic parameters of the designation. With a community master plan, any zoning district may be appropriate in Rural Ranch.

The following chart summarizes the maximum density and minimum parcel size for the Rural Ranch character area:

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Rural Ranch	1 du ¹ / 20 gross ac	1 du / 2 gross ac	36 ac

Range Land

The purpose of the Range Land character area is to allow cattle ranching, farming, and other traditional Apache County agricultural uses. The character area is designated for lands that are large private tracts or other property that is, and likely will continue to be, used for ranching purposes.

Development in Range Land should not include lots or parcels smaller than 160 acres without 1) compliance with Apache County’s subdivision regulations and 2) approval of a community master plan that addresses roadways, provision of water, sewer, sanitation, and other public services, and location of residential and nonresidential uses. Residential density in a community master plan in Range Land should not exceed one dwelling unit per five gross acres. Commercial and industrial development should be restricted to locations with paved or other appropriately surfaced access and is encouraged at highway intersections. Industrial or storage uses should be screened from views from rights-of-way.

Without a community master plan, the appropriate zoning districts in Range Land should include any zoning districts that satisfy the basic parameters of the designation. With a community master plan, all of Apache County’s zoning districts would be permitted in Range Land except those that allow a density of more than one dwelling unit per five acres.

The following chart summarizes the maximum density and minimum parcel size for the Range Land character area:

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Range Land	1 du / 160 gross ac	1 du / 5 gross ac	160 ac

Rural Edge

The purpose of the Rural Edge character area is to provide lower density residential development adjacent to Community Village. This character area is typically designated for property adjacent to existing or planned areas of higher density and for property within two miles of a highway or other significant road.

Development in Rural Edge should not include lots smaller than nine acres without 1) compliance with Apache County’s subdivision regulations and 2) approval of a community master plan that addresses roadways, provision of water, sewer, sanitation, and other public services, and location of residential and nonresidential uses.

¹ “du” stands for Dwelling Unit.

Community master plans should include a minimum of 36 acres; residential density in a community master plan should not be more than four dwelling units per gross acre.

Rural Edge may include both low density residential and limited commercial uses. Commercial uses in Rural Edge should be allowed only along paved or other appropriately surfaced access or rights-of-way and are encouraged at highway intersections. Any industrial or storage uses in Rural Edge should be screened from views from rights-of-way.

Without a community master plan, the appropriate zoning districts in Rural Edge should include any zoning districts that satisfy the basic parameters of the designation. With a community master plan, all of Apache County's zoning districts should be permitted in Rural Edge.

The following chart summarizes the maximum density and minimum parcel size for the Rural Edge character area:

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Rural Edge	1 du / 9 gross ac	Up to 4 du / gross ac	36 ac

Community Village

The purpose of the Community Village character area is to provide large areas with higher density residential development with a mix of related commercial, industrial, and institutional uses extending from highway corridors and highway intersections. Community Village is an appropriate and encouraged location for uses such as community college campuses and hospitals or medical clinics.

All development in Community Village should have paved or other appropriately surfaced access. Residential development should have no maximum or minimum density requirement. Performance standards would mitigate impacts of the uses on established development and provide relief between residential and nonresidential uses. Industrial and storage uses should be screened from views from all rights-of-way and should have a setback of at least 100 feet from adjacent, non-industrial land uses. All uses in Community Village should provide landscaping along highway frontages with a minimum of one tree for every 60 feet of frontage.

Community Village is most appropriate adjacent to existing communities or as part of a community master plan. Community Village should either be 1) annexed to an incorporated municipality and developed in conformance with the municipality's regulations, or 2) developed subject to a County-approved community master plan that addresses roadways, provision of water, sewer, sanitation, and other public services, and location of residential and nonresidential uses.

The following chart summarizes the maximum density and minimum parcel size for the Community Village character area:

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Community Village	1 du/ 5 gross ac	Not limited	Not Limited

Highway Service

The purpose of the Highway Service character area is to provide small, transportation-oriented commercial development nodes along the interstate highway system and other highway-oriented development. Highway Service land uses will provide services to the travelling public, including long haul truckers and vacationers.

Access to Highway Service should be paved and should accommodate the turning radii of semi-tractor trailers for commercial development. The diameter of the commercial nodes should be between one and two miles, as indicated on the Comprehensive Plan Land Use Map, described in Section 1.2. Residential development in Highway Service should be mixed with commercial uses, if located closer than one-half mile to a freeway interchange. Residential uses should have a density between four and 10 dwelling units per gross acre if located within one mile of a freeway interchange. Any stand alone residential development should be approved only with a community master plan that addresses how the development accommodates large trucks and roadways, provision of water, sewer, sanitation, and other public services, and location of residential and nonresidential uses.

The appropriate zoning in Highway Service should include residential, commercial, and light industrial/warehousing districts; stand alone residential development should require a community master plan with residential zoning. Apache County will work with the Arizona Department of Transportation to encourage that agency to improve the freeway interchanges along Interstate 40.

The following chart summarizes the maximum density and minimum parcel size for the Highway Service character area:

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Highway Service			
stand-alone residential within ½ of freeway interchange	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed
stand-alone residential	Not allowed	10 du / gross ac (4du /ac min density)	Not Limited
residential integrated with commercial uses within 1 mile of freeway interchange	10 du / gross ac (4du /ac min density)	10 du / gross ac (4du /ac min density)	Not Limited

Recreation

The purpose of the Recreation character area is to provide for limited growth, particularly of vacation and recreation oriented uses, on properties surrounded by and adjacent to

National Forest land. If National Forest land is transferred to private ownership, the Recreation character area is the most appropriate designation.

Uses in Recreation should include guest lodgings in resorts, hotels, or bed and breakfast facilities, restaurants, and other tourist-oriented commercial uses, and residential uses, especially second homes and staff-related housing. Use of performance standards that provide incentives for development that is sensitive to the forest would help soften impacts of the uses on the forest. All development should either 1) have or plant at least eight native trees per acre throughout the site as a visual buffer, or 2) provide and maintain natural meadows. However, all development in Recreation should be “fire-wise”. Development should limit the amount of contiguous pavement to blend with the forest. Colors and lighting should be muted and fit the context of the forest. Billboards should be prohibited. On-premise signage should be low scale and unobtrusive while delivering the intended message. Residential densities greater than 1 dwelling unit per ten gross acres should require appropriately surfaced access from a highway to the lot. All commercial uses should require paved or other appropriately surfaced access from the highway. Logging and related uses should be allowed subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors and subject to provision of paved or other appropriately surfaced access for the use(s). No development in Recreation should exceed the height of the tree line or 80 feet, whichever is less, except mechanical towers, chimneys, smokestacks, communication towers, or observation towers. All development should use natural materials that blend with the colors and textures of the forest.

All Apache County zoning districts, except industrial districts, would be appropriate in Recreation.

The following chart summarizes the maximum density and minimum parcel size for the Recreation character area:

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Recreation			
Unpaved access	1 du / 9 gross ac	1 du / 9 gross ac	9 ac
paved/approved surface access	1 du / gross ac	Not limited	9 ac

Environmentally Sensitive Development Area

The purpose of the Environmentally Sensitive Development Area (“ESDA”) character area is to provide for limited growth of a full range of development/land uses on environmentally sensitive lands, such as the property adjacent to the Petrified Forest National Park and Lyman Lake State Park – the publicly owned and specially designated properties set aside for their scenic, historic, and/or recreational value. Appropriate land uses could include vacation and recreation oriented uses and other uses that are designed to have limited visual or other impacts on the scenic value of surrounding property. The character area does not address properties in or adjacent to the National Forest. Existing land uses adjacent to the parks are primarily ranching and scattered residential development, neither of which conflicts significantly with public enjoyment of the parks. However, additional safeguards are appropriate to ensure continued protection of the parks and their resources without placing unreasonable barriers on future adjacent development.

Permitted uses in ESDA should include guest lodgings in resorts, hotels, or bed and breakfast facilities, restaurants, and other tourist-oriented commercial uses, and residential uses, especially second homes and related staff housing.

All development in ESDA should be approved with a community master plan that addresses paving of roads, open space, preservation of natural features, provision of water, sewer, sanitation, and other public services, and location of residential and nonresidential uses. Development on properties in ESDA should provide visual buffers from the parks. Billboards should be prohibited. On-premise signage should be low scale and unobtrusive while delivering the intended message. No development in ESDA should exceed the height of 30 feet above natural grade, except 1) mechanical towers, chimneys, smokestacks, communication towers, or similar unoccupied towers, 2) observation towers, or 3) development for which the design accents or complements a natural slope with a greater overall height, such as a building that is designed to follow such slope. All development should use natural materials that blend with the colors and textures of the parks.

All Apache County zoning districts, except industrial districts, would be appropriate in ESDA.

The following chart summarizes the maximum density and minimum parcel size for the ESDA character area:

<u>CHARACTER AREA</u>	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Environmentally Sensitive Development Area (ESDA)			
Unpaved access	Not allowed	1 du / 9 gross ac	36 ac
paved/approved surface access	Not allowed	Not limited	36 ac

Character Area Comparison

The following table compares the residential density and parcels sizes of the character areas for development with and without a community master plan

CHARACTER AREA	MAXIMUM DENSITY		MINIMUM PARCEL SIZE REQUIRED FOR A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN
	DEVELOPMENT NOT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	DEVELOPMENT REQUIRING A COMMUNITY MASTER PLAN	
Range Land	1 du / 160 gross ac	1 du / 5 gross ac	160 ac
Rural Ranch	1 du / 20 gross ac	1 du / 2 gross ac	36 ac
Rural Edge	1 du / 9 gross ac	4 du / gross ac	36 ac
Recreation			
unpaved access	1 du / 9 gross ac	1 du / 9 gross ac	9 ac
paved/approved surface access	1 du / gross ac	Not limited	9 ac
Environmentally Sensitive Development Area (ESDA)			
unpaved access	Not allowed	1 du / 9 gross ac	36 ac
paved/approved surface access	Not allowed	Not limited	36 ac
Highway Service			
stand-alone residential within ½ of freeway interchange	Not allowed	Not allowed	Not allowed
stand-alone residential	Not allowed	10 du / gross ac (4du /ac min density)	Not Limited
residential integrated with commercial uses within 1 mile of freeway interchange	10 du / gross ac (4du /ac min density)	10 du / gross ac (4du /ac min density)	Not Limited
Community Village	1 du / 5 gross ac	Not limited	Not Limited

Land Use Map

The Comprehensive Plan Land Use (“CPLU”) Map graphically represents proposed character areas for Apache County. A small version of the CPLU Map is shown on Exhibit 1. The official CPLU Map is maintained in a larger format and is incorporated into this Plan by reference.

To properly administer the CPLU Map, a couple things must be kept in mind. The first is that the CPLU Map is dynamic. The current projections for land needs are based on past and present trends, and assumptions about the future. However, community needs and priorities tend to change over time, so amendments to the CPLU Map must be possible.

The second is that the CPLU Map is “general”. **The character areas on the CPLU Map are not intended to follow property lines and are not intended to represent zoning districts.**

Interfaces between different designations are purposefully non-site-specific so as to discourage using CPLU Map designations as the sole basis for making decisions on zone change applications. Along with considering the CPLU Map for a zone change or conditional use permit, all applicable Comprehensive Plan goals and strategies must be considered as well.

The Community Plans address development in their boundaries and are incorporated into this Comprehensive Plan by reference.

b. ZONING

At its most basic, zoning attempts to reduce conflicts between land uses by designating areas for certain uses (like single-family homes), while restricting conflicting uses in those same areas (like factories).

If done right, zoning strikes a balance between individual property rights and protections desired by the community.

What is our current zoning?

Since the implementation of the first zoning ordinance in 1985 until now, Apache County has had two main zones—the Agricultural General Zone for most of the county, and the Greer Phase I Zone for Greer. So nearly the entire unincorporated area of Apache County south of I-40 is under the Agricultural General zone.

In the Agricultural General Zone, certain uses are automatically permitted, such as residential homes, agricultural uses, and limited commercial uses along highways. But other uses must be approved through a Conditional Use Permit. Obtaining a Conditional Use Permit requires notifying surrounding neighbors, holding public hearings, and getting approval from the Board of Supervisors.

This process has allowed some flexibility in uses over the years, but only on a case-by-case basis; no large-scale zoning changes have occurred since 1985. On the pages of the zoning ordinance itself are several different zone options such as residential, commercial, and industrial zones, but the county remains under the one main zone.

How to improve zoning going forward

Going forward, the county zoning ordinance will continue to provide various zones to reduce land use conflicts and provide stability and predictability for development and growth. These zones can include but are not limited to zones such as agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, overlay zones, or master planned communities. It can also include zoning for open space, rangeland, villages, highways, recreation, wildland urban interface, energy corridors, and any other zones that may meet the land use needs of the citizens of Apache County. It could also include zones for Rural Planning Areas, Specific Zoning Plans, and Infill Incentive Districts described below.

Zoning in Apache County can also be improved in the following ways to implement this Land Use Element:

a. Implement community land use plans through zoning ordinances. Along with creating community plans, each community can also create its own zoning scheme to implement the plan. So far, only Greer has created its own zoning ordinance, which is tailored to the needs and desires of Greer. This has been advantageous for Greer because any changes to its zoning ordinance only affects Greer, instead of the entire county, making it more flexible to the current needs of Greer. Therefore, each community with a community plan is encouraged to implement its plan through its own specific zones.

b. Improve and simplify the Master Planned Community Zone. The 2004 Comprehensive Plan relied heavily on creating a community master plan ordinance to implement the Land Use Element goals and policies. To implement the goal, Apache County created the Master Planned Community Zone ordinance in 2008. But because of the great recession beginning in 2007, growth nearly stopped and no master planned communities have been created so far. But the community master plan concept is still an important tool for implementing the visions of the Comprehensive Plan. To improve and encourage its use, the Master Planned Community Zone ordinance needs to be simplified and updated to better match the flexibility of the character areas.

c. Identify and rezone properties that are appropriate for commercial and industrial uses. Starting or relocating a business is already difficult without having to wade through a rezoning application. So designating certain areas for commercial and industrial uses helps businesses know where they can locate without the hassle of rezoning, and also notifies people who want to live next to it of what might be there in the future.

d. Economic sustainability is a major concern in the area, so the overall zoning scheme should encourage rather than discourage economic growth.

c. Subdivision Ordinance

The Apache County Subdivision Ordinance is one of the main tools for implementing the Land Use Element. The subdivision rules preserve open space or easements for traffic, utilities, drainage, access to firefighting apparatus, recreation, light, and air. Subdivisions can promote orderly growth and ensure the cost of new services are borne by the developer, not the general taxpayer.

The Subdivision Ordinance also stops wildcat subdivisions. Wildcat subdivisions occur where property is subdivided down to small lots but little or no plans are made for road access, utility easements, drainage, access by emergency vehicles, safety, or future growth. The purchasers of these poorly planned lots inherit these problems. There are many people who bought land in Apache County and are now frustrated or disillusioned because their land is landlocked, has no maintained roads to access it, is far from electricity, is on the side of a steep hill, has no possibility for a septic tank, or has myriad other issues that are alleviated through subdivision rules. Many of these properties have been abandoned, leaving dilapidated structures and unpassable roads, which causes problems for the people who continue to live in the vicinity.

Going forward, the subdivision ordinance will continue to be an important tool to implement the Comprehensive Plan and Community Plans and to help encourage orderly growth that protects our current and future citizens.

d. Community Plans

The land area of Apache County is large and diverse. It ranges from high mountain communities to barren badlands, from villages to sparsely populated rangelands. The Comprehensive Plan is a regional plan and does not attempt to cover specific local needs. Therefore, communities are encouraged to develop their own community plans and accompanying zoning ordinances to manage local needs.

The following area or community plans are being adopted and incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. This Comprehensive Plan does not address the land covered in the area plans, and these plans are the controlling planning document for these communities.

Greer Community Plan

Alpine Community Plan

Nutrioso Community Plan

Concho Community Plan

Any other communities desiring to create a plan are encouraged to do so. Those plans can be adopted into this Comprehensive Plan through the amendment process.

e. Improve the Appearance

Trash cleanup is a major concern for many citizens in the county. One does not need to drive far to see abandoned trailers, wildcat dumps, dilapidated buildings, and trash strewn about. When these conditions exist quality of life is reduced—crime increases, property values drop, tourism sputters, health is endangered, and enjoyment of one's property is diminished.

With limited resources and legal constraints, the county government does not have the capacity to clean up on a large scale. It will take a joint effort with communities, state and federal granting agencies, nonprofit organizations, landfills, and individual property owners to make it happen.

One tool of the county government that can be improved is code enforcement. As in other rural counties, code enforcement in Apache County has been weak for many years. Various factors have contributed to this such as lack of money and personnel, political constraints, legal constraints, or fear of offending neighbors. To help achieve this goal of improving the appearance, the county can improve code enforcement in a couple ways:

1. Adopting and executing a Code Enforcement Plan. A code enforcement plan is a way to have an open dialogue with the community to determine where the county government should focus its efforts and to make a fresh start. Such a plan can help clarify to citizens what will and what will not be enforced, and increases the county's capacity to enforce the code. Finally, creating the code enforcement plan with citizen input helps the county to match written ordinances and codes to the desires and direction of the community.
2. Engage all county departments in the effort. The Sheriff's Office, Assessor's Office, Health Department, Community Development Department, Roads Department, and County Attorney's Office all have a part in the code enforcement effort. The county can improve

coordination among these departments going forward by creating the code enforcement plan, sharing information, and developing integrated procedures for code enforcement.

f. Preserving the Rural Character of Communities

During the planning process, a majority of citizens voiced their desire to protect the rural character of the county. The county government can support this desire by adopting new ordinances or enforcing existing ordinances relating to billboards, dark skies, noise, subdivisions, acreage limitations, dwelling limitations, conservation easements, clustering development, and other land use restrictions. It can also continue to support agriculture and the agricultural lifestyle. But preserving the rural character must be balanced with the desire to continue the low regulation environment. The options listed above are simply ideas to draw from to achieve this goal.

As discussed earlier, the Character Areas provide a way to preserve the rural character through acreage limitations, especially in areas of the county that have been traditionally used as range land or ranches, while still allowing denser growth through subdivision creation and community master plans.

Finally, this goal of preserving the rural character is best implemented by individual communities through their area plans and tailored zoning ordinances. That way, each community can determine what level of protection they need from growth pressures without imposing additional rules on neighboring communities.

g. Preserve the Low-Regulation Environment

Apache County has a long history and strong culture of individual freedom. Many who live in unincorporated Apache County moved here because they enjoy the low-regulation environment. Continuing this tradition of low regulation and protecting individual property rights is important. Some communities may want to implement specific rules to further reduce land use restrictions. Below are four tools or avenues communities can use to reduce regulations without having to change the rest of the county.

1. Rural Planning Areas

For communities wanting to reduce regulation in their area, creating a rural planning area is an option provided under Arizona law ARS §11-806. A rural planning area allows a community to emphasize voluntary, nonregulatory incentives for compliance and accommodation of continuing traditional rural and agricultural enterprises.

To create a rural planning area, a majority of property owners within a proposed area must sign a petition requesting to create the planning area and submit it to the Board of Supervisors. Participation in the plan is voluntary by those living within the area, and any person may withdraw from the planning area. Once formed, the rural planning area is included in the county comprehensive plan.

Size limitation - A rural planning area must include an area of no less than one square mile.

2. Special Zoning Plans

Special Zoning Plans under Arizona law ARS §11-807 are another tool communities can use to create zoning plans for their area. A Special Zoning Plan can include all types of plans or regulations as desired by the community, but at minimum it must include text, maps and illustrations specifying all of the following:

1. The distribution, location and extent of land uses, including open space.
2. The distribution, location, extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage and solid waste disposal, drainage and other facilities necessary to provide for the land uses described in the specific zoning plan.
3. Standards by which development shall proceed and, if applicable, requirements for conservation, development and utilization of natural resources.
4. A statement of whether the specific zoning plan is consistent with the comprehensive plan required by ARS §11-804.
5. Any other matters necessary or desirable for implementation of the specific zoning plan.

To create a Specific Zoning Plan, all the property owners within the boundaries of the chosen area must give written consent before the plan can be established. Then, the plan may be adopted after notifying the public and holding hearings before the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Size limitation - A Specific Zoning Plan must include an area of no less than one square mile.

3. Infill Incentive Districts

Under Arizona law ARS §11-254.06, certain areas can be designated as Infill Incentive Districts which allows a relaxation of rules to encourage redevelopment in that area.

To encourage redevelopment, the land use rules within the Infill Incentive District must emphasize voluntary incentives for compliance, and can include measures such as expedited planning and zoning procedures, waiver of county fees, and waiver of development standards and procedural requirements.

To be designated as an Infill Incentive District, an area must meet at least three of the following requirements:

1. There is a large number of vacant, older or dilapidated structures.
2. There is a large number of vacant or underused parcels of property that are of small or inappropriate sizes or that are environmentally contaminated, that are owned by different owners and that are located in an area that lacks the presence of development and investment activity compared to other areas in the county.
3. There is a large number of parcels of property or buildings where nuisances exist or occur.
4. There is a high occurrence of crime.
5. There is a continuing decline in population.

If an area meets three of these requirements, then the Board of Supervisors can designate the area as an Infill Incentive District after giving property owners notice by mail and holding a public hearing. Once the area is established, the Board of Supervisors must adopt a plan for the area that identifies the reduction or waiver of regulations that will encourage redevelopment.

Size limitation – An Infill Incentive District must include an area of no less than one square mile.

4. Community Plans

Community Plans are also an option to reduce land use regulations. Community plans are a grass-roots endeavor where community members get together and create a plan that can be integrated into the Comprehensive Plan. The process of creating the plan must be open to all members of the public, and ultimately must be adopted by the Board of Supervisors. To implement such plans, communities can adopt specific zoning ordinances or other codes.

Size Limitation – a community plan must include an area of no less than one square mile.

h. Preserving the Character of the Forest Communities

There are also communities, especially in the forest areas, where fire danger and growth pressures have led to desires to protect the community even further. These communities are encouraged to use community plans, zoning ordinances, and building codes to create the protections they need. Examples include adopting Wildland-Urban Interface codes, using zoning to limit growth in environmentally sensitive areas, or adopting Reserve Overlay Zone maps for those areas.

i. Federal Government Coordination

Because Apache County's land area is only 13% private land, it is essential that Federal agencies coordinate all plans and actions with Apache County and its citizens. To implement this coordination, the county has adopted the Apache County Land Use and Resource Policy. The Land Use and Resource Policy is to be used in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan to ensure full coordination, cooperation, and consistency between Apache County and the Federal government.

j. Cost of Development

Planning to address the cost of development is important in Apache County given its limited resources; it is critical that new development pay for its fair share of necessary public improvements. This cost of development section identifies policies and strategies that the County could use to require that development pay its fair share toward the cost of additional public facility needs generated by new development.

To date, development in Apache County has been responsible for the cost of on-site infrastructure and some off-site improvements necessary for a project, such as roadway improvements and water lines. The County has not required development to pay for other public facility needs, such as new parks and trails, new sheriff's facilities, new fire facilities, new public safety communications systems, highway widening, new traffic signals, and upgraded utilities. Several funding mechanisms are available to fund such improvements, including special districts for roadway improvements.

Arizona gives counties the ability to assess development fees on new development. (A.R.S. § 11-1102). To implement a development fee program, a county must adopt a capital improvements plan and may then assess development fees within the covered planning area to offset capital costs for water, sewer, streets, parks, and public safety facilities that the plan indicates are necessary for county public services for development in the area. Development fees must: result in a beneficial use to the development that is being assessed; be placed in a segregated account to be used only for authorized purposes; be credited for facilities covered by the development fee if the developer dedicates such facilities; bear a reasonable relationship to the burden of capital costs resulting from the need for public services for the development; and be assessed in a nondiscriminatory manner. The fees are typically assessed at the time a building permit is issued; for residential development, the Statute requires the payment to be made when a building permit is issued.

In rural areas with very low-density development, administration of a development fee program is difficult. Given the small number of permits issued in such an area, little money is collected and the contribution to capital projects is also small; a fee that is proportionate to the benefit of the improvement to the area would often be exorbitant. It is possible that assessment of development fees would be practical in growth areas or planned communities.

k. Goals and Policies

Goal 1: To maintain and update the Land Use Element of the Apache County Comprehensive Plan

Policy 1-A: Review the Land Use Element of the Apache County Comprehensive Plan at least every ten years, and amend the plan whenever it is determined that a change is warranted.

Policy 1-B: As growth occurs in Apache County, revise the Land Use Element, considering addition of greater definition and precision to guide development in the County.

Goal 2: To administer the Land Use Element of the Apache County Comprehensive Plan so as to further the purposes of the Plan.

Policy 2-A: Approve zone changes that are consistent with the Land Use Element's character areas, as shown on the Land Use Map. However, the Land Use Element and Map shall not be used as the sole justification for making decisions on zone changes and Conditional Use Permits.

Policy 2-B: When interpreting character area boundaries, due to the general and non-site specific nature of the Land Use Map, the Planning & Zoning Commission shall consider the character of

surrounding uses, past interpretations, and applicable goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.

Goal 3: To improve and maintain the quality of life in Apache County by using land use planning strategies that have positive effects on the natural, cultural, and built environments.

Policy 3-A: Plan and approve growth and development with consideration to energy efficient patterns of development, including access to incident solar and wind energy, utilizing existing capital infrastructure, whenever possible.

Policy 3-B: Provide adequate facilities and services to support needs for diverse educational, cultural, and social opportunities.

Policy 3-C: Revise the Apache County Zoning Ordinance as needed to implement this Comprehensive Plan, including addition of performance standards and design guidelines to mitigate impacts between uses in different zoning districts. Apply the new Zoning Ordinance with case-by-case rezoning approvals/applications as property owners propose new development rather than the County proactively placing the new districts on unincorporated land.

Policy 3-D: When approving development adjacent to incorporated and unincorporated communities, consider uses that are compatible with existing uses in intensity or density.

Policy 3-E: Complete the community plan for Greer and update the community plans for Alpine, Concho, and Nutrioso to include land use maps and other tools to help implement the goals of the communities' residents and property owners. Also, encourage other communities to develop community plans.

Policy 3-F: Coordinate planning efforts with Navajo County and the Native American Reservations in Apache County to improve regional competitiveness for development and uses in the County.

Policy 3-G: Plan for economic development to improve the business environment in the County and encourage young residents to remain in the County as they mature and enter the workforce.

Goal 4: To preserve and protect archaeological and historic resources for their aesthetic, scientific, educational, and cultural value.

Policy 4-A: Where probable cause for discovery of cultural or archaeological resources exists, encourage property owner(s) to contact the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office.

Goal 5: To provide equal opportunity for safe, decent, sanitary, and affordable housing for all residents of the County, regardless of race, color, religion, mental or physical disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital or family status, or national origin, in conformance with the Federal Fair Housing Act of 1988 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and to provide a range of residential uses that offer housing opportunities for all County residents.

Policy 5-A: The County's approval standards, special conditions and procedures regulating the development of needed housing shall be clear and objective and shall not have the effect of discouraging needed housing through unreasonable cost or delay.

Policy 5-B: To promote greater flexibility and economy of land use, provide opportunities in the Zoning Ordinance for alternative housing types and patterns, planned developments, mixed uses, and other innovations that reduce development costs.

Policy 5-C: Adopt and implement growth and development policies which do not result in the distortion of regional housing markets and/or artificial land price escalations, and which are not used as mechanisms to otherwise exclude low and moderate cost housing.

Policy 5-D: Encourage new construction methods and housing types in order to increase the housing supply for all socioeconomic groups.

Policy 5-E: Develop standards for development density that reflect the needs and goals of existing communities, whether incorporated or unincorporated, such as establishing medium to high density residential zoning for Community Villages and Rural Edge areas and low to medium density for developing rural areas.

Goal 6: Improve the overall appearance of the County.

Policy 6-A: Maintain natural scenic qualities of the County by identifying and protecting cultural resources, protecting wildlife habitat, natural plant communities and riparian areas, and encouraging protection of scenic vistas.

Policy 6-B: Consider adoption of a Code Enforcement Plan

Policy 6-C: Improve the nuisance abatement or property maintenance ordinance.

Goal 7: Maintain compatible land use patterns while encouraging free market development.

Policy 7-A: Encourage the use of and provide incentives (such as density bonuses) for implementation of community master plans.

Policy 7-B: Provide for buffers between different land uses including, but not limited to, setbacks, walls or fences, and landscaping.

Policy 7-D: Require appropriate and adequate access to commercial and industrial uses.

Goal 8: Increase the amount of commercially and industrially developable land.

Policy 8-A: Place commercial development strategically so as to attract and locate appropriate shopping and employment uses to have appropriate and adequate access and are easily accessible, particularly in or near established communities and cities, and in communities with air and/or rail access.

Policy 8-B: Encourage the development of non-resource specific industrial uses along major transportation corridors, rail heads, and airports and the development of resource specific industrial uses in appropriate remote locations.

Policy 8-C: Encourage small, specialty enterprises that support recreation and tourist activities near the National Forest, the Petrified Forest National Park, and the Native American Reservations.

Goal 9: Reduce the danger from fire for all residents living in a wildland urban interface or near a National Forest boundary.

Policy 9-A: Require developers and owners to incorporate fire safe development standards including defensible spaces and construction materials.

Policy 9-B: Investigate the appropriateness of adopting of the Urban Wildland Interface Code, which addresses creation of defensible spaces, by local Fire Districts.

Policy 9-C: Review and consider adoption of a fire code, such as the Uniform Fire Code, for Apache County.

Policy 9-D: Discourage high density development in areas where fire protection and other emergency services are not readily available.

Policy 9-E: Multiple access routes shall be required into new large subdivisions and other major developments for emergency purposes.

Policy 9-F: Propose and encourage involvement of the Fire Districts in the review and approval of subdivisions and development projects within their respective jurisdictions.

Policy 9-G: Encourage the implementation of fire prevention education programs.

Policy 9-H: Review the Apache County Zoning Ordinance and propose amendments for consideration by the Board of Supervisors where necessary to address the issue of fire safety and forest health.

Goal 10: Actively plan to accommodate growth in Apache County in an appropriate manner.

Policy 10-A: Consider adoption of development fees to cover costs associated with new development as allowed by statute.

Policy 10-B: Encourage higher density and intensity development in those areas of the County where services, including but not limited to water and sewer systems, paved rights-of-way, and schools, are available or can be created with new development.

Policy 10-C: Conserve agricultural land and open space through density transfers or other programs.

Policy 10-D: Identify infill opportunities in the County to capitalize on existing infrastructure and reduce some growth related costs.

Policy 10-E: Encourage municipalities, sewer companies, water companies, telephone companies, and electricity companies to adopt five and ten year phasing plans for the expansion of public facilities and development in their service areas.

Policy 10-F: Encourage development/installation of technology improvements including, but not limited to, high speed Internet connections and other communications improvements in Apache County.

Infrastructure and Services Element

Apache County aims to provide public infrastructure and services to current and future residents in a fiscally responsible manner and under consistent standards. As the county grows, it is important that demands for additional services are balanced with the county's fiscal resources and capabilities. Generally, the municipalities provide urban services such as water and sewer, paved streets, sidewalks, parks, solid waste collection and management, and similar facilities. Apache County does not provide these urban services and is not equipped to do so.

Due to the variety of locations, population densities, and presence of special taxing districts, different parts of Apache County experience different levels of service. Also, the greater the distance a location is from a population center, the more difficult and expensive it is for the county to provide services, especially when those rural areas contribute the least amount of taxes to cover those services.

Because of these realities, this Plan reinforces the historic distinction between city and county levels of service by recognizing the limited capacity of the county to provide urban services. The county will instead focus on providing its limited services and providing them efficiently and responsibly. Future infrastructure and services may be provided in areas where new development and population growth can financially justify it.

Roads

Roads are the main infrastructure that Apache County provides. However, the county only constructs and maintains roads that are officially adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The most limiting factor for roads is the enormous costs of construction and maintenance compared to the sparse population of the county.

Roads are *not paid for with property tax*, they are paid for with Highway User Revenue Fund (HURF). HURF consists of monies collected from taxes of motor fuels, as well as fees and charges related to registering and operating motor vehicles. This HURF money is allocated mainly based on fuel sales and the population of the unincorporated areas. So, to increase the amount of money for road maintenance, Apache County needs more fuel sales or increased population.

Without an increase of population or fuel sales, the HURF money the county gets from year to year stays about the same. So whenever a new road comes into the county system, it simply spreads the same amount of resources over a larger road system. Furthermore, there is a much higher cost to taxpayers when the county constructs or maintains roads in the most rural and least populated areas. Those roads are essentially subsidized by the rest of the taxpayers, which is not fair to taxpayers.

The Board of Supervisors are put in a tough position when constituents request a new road be adopted—either the Board satisfies the demand and thereby further stretches limited resources, or denies the request and risks angering constituents. Establishing a policy that ties the adoption of new roads to frequency of use and available HURF funds would help the Board make those decisions by providing a consistent standard that is fair to taxpayers. Therefore, to ensure a fair and efficient expenditure of tax dollars, the following goals and policies are adopted as part of this comprehensive plan.

GOAL: Construct and maintain roads in a fiscally responsible manner.

- a. Policy 1. New roads will not be adopted unless the construction and maintenance costs can be justified by new development and population growth, or by an increase in HURF money that will continue for the foreseeable future.

- i. Sufficient development or population to justify road adoption must be evidenced by a minimum average daily traffic count of 100 vehicles per day as measured by the Engineering office.
- b. Policy 2. The Engineering office will develop a road adoption policy that includes standards and procedures for road adoption in compliance with the direction given in this Comprehensive Plan.

Special Taxing Districts

Special taxing districts can provide services in areas that might otherwise be limited from receiving services because of size, location, financial limitations or unavailability of other government resources. The formation of a special taxing district creates a funding stream to pay for the services by taxing only those parcels that benefit from the service.

Arizona law currently allows and specifies the process for the formation of 42 special taxing districts such as fire districts, road improvement districts, and water or sewer districts. It also includes districts to construct other public facilities – street lights, sidewalks, fire hydrants, parks, recreational facilities, etc.

Other Arizona counties have multiple districts such as road improvement and water improvement districts to improve services in certain areas. Our neighbor, Navajo County, currently has about twenty road improvement districts. If HURF funds do not increase through population increase or gas sales, then a special taxing district is a way for the residents to construct, improve or maintain local roads or water and sewer systems. Both Alpine and Greer have special taxing districts that provide wastewater treatment services, but there are currently no road improvement districts in Apache County.

If residents need more information on special districts, please contact the Apache County Engineering Office.

Circulation Element

Introduction

As growth and development occur in Apache County, enhancements to its circulation system will be necessary. With time, more roads will be paved and air and rail service will improve. The changes to the system will provide better connections from the southern end of the County to Interstate 40 and the communities along the Interstate. New roadways will also improve access from the eastern portions of the County, and Arizona, to Phoenix. Expansion of air and rail service will improve connections of the County to the region and the nation. Some purposes of the Circulation Element are to respond to the new growth and to: 1) provide safe, adequate roadway capacity to meet circulation and access needs; 2) maintain and improve the airport and rail services as viable inter-regional transportation linkages; and 3) direct growth to areas with existing or proposed roadways. The Element also is based in part on the relationship between land use and circulation to direct both land use development and circulation infrastructure improvements.

This Element includes a brief description of existing circulation infrastructure and goals and policies to help guide improvements to the system as growth and development occur in Apache County. To date, roadways in the County have been constructed where needs have arisen rather than being installed in anticipation of growth. This approach will probably remain, given limited resources to make improvements. Although this Comprehensive Plan proposes locations for new elements of the circulation system, the timing of making these improvements will be determined largely by needs from new development.

The Northern Arizona Council of Governments ("NACOG"), a nonprofit membership corporation that represents local governments including Apache County with a variety of services, helps plan and improve the circulation system in the County. NACOG distributes federal transportation planning and construction funds to local agencies in the County and examines circulation planning from a regional perspective. Contact and work with NACOG will be critical to ensure implementation of this Element.

Existing Circulation Issues

Circulation planning in Apache County is challenging given the size of the area, its limited population, and the presence of large ranching tracts, extensive forest lands, large parcels of publicly owned property, and large Native American Reservations. The dominant mode of travel in the County is vehicular; the trips occur on both paved and unpaved roadways. Rail and airport facilities exist in the County to connect the area to the region and nation. All of these methods of transportation serve residents, tourists, and industry.

The circulation system in the County is inadequate to accommodate long term growth. Although some roads carry vehicular traffic east-west and north-south, large portions of the County are not easily accessible and are, at best, served by privately owned and maintained roads; the County cannot improve or maintain private roads. Many of the existing paved roads are narrow and two-lane, which limits their carrying capacity. Some of the roads that appear to be paved are only chip seal with or without a roadway bed or foundation needed for long term stability. Additional and/or improved roads will be needed to serve safely and adequately the land uses proposed in this Comprehensive Plan. The road system and the land uses depend on each other - as development occurs, more roads will be necessary and as more roads are provided, growth will occur along them.

Apache County contains several airports that can provide the framework for enhanced opportunities for air connections to and from the County. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad lines near Interstate 40 connect the County to the region and nation for east-west traffic; a spur line allows limited rail service from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe line to the power plants near St. Johns and Springerville. Although not extensive, these rail lines can also assist in expansion of rail service in the County.

The existing circulation system, which is illustrated in Exhibit 3, includes the elements listed below. The roadways depicted on the Exhibit are those that the County and its residents deem to be of major importance for current circulation; it does not include all roadways in the County.

- a. Federal Interstate 40.
- b. U.S. Highways 60, 160, 180, and 191.
- c. State Highways, including State Routes 61, 180A, 260, 261, 264, and 273.
- d. County Paved Roadways and Highways, which are paved and maintained.
- e. County Maintained Roadways, which are non-paved and maintained.
- f. Non-maintained Roadways, which are non-paved and non-maintained but which are of importance for carrying traffic to County residents.
- g. Public airports in Springerville, St. John, and Window Rock and a helistop in Springerville. Private airstrips are not shown on the map.
- h. The Burlington Northern-Santa Fe rail lines, which serves both freight and passenger traffic – the latter with twice daily stops of Amtrak's Southwest Chief west of Apache County in Winslow.
- i. Railroad spurs from the Burlington Northern-Santa Fe tracks from the community of Navajo south to the Salt River Project's Coronado Generating Station northeast of St. Johns and to the Tucson Electric Power Generating Station northeast of Springerville-Eagar/southeast of St. Johns. These lines carry coal to the power plants.

The many miles of private roads that are in Apache County are shown on Exhibit 3 as minor roads for reference only. Although the roads are an important part of the circulation system for limited portions of the County's population, the County has not attempted to map them.

Proposed Circulation System Improvements

To address the deficiencies in the existing circulation system, this Comprehensive Plan proposes several additions or expansions to the system. These changes are shown on Exhibit 4 and include the elements discussed below. All existing roads are not shown on Exhibit 4 as its focus is on the roads for which a major role in the circulation system is anticipated as development and growth occur in Apache County.

The roadway designations (Federal Interstate, Federal/State Highway, Major Transportation Corridor, Major Community Connector) constitute the road classification/hierarchy addressed with these proposed improvements. The Major Transportation Corridors, which run primarily east-west, and Major Community Connectors, which run primarily north-south, are anticipated to be Federal or State Highways, County Paved Roadways and Highways, or County Maintained Roadways, which will be paved over time as development occurs, use of the roads increases, and funds become available. The Corridors and Connectors will carry most traffic through the

County. Minor and non-paved/non-maintained roads will continue to be used in Apache County but are not stressed in the proposed improvements given the relatively limited traffic they carry. The County should allocate Highway User Revenue Funds to roadway improvement and maintenance projects, in accordance with Arizona Constitution, Article IX, § 14.

- j. New roads to increase routes for north-south and east-west vehicular traffic. The roads include improved access: to the Petrified Forest National Park; between the southern portion of the County and the communities along Interstate 40; and along the Mogollon Rim. The roads can provide alternative connections between Interstate 40 and the Phoenix metropolitan region and serve as a better east-west alternative to Interstate 40 than the current roads provide. The roads will also be stronger links to neighboring counties. Some of the roads will serve areas that have been or will be divided into 36 or 40 acre parcels; other roads will serve the new community centers and existing incorporated and unincorporated communities. Some of the County roads will, over time, be paved. This Plan does not suggest which of the County roads will be paved as that will be a function of the timing of land development. The State Highways will be paved. A new Major Transportation Corridor and new Major Community Connectors will improve circulation between the pinons and pines areas in the southern portion of the County.
- k. Potential improvements to or expansions of the existing airports may be appropriate or necessary as the population in the County grows and the area develops and for recreational access to the County.
- l. New spur railroad lines to assist industry in Apache County through delivery and pick up of goods or products and by serving as an alternate method for workers to commute between their homes and job sites. There are two potential alignments for rail spurs St. Johns to Eagar and Springerville. One of these alignments follows an existing non-paved but maintained roadway west of U.S. Highway 180/191; the other alignment runs southwest from the Tucson Electric Power Generating Station. Another potential railroad spur runs east from St. Johns to New Mexico. Another spur railroad line could run along the proposed Major Transportation Corridor that would at the base of Potter's Mesa along the Milky Wash southwest of the Navajo-St. Johns spur to the proposed Community Village south of the Petrified Forest National Park.

Goals and Policies

Goal 1: Provide a range of circulation options that are safe and efficient and that complement local communities and the natural environment.

Policy 1-A: Use available statutory authority to plan for, construct, maintain, and improve circulation facilities and infrastructure.

Policy 1-B: Coordinate land use and circulation planning to encourage comprehensive and efficient development and growth patterns that support adjacent land uses, complement the character of adjacent communities and neighborhoods, and mitigate impacts on the natural environment.

Policy 1-C: Plan and improve the circulation system to facilitate the movement of goods, services, and people throughout Apache County to support existing businesses and economic investment and reinvestment.

Policy 1-D: Coordinate circulation planning with jurisdictions, including public lands, both within and outside of Apache County, especially Navajo County and the Native American Reservations, and with any involved federal or state agency to improve connections to those jurisdictions and to provide a continuous and integrated circulation system.

Goal 2: Ensure quality design and development of the circulation system.

Policy 2-A: Plan and develop the circulation system in a consistent, high-quality manner in accordance with the road classification/hierarchy and facility design guidelines.

Policy 2-B: Review existing circulation infrastructure when considering capacity improvements to encourage preservation, improvement, and redevelopment of that infrastructure, where appropriate.

Policy 2-C: Promote the development of multi-modal and public or private transit facilities as an alternative to new roadway improvements along high-traffic corridors, especially along routes to and from the Forest recreation areas and for commuter use to carry workers to their work sites.

Policy 2-D: Develop circulation infrastructure to promote energy efficiency, protect air quality, and preserve historic, scenic, cultural, and environmental resources.

Policy 2-E: Work with involved entities or public agencies to include special design considerations for circulation improvements that provide access to major tourist destinations, including but not limited to interpretive signs, traffic turnouts, landscape treatment, protection of view corridors, and preservation of natural and cultural resources.

Policy 2-F: Require developers of private circulation infrastructure to meet County standards.

Policy 2-G: Include identification of methods to obtain rights-of-way for future circulation improvements in the Capital Improvements Plan.

Policy 2-H: Require dedication of rights-of-way through the subdivision process, community master plan, or other review and approval processes.

Policy 2-I: Develop a paved/dustproofed road standard for the County that includes alternatives to standard asphalt paving.

Goal 3: Improve and maintain circulation infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and to protect the natural environment.

Policy 3-A: Minimize air, water, and noise pollution and disruption of surface water drainage in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations when designing, constructing, and operating circulation infrastructure.

Policy 3-B: Minimize the introduction, movement and proliferation of nonnative, invasive plants through visual inspection, washing, and use of staging areas for construction equipment during infrastructure construction and maintenance.

Policy 3-C: Maintain safe, adequate, and convenient access through infrastructure improvement work sites for all travelers.

Policy 3-D: Use maintenance techniques, such as snow and ice removal, that are consistent with conservation and ecosystem protection.

Policy 3-E: Encourage the use of improvement districts to improve circulation infrastructure through County provision of all appropriate administrative and financial assistance.

Policy 3-F: Assist with efforts to establish dust control measures through provision of technical assistance and resource information.

Policy 3-G: Require new roads to conform to the natural topography as closely as possible while balancing aesthetics with safety concerns.

Goal 4: Provide for safe travel and access to property.

Policy 4-A: Use the Capital Improvement Plan to direct circulation infrastructure improvement funds to improve safety of high-accident locations.

Policy 4-B: Require developers and property owners to achieve safe and legal access for all properties.

Policy 4-C: Require developers to install or pay for necessary circulation infrastructure improvements to support access to and within major developments or subdivisions.

Policy 4-D: Design circulation infrastructure to accommodate current and future public safety/emergency vehicle needs through provision in new development of connections to existing or potential infrastructure.

Policy 4-E: Include consideration of and planning for pedestrian, equestrian, bicycle, and all terrain vehicle use when designing circulation infrastructure improvements through addition of trails, sidewalks, signage, pavement markings, or other treatments.

Policy 4-F: Make paving of primary circulation corridors and access to developed areas a high priority in the County.

Policy 4-G: Approve subdivisions or rezonings only where existing street facilities are adequate or where the developer agrees to pay for off-site improvements necessitated by the proposed development and consider adoption of either a development fee program that will provide credits for such off-site improvements or another financing mechanism to reimburse a developer for a portion of its expenses when later development occurs that benefits from the improvements.

Goal 5: Improve non-motorized circulation networks and provide more opportunities for alternative modes of travel.

Policy 5-A: Encourage planning for non-motorized circulation infrastructure in new development projects.

Policy 5-B: Work with relevant state and federal agencies and property owners to connect existing neighborhoods and communities with trails, non-motorized circulation infrastructure, and multi-modal facilities.

Policy 5-C: Require major developments and subdivisions to install pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian connections to continue the development of a cohesive system of non-motorized circulation infrastructure when such facilities exist on adjacent developments or subdivisions.

Policy 5-D: Encourage consideration of including non-motorized circulation infrastructure in highway development or redevelopment projects.

Goal 6: Improve transit service opportunities in unincorporated portions of Apache County.

Policy 6-A: Consider opportunities to add/expand public and/or private transit services, including use of railroad spurs, as population grows in the County.

Policy 6-B: Support tribal efforts to establish and maintain inter-city transit between Native American Reservations and surrounding communities.

Policy 6-C: Work with public and private agencies to provide transit services to transit-dependent people.

Goal 7: Support airport facilities and air travel with limited impacts on the surrounding environment.

Goal 7-A: Review proposals for airport facilities to ensure compatibility with local land use patterns, this Comprehensive Plan, and County Area Plans.

Goal 7-B: Support improved service at existing airports to move passengers and goods between Apache County and the region and nation.

Goal 7-C: Work with expanding, renovating, or new airport facilities, including private facilities, to mitigate impacts from aircraft noise on surrounding properties.