



## COCHISE COUNTY

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

"Public Programs...Personal Service"

### MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**THROUGH:** James Vlahovich, County Administrator  
**FROM:** Beverly J. Wilson, Planning Director  
**SUBJECT:** Docket CP-15-01 (Readoption of Comprehensive Plan)  
**DATE:** May 14, 2015 for the May 19, 2015 Meeting

#### I. BACK GROUND:

Beginning in September of 2012 and continuing throughout 2013 and 2014, staff worked to update the Comprehensive Plan for Cochise County. The existing Comprehensive Plan was last updated and readopted in 2003. Amendments have been added to the Plan since 2003, however State statutes require that Counties re-adopt their Comprehensive Plans every ten years. In 2009, due to the depressed economy, the Legislature extended this deadline to July 1, 2015.

The Planning and Zoning Commission held four work sessions to discuss, analyze, and recommend changes to the revised Comprehensive Plan. On January 14, 2015, the Commission unanimously voted to send the final version of the Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Supervisors for their consideration and final approval.

Staff presented the Comprehensive Plan to the Board of Supervisors on March 24, 2015. At that public hearing, the Board adopted the majority of the Comprehensive Plan. However, several changes were agreed upon, and the Board has returned these changes to the Commission for their review and recommendation.

The Planning and Zoning Commission reviewed the proposed changes at their May 13, 2015 meeting, and unanimously agreed to the following motion: "Move to send the package back to them, and we stand by our original recommendations."

#### II. SPECIFIC CHANGES

Specific changes to the document are shown in the attached document and excerpted as follows:

##### **Element F. Federal Government Coordination Element, Goal 1, Policies a and c:**

###### Goal

1. To ensure that the Federal Government provides Cochise County the opportunity to participate in the development of land use plans, to cooperate and coordinate with Cochise County in developing such plans, and to ensure that federal policies are consistent with local or regional policies.

###### Policies

- a. Public lands, including the SPRNCA, shall be managed so as to minimize negative impacts on the regional ground water aquifer.
- b. Public access to public lands for recreation should be consistent with multiple use and conservation of a viable conservation area.
- c. Agricultural uses, including grazing, should be permitted on all public lands within limits consistent with multiple use and conservation goals.
- d. Sub-watershed-wide conservation, reuse, recharge and augmentation policies, and projects must be used to resolve both riparian condition issues and the overall balance of water levels in the aquifer.

**Element F. Federal Government Coordination Element Goal 3:**

Goal

3. To protect the culture, history, economy, environment, and lifestyles of Cochise County residents by requiring federal agencies to coordinate land use plans with Cochise County and to establish plans that provide for continued multiple use of public lands consistent with the following policies:

**Element F. Federal Government Coordination Element Goal 3, Policy a.iii:**

- i. Wilderness designation limits potential land uses significantly to those compatible with the designation. Care should be taken to balance the need for resource protection from such designations with potential economic and other impacts. Diverse stakeholder input is critical and consensus is desirable, if not essential, in seeking such designations. In some instances, the lands in question can be adequately protected through mitigation, minimizing negative impacts and proper reclamation, so that wilderness designation is unnecessary.

**Element F. Federal Government Coordination Element Goal 3, Policy d.iv:**

- i. Access to all water-related facilities such as delivery systems, monitoring facilities, livestock water and handling facilities, shall be maintained taking account of restrictions, if any, associated with public lands. Access routes may be adequately maintained by the owner of that route or the holder of access rights. Unreasonable restrictions may result in the loss of use of such facilities and property rights.

**Element F. Federal Government Coordination Element Goal 3: Policy i.iv.**

i. Off Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

- i. OHVs have become an important segment of the recreation industry and are an important tool and mode of transportation for farmers, ranchers, and resource development.
- ii. Public Land Management agencies must implement and maintain an aggressive OHV program to educate users on how to reduce resource impacts. This is to be followed by an aggressive enforcement program.

iii. The non-recreational use of OHVs, such as development and livestock operations, should be provided for where essential to operations and appropriate according to existing management plans, unless restricted by law.

iv. Federal Travel Management Plans should consider the growing popularity of OHV recreation and provide reasonable and responsible opportunities for OHV uses.

### **Element I. Rural Character Element Goal 1, Policies c, d, e, and g.**

#### Policies

a. With property rights considered, protect rural character from the intrusion of urban uses and recognize that resources, such as agricultural lands, open space, and scenic view sheds, provide economic, social, and environmental benefits.

~~fc.g.~~ Maintain and enhance a reasonable and diverse overall level of rural development that balances the need for rural growth against impacts on rural character.

~~d.h~~ Encourage conservation design practices and other land use strategies, such as conservation subdivisions and cluster development for new residential and commercial projects.

e. Encourage protection of Cochise County's scenic resources and recognize these resources are a vital part of the county rural character by discouraging development which has the potential to seriously compromise viewshed integrity.

f.. Recognize the importance of rural, native-surfaced roads for the purpose of protecting rural character and ensure that these roads help to maintain this character when considering new road improvement standards.

g.. Support the establishment of voluntary County transfer of development rights (TDR) programs with landowners who adopt conservation easements to preserve habitat.

h.. Develop a recognition program to encourage habitat protection and enhancement, to recognize efforts by individuals, communities, and developers.

### **VII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Arizona Revised Statutes Article 11-805 directs the Board of Supervisors to hold a public hearing, and allows them to make changes or alter the Comprehensive Plan. However, prior to adopting those changes, the Statutes require ‘...*that portion of the Comprehensive Plan proposed to be changed to be re-referred to the Commission for its recommendation, which may be accepted or rejected by the Board.*’ The Commission discussed the language changes at a Public Hearing held on May 13, 2015, and stand by their original language.