

CHAPTER 3.0

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In order to prepare a plan for a community, it is important to collect and conduct an analysis of background information. This will ensure that important issues will be addressed and that the planning process is relevant, focused and productive. This section of the plan will examine the history of the Study Area. An overview of existing and previous plans is provided to place the *Pinetop-Lakeside/Navajo County Regional Plan* in the proper planning context. Other pertinent background information is provided in each element of the Regional Plan under the heading of Existing Conditions.

3.2 COMMUNITY HISTORY

Pinetop-Lakeside and the Study Area are located in Arizona's White Mountains at the edge of the "Mogollon Rim." This dramatic geologic phenomenon has produced many of the natural and cultural attributes that make the community a unique and special place.

The region's high elevation and physiography contributes to pleasant year-round temperatures (80 degrees in summer and 50 degrees in winter) and annual precipitation to sustain the world's largest stand of Ponderosa Pine. This beautiful and ecologically diverse pine forest shelters and nurtures a rich abundance of wildlife and makes the area extremely attractive for human settlement.

Native Americans from prehistoric times to the present have occupied this region. Today the White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation borders the Town on the south and west and contains thousands of acres of pristine Ponderosa forest and sub-alpine ecosystems. As stewards of their sacred homeland, the White Mountain Apache strive to preserve and protect cultural and archeological sites, natural resources, and the recreational value of the land, while managing the forest and wildlife for economic advantage.

The Mogollon Rim, originally an important trail for Native Americans, became a key feature in the early settlement of the area. In the 1880's, General Crook utilized the rim's high elevation, southern exposure and plateau-like features to monitor Apache movements and maintain supply lines among the army garrisons located throughout eastern Arizona. In the 1880's, Mormon settlers moved to the area to take advantage of the abundant timber and favorable agricultural conditions and established the first permanent white settlements at Pinetop and Lakeside.

Through the better part of the twentieth century timber and agriculture were the mainstays of local economy. With the growth of the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas in the 1960's, 70's, and 80's however the Study Area began to experience development pressure. Drawn by cooler temperatures and an uncrowded environment

vacationers and second-home buyers flocked to the area. To meet the demand subdivisions, condominiums, and commercial developments sprang up throughout the region, many without the benefit of comprehensive plan review.

The incorporation of the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside in 1984 was an attempt by area residents to gain control of development that many saw as detrimental to the rural character of the community. With incorporation and subsequent annexations, large sections of the Study Area became subject to local subdivision regulation and design review. The pace of development however has outstripped the community's capacity to provide adequate review. Expansion of State Route 260, the opening of the Hondah Casino and Conference Center, and continued new home and commercial development has increased traffic volumes, demand for services, and environmental impacts.

A lack of bicycle and/or pedestrian facilities coupled with a proliferation of curb cuts creates hazardous conditions throughout the commercial core of the region for all non-vehicle highway users. The failure to include traffic calming landscape features in the highway redesign and most new roadway construction further discourages non-vehicular travel in the Study Area.

3.3 EXISTING PLANS

The preparation of the *Pinetop-Lakeside/Navajo County Regional Plan* did not take place in a vacuum. Recognizing that the Study Area is impacted by existing plans of adjacent jurisdictions and other municipalities in the region, the following plans were reviewed to determine their relevance to the planning process.

PINETOP-LAKESIDE GENERAL PLAN (1986)

The existing General Plan for the community contains a Land Use Element and a Preliminary Circulation Element. The Plan also contains standards for streets, with recommended cross sections for moving lanes, medians, bike lanes and bike paths. The Plan also contains a section about drainage. The Plan established nine community goals, which are listed below:

- ❑ The Town should maintain the cultural, social and physical integrity of a small rural community.
- ❑ The Town should accommodate future economic development and growth, but should be selective as to the type of development that occurs. Environmental protection should be of utmost importance. Economic development, which expands the economic base of the community and provides jobs to existing and future residents, should be a high priority.
- ❑ The Town should assist in the provision of quality, affordable housing and also realize that housing needs of higher income persons must be planned for.
- ❑ The Town should encourage urban design that is attractive and uplifting to its residents.

- ❑ The Town should increase the availability of accommodations in the area for campers, hikers and others who travel the state and enjoy outdoor recreation.
- ❑ The Town should aid in the protection of soils, watersheds and vegetative cover.
- ❑ The Town should encourage preservation of open space within the Town, and the maintenance of unique natural features, such as springs, natural drainage areas and meadows.
- ❑ The Town should encourage the recycling of natural resources.
- ❑ The Town should implement a community energy and conservation standards program.

The 1986 General Plan also contains a series of objectives and policies for the land use and circulation elements. The Land Use Element contains the following objectives:

- ❑ Designation of sufficient but not excessive areas of land to meet the projected needs within each land use category
- ❑ Planning for the location and development of neighborhoods within the community
- ❑ Provide for a town commercial and civic center to serve as the focal point of the community
- ❑ De-emphasize the highway commercial strip development along State Route 260 and emphasize a rural and recreational atmosphere instead
- ❑ Maintain the rural mountain atmosphere
- ❑ Provision for the appropriate distribution of land for needed residential uses
- ❑ Maximization of the availability of commercial services and facilities to meet the needs of the citizens of Pinetop-Lakeside and to attract tourist business to provide for a strong local economy and necessary tax revenue for the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside.
- ❑ Development of a heavy commercial park site for heavy commercial activities suitable for Pinetop-Lakeside.
- ❑ Planning and development of a new civic center that will serve as a community center.
- ❑ Provision of property located for future school sites to meet the needs of the community as it grows.
- ❑ Provision of adequate parks and recreation facilities to meet the needs of the Town.

The Preliminary Circulation Element contains the following objectives:

- ❑ Improvement of the safety, efficiency and convenience of all modes of transportation.

- ❑ Minimization of pollution and other environmental impacts caused by the total transportation system.

The General Plan contained the following recommendations for transportation:

- ❑ Channelization of traffic onto State Route 260 at major intersections.
- ❑ Provision for signalization as needed at the intersection of Highway 260 and Rainbow Lake Drive, Porter Mountain Road, Woodland Road, Apache Road, Woodland Lake Road, and Penrod Road.
- ❑ Completion of the Mogollon Rim Road as a scenic route and secondary emergency access route.
- ❑ Connection of Porter Mountain Road with Route U.S. 60 near Show Low.
- ❑ Improvement of the Woodland Road and Woodland Lake Road loop as a minor arterial.
- ❑ Improvement of the route south on Rainbow Lake Drive to Larson Road to Homestead Road to Woodland Road as a minor arterial.
- ❑ Completion of bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian path routes and trails as indicated on the General Plan Map.
- ❑ Development of an alternate access route between Pinetop-Lakeside and Show Low to provide for long term increases and avoid future traffic overload on Highway 260.

THE TOWN OF PINETOP-LAKESIDE 2020 VISION PLAN (DECEMBER 1996)

The plan entailed an inventory and analysis of existing conditions, identifying issues affecting the community, the formulation of a community vision, development of goals, objectives and strategies, and the preparation of an Action Plan. The following community assets were identified:

- ❑ Healthy environment (trees, water, open space)
- ❑ Small town atmosphere
- ❑ Large, undeveloped green areas
- ❑ Excellent trail system
- ❑ Good schools
- ❑ Woodland Lake Park
- ❑ Town surrounded by natural pine forest
- ❑ Large wildlife populations
- ❑ Minimal light pollution
- ❑ Low crime rate

The following liabilities were identified:

- ❑ Traffic accident and unsafe traffic conditions
- ❑ Having only one major road through town
- ❑ Lack of managed growth
- ❑ No core area – lack of a unified town center
- ❑ Lack of recreational activities for young people
- ❑ Lack of any on-road bikeways
- ❑ Lack of children’s awareness of the many opportunities in the area
- ❑ Lack of architectural theme and continuity

PINETOP-LAKESIDE HIGHWAY 260 CORRIDOR DESIGN CHARRETTE (JULY 1997)

This was a two-day workshop designed to follow through on the 2020 Vision Plan’s strategy to prepare a SR 260 land use and design guidelines corridor study. The purpose of the charrette was to investigate and build consensus on design related issues as a means for growth management and sustainable economic development considering the specific elements of:

- ❑ Transportation
- ❑ Urban Design
- ❑ Natural Resource Protection

The goal of the charrette process was to develop tentative strategies for improving the visual quality of the corridor by promoting preservation of the natural landscape, public improvements addressing pedestrian safety and accessibility, and effective growth management. The charrette resulted in the following:

Confirmation of the conclusions reached in the 2020 Vision Plan, including the need to thoroughly and comprehensively evaluate the vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian circulation issues related to the corridor: Charrette participants recognized the need to improve the visual quality of buildings, signage and lighting along the corridor. In addition, all participants agreed that protecting the historic buildings and saving the mature pine trees was critical to maintaining a small-town, rural, mountain resort character in Pinetop-Lakeside.

Recognition of the interrelationships between transportation, land use and open space/trails: Charrette participants discussed these three “systems” in detail and maps illustrating the location and configuration of the various components of these systems were prepared. As a result, the charrette identified appropriate locations for pedestrian crossings, open space preservation, entry features/gateways, and streetscape improvements such as revisions to roadway, median and sidewalk design.

A vocabulary for different zones with the corridor including: forested edges, strip commercial areas, and village centers/downtown areas. Delineation of these zones led to the identification of significant nodes where development should begin to create pedestrian-oriented public spaces and streets.

Consensus regarding the range of alternatives for roadway, median, bicycle lane, sidewalk and landscape design solutions. Charrette participants agreed that in at least some areas traffic speeds should be reduced, pedestrian crossings provided, turning movements limited, bicycle lanes or paths created, sidewalks separated from the curbs and landscaping improved. It was agreed that in the long term, an alternative route for the State Highway would probably be developed but that revisions to the roadway design could take place immediately in some areas.

Participants identified a wide range of implementation measures. Downtown Lakeside was suggested as an area for a pilot project for street, pedestrian and architectural improvements. This area was selected because it is the current center of government, it contains numerous historic buildings and it is in need of revitalization. The current street pattern, mix of land uses and proximity to natural amenities such as the forest, lakes and trails are conducive to creating a wonderful place for residents and visitors.

Change the character of the road to reflect its role as the town's Main Street in addition to conveying through traffic in the most efficient manner.

WHITE MOUNTAINS REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (1999)

The regional transportation plan was prepared for a Study Area of approximately 4,000 square miles in southern Navajo and Apache counties. The entire Study Area of the Pinetop-Lakeside General Plan is included in the transportation plan's Study Area. The plan contains recommendations for right-of-way and pavement widths by functional classification. It also contains a list of recommended road projects for Pinetop-Lakeside. These are shown below:

- ❑ Widen Woodland Road to four lanes
- ❑ Widen Porter Mountain Road to four lanes
- ❑ Pave Rim Road
- ❑ Preserve right-of-way for four lanes on Rim Road

The Regional Transportation Plan also shows an extension of Penrod Road intersection with Porter Mountain Road in Pinetop-Lakeside and proceeding to Show Low where it intersects with U.S. 60.

SHOW LOW/PINETOP-LAKESIDE RETAIL ANALYSIS (1998)

This report documented that the Show Low/Pinetop-Lakeside region "far surpasses State averages for per capita taxable sales." The report noted that there are four reasons

explaining the region's strong sales performance. First, there has been strong historic growth, resulting in an increase in the local consumer market. Second, the two communities are a hub for the White Mountains and, therefore, have a market area outside of their respective jurisdictions. A strong second home market within the region is the third factor, and the fourth, that tourism and visitor spending generate additional retail sales.

CITY OF SHOW LOW GENERAL PLAN (1999)

According to mid-year population estimates, the City of Show Low had 7,875 residents and its growth rate during the 1990s has been 5.8%. Projections contained in the General Plan show that the population of Show Low may grow to 17,000 by 2008 and to 40,000 by 2020. The City of Show Low is directly north of the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside and, while it shares a common boundary in some areas, there is some unincorporated territory between the two communities, most notably along Highway 260. The Show Low General Plan contains the following elements:

- ❑ Land Use Element
- ❑ Circulation Element
- ❑ Housing Element
- ❑ Economic Development Element
- ❑ Public Facilities and Services Element
- ❑ Open Space Element
- ❑ Environmental Planning Element
- ❑ Growth Area Element
- ❑ Cost of Development Element

Of particular relevance to the *Pinetop-Lakeside/Navajo County Regional Plan* is Show Low's plan for the unincorporated territory between it and Pinetop-Lakeside. The Show Low plan recommends that commercial development be located along White Mountain Road (Highway 260) and that residential development and open space make up the rest of the land use pattern in this area.

LAKESIDE VILLAGE REDEVELOPMENT AREA PLAN (JULY 1999)

The plan notes that the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside has "recognized the need for aggressive, coordinated public/private action to secure this area as the business, governmental, institutional, and cultural heart of the area and as a focus of community pride and achievement. This Plan provides for the initiation of a comprehensive program of reconstruction and redevelopment of the historic Lakeside area." The project area boundaries are generally described as including the area bounded by Niels Hansen Lane on the west, Billy Creek on the east, Blue Ridge School on the south, and Lake of the Woods on the north.

The objectives of the plan are to:

- ❑ Preserve and create an environment within the project which will contribute to the health, safety, and general welfare of the Town and preserve the value of properties within, and adjacent to, the area.
- ❑ Eliminate substandard and obsolete buildings, blighting influences, and environmental deficiencies that detract from the functional unity, aesthetic appearance, and economic welfare of this important section of the Town.
- ❑ Provide for the orderly physical and economic growth of the project area.
- ❑ Assemble land into parcels functionally compatible, with respect to shape and size, for disposition and redevelopment in accordance with contemporary development needs and standards.
- ❑ Provide safe, efficient, and attractive circulation systems that minimize conflicts between different forms of traffic such as pedestrians, automobiles, transit, and service vehicles.
- ❑ Provide safe, efficient, and attractive vehicular access to the project area from major regional highways, from neighborhoods and communities throughout the region, and from other major centers of business and employment.
- ❑ Encourage and assist in the provision of an increased supply of good, market-rate housing in a suitable living environment.
- ❑ Assure the provision of public services and facilities adequate to meet the needs of the project area, and to meet certain additional needs of the Town and region.

3.4 OTHER PLANS AND REPORTS

The reports listed above are not an exhaustive inventory of reports reviewed for the preparation of the *Pinetop-Lakeside/Navajo County Regional Plan*. Other reports examined include, but were not limited to, the following:

- ❑ Pinetop-Lakeside Main Street: Application and Proposal for the 1998 Arizona Main Street Program
- ❑ Pinetop-Lakeside & Navajo County Zoning Ordinances
- ❑ Pinetop-Lakeside & Navajo County Subdivision Ordinances
- ❑ Navajo County Planning Program
- ❑ Comprehensive Planning Program: Navajo County 1990 Development Plan