

SECTION 4.9

GROWTH AREA ELEMENT

The Growth Area Element of the *Pinetop-Lakeside/Navajo County Regional Plan* is presented in the following sections:

- 4.9.1 Introduction
- 4.9.2 Existing Setting
- 4.9.3 Growth Areas
- 4.9.4 Growth Area Goals, Objectives, Evaluation Measures, Policies, and Programs
- 4.9.5 Growth Area Implementation Program

The introduction will examine the purpose and the legislative intent of the Growth Area Element, with a focus on the changes instituted by the Growing Smarter legislation. The existing setting will explore the context under which the Growth Area Element is being prepared. Prior to an overview of the Growth Area Implementation Program, the Growth Area goals, objectives, evaluation measures, policies and programs will be highlighted.

4.9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Growth Area Element is one of the four new mandated elements of the Growing Smarter legislation for communities larger than 2,500 inhabitants. A Growth Area Element is only required for counties with populations larger than 200,000 persons. Because of these thresholds, a Growth Area Element is required for the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside and is optional for Navajo County.

For Arizona municipalities, ARS 461.05 stipulates that communities larger than 2,500 must prepare “a growth area element, specifically identifying those areas, if any, that are particularly suitable for planned multi-modal transportation and infrastructure expansion and improvements designed to support a planned concentration of a variety of uses, such as residential, office, commercial, tourism and industrial uses.” The Growth Area Element should include policies and implementation strategies that are designed to:

- ❑ Make automobile, transit and other multi-modal circulation more efficient, make infrastructure expansion more economical and provide for a rational pattern of land development.
- ❑ Conserve significant natural resources and open space areas in the growth area and coordinate their location to similar areas outside the growth area’s boundaries.
- ❑ Promote the public and private construction of timely and financially sound infrastructure expansion through the use of infrastructure funding and financing planning that is coordinated with development activity.

Whereas the other new elements added by Growing Smarter are relatively self-explanatory, the content of the Growth Area Element is not as clear. For instance, the legislative directive to “provide for a rational pattern of land development” can mean different things to different interest groups. For the *Pinetop-Lakeside/Navajo County Regional Plan*, as will be detailed in the *Existing Setting* section, the Growth Area Element mandated as part of the Growing Smarter legislation is interpreted as an attempt to compel communities to examine development patterns that do not promote urban sprawl but “provide for a rational pattern of development.

4.9.2 EXISTING SETTING

Almost without exception, citizen surveys throughout the State of Arizona have shown that the most important local issue is not crime or education or the economy. The most important local issue is rapid growth and its effect on the community. Many residents, having already built their homes in the forest or desert, want to eliminate additional development in their neighborhoods or communities. However, where adjacent lands are in private ownership, short of the private or public purchase of development rights, it is impossible to prevent other private property owners from developing their properties. Other residents, recognizing the constitutional limitations of precluding development, advocate more low-density rural development as a solution to dealing with the problem of growth. Unfortunately, as development extends outward and catches up to these low-density enclaves, it becomes prohibitively expensive to provide municipal and utility services to thousands of “rural” residents sprawled throughout the countryside. A number of planning studies have indicated that this type of development, peripherally attached to and a part of urban areas, is less efficient and wasteful of both land and infrastructure resources.

It is in this context that the Arizona Legislature adopted the Growing Smarter legislation. In an effort to appeal to the constituency advocating no growth or slow growth, a significant component of the new legislation is planning and providing for “open space.” Plans for examining open space were mandated for many communities under Growing Smarter and the state legislature appropriated \$220 million to enable communities to purchase land from the Arizona State Land Department. It was also in this political environment that the legislature required that communities and counties above certain population thresholds prepare and adopt Growth Area Elements as part of their local comprehensive plans. Placed in this context, the intent of the Growth Area Element is to compel communities to reevaluate the community planning and development process and to identify areas, which may be amenable to different types of development patterns.

Development patterns in the Study Area, like those throughout Arizona and the United States, are generally distinguished by two distinct characteristics. First, while there may be differences in densities, land uses are often segregated. That is, residential zoning districts permit only residential land uses, commercial zoning districts permit only commercial land uses, and industrial districts permit only industrial land uses. The impact of this development pattern leads to the second distinct characteristic of land use

in the United States as well as the Study Area – land uses physically removed from each other can only reasonably be accessed via the automobile.

There is further stratification and segregation within each zoning category. For instance, residential zoning is classified according to the number of dwelling units permitted per acre, or the minimum lot size per dwelling unit. Multi-family residential developments are often excluded from all other residential zoning districts.

4.9.3 GROWTH AREAS

FUTURE GROWTH AREAS

The intent of the Growth Area Element is to encourage Smart Growth principles, and is based upon the following:

- Identification of key undeveloped areas that may likely experience higher intensity or density land use due to their proximity to existing or proposed transportation or infrastructure facilities. Certain undeveloped areas were selected because it is possible to influence their design quality through development review process.
- Encouragement of Smart Growth principles that permit alternative land development patterns, including open space conservation, and mixed uses amenable to inter-modal transportation: mass transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists, in addition to the automobile. Also, a more cost-efficient extension of community services.
- Distressed areas that are suitable for residential and commercial redevelopment activities. Redevelopment may imply land use changes that are more appropriate due to market forces and surrounding uses.
- Future development and redevelopment within the regional plan area that promotes the other plan elements: land use, community facilities, economic development, housing, environmental, recreation, and open space.

PENROD ROAD

The City of Show Low's General Plan identifies the area along Penrod Road in their Study Area as a Growth Area and the land use plan identifies Penrod Road as a new retail corridor, with a major concentration of retail at the intersection of Penrod Road and U.S. 60. As a result, it appears that the northern portion of Penrod Road will be a catalyst for commercial and industrial development. As a general rule, development pressures will extend along the length of the corridor through the Study Area, with the exception of those areas within the National Forest boundary. The convergence of these competing factors (the pressure for growth along a developing commercial highway and the pressure for conservation because of the environmental sensitivity of the marsh) can serve as a catalyst for a different type of development pattern in this area.

MAVERICK CENTER AREA

The Maverick Center Growth Area is located around the intersection of Lockwood Drive and Highway 260. This area includes lands within the Town jurisdiction on the north, west, and south, and County land to the east. Due to a pending traffic light it is expected that the surrounding highway frontage may have a high potential for large-scale commercial development. Currently, there is one major retail furniture store and office complex off Lockwood Drive, and a partially developed fun park with go-cart track facilities to the north. The Maverick Center commercial subdivision is currently being marketed for retail and office uses.

THE TOWN HALL AREA

The Town Hall Area is already developed, but it has a number of factors which could make it function effectively as a mixed use, multi-modal development area. This area is generally described as the old town site area, incorporating residential and commercial properties along both sides of Highway 260, south of the Porter Mountain Road intersection, west of Billy Creek, north of the Woodland Road intersection, and east of the Shores development. The area has good access to Highway 260, which makes it attractive for commercial and office uses, as well as limited higher density residential development. With the Town Hall, Lakeside Post Office, LDS Church, and Appletree Apartments as anchors, the area is already established as an area for employment and commerce. Additionally, the presence of local government often promotes the location of a number of ancillary supporting services, such as office supply companies, law firms, etc. Finally, the relatively compact size of the Town Hall Area make it relatively easy to get around either on foot or bicycle.

SOUTH PINETOP

This area centers on the Penrod Lane intersection and includes existing and potential commercial sites, as well as residential neighborhoods. Frontier Bank recently located a new facility at the intersection, while Eddie's Country Store completed an expansion of its grocery operation. The new Pinetop post office is also planned near this intersection.

BUCK SPRINGS ROAD

This area centers on Buck Springs Road and Highway 260 intersection, the busiest intersection in Navajo County. This area also includes the proposed Pinetop Crossing development, a 33 acre mixed-use project that includes commercial retail and professional uses, hotel, condominiums, and single-family residential. There are also several strategic parcels located off Buck Springs Road that are zoned for commercial development.

4.9.4 GROWTH AREA GOALS, OBJECTIVES, EVALUATION MEASURES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

GROWTH AREA GOAL

Promote a more balanced, mixed-use, multi-modal environment that conserves resources, reduces dependency on the automobile, and more efficiently uses existing infrastructure and services capacities.

OBJECTIVE 1

Promote the development of Future Growth Areas through Planned Development projects.

EVALUATION MEASURE: The number of Planned Developments

POLICY: Encourage development to occur under all Planned Development concepts: Planned Unit Developments, Planned Area Districts or other new zoning districts more conducive to mixed-used or alternative development.

PROGRAMS:

- ❑ Amend the Town and County Zoning Ordinances to include a Planned Area District for new development.
- ❑ Amend the Town and County Zoning Ordinances to permit overlay zones for mixed-uses in established areas of the Plan Study Area.
- ❑ Establish criteria for the Town to evaluate the short versus long-term implications of annexations.

OBJECTIVE 2

Reduce community and individual dependence upon the automobile and promote the expansion of the existing transit system.

EVALUATION MEASURE: The number of pedestrian and bicycle trips and distance of trips versus number of auto trips.

EVALUATION MEASURE: Increase in Public Transit ridership.

EVALUATION MEASURE: Utilization of state and local alternative transportation incentives (if available).

POLICY: Promote alternative forms of transportation to the automobile

PROGRAM: Provide preferential parking and other benefits to Town and County employees who carpool

PROGRAM: Provide subsidized or free bus passes to employers with more than 20 employees.

PROGRAM: Implement the Trails Plan and promote expanded bicycle facilities.

PROGRAM: Continue funding for the Transit Program

4.9.5 GROWTH AREA ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

A key component of the *Pinetop-Lakeside/Navajo County Regional Plan* is the Implementation Plan for each element of the Plan. The Growth Area Element Implementation Program is identified in Table 4.9-1, *Growth Area Implementation Program*.

**TABLE 4.9-1
GROWTH AREA IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

Implementation Measure	Lead Agency	Timeframe (Years)	Budget/ Resources
Implement the recommendations of Section 4.1 Land Use: Amend the Town and County Zoning Ordinances to create PAD and overlay zoning districts.	Town & County	2	Staff
Establish Town-County Mountain Gateway Area to guide future commercial development on Highway 260.	Town & County, Main Street	2	Staff, consultant
Town and County to work cooperatively on incentives to promote private development in Future Growth Areas.	Town & County, WMRDC	3	Town Council & County Supervisors
Town and County to work with public and private service providers to develop infrastructure needed to serve Future Growth Areas.	Town & County, Joint Utility Task Force	3	Town, County, and Area Service Providers, WMRDC, Department of Commerce
Continue funding for the Transit Program	Town & County, WMRDC	1	Town and County