

## BACKGROUND

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### Context

Every city and county within Arizona is required to adopt a comprehensive, long-range planning document called a General Plan. The role of the General Plan is to guide the physical development and entitlement of the community and serve as the “blueprint” for future decisions regarding land use and resource conservation. The Peoria General Plan currently includes fourteen elements affecting many facets of the development of the City, including land use, transportation, economic development, water resources, housing, growth areas, environmental stewardship and others.

As part of the 1998 Growing Smarter legislation and its amendments, local governments are required to ensure that their General Plans are maintained and kept current within a set timeframe. Consequently, every ten (10) years, a city’s General Plan is required to be ratified by the voters.

The first post Growing Smarter Peoria General Plan was ratified by voters in 2001 and was largely a reflection of the planning completed in the late 1990’s. The last substantive update to the Peoria General Plan occurred in 2009 and was ratified by the voters in 2010. At that time, the Plan was moderately refreshed to comply with revised statutory requirements and to further refine the City Council policies and goals. Since then, Peoria has experienced an evolving economic landscape, along with meaningful growth and physical development. Additionally, advancements in technologies, and efforts in the areas of sustainability, diversification of workforce, and quality of life are now topics at the forefront of the conversation which impact land use decisions.

The City believes now is the time to develop a new General Plan that is visionary and responsive to the next twenty (20) planning horizon and through to buildout. Accordingly, the City Council approved funding for the preparation of the new Peoria General Plan as part of the Fiscal Year 2017 Budget.

### Process

The update to General Plan is a multi-year process, which is generally divided into these phases:

- **Project Start-up**  
Includes the initial data gathering, branding, mapping and analysis of the study area.
- **Visioning and Scenario Planning**  
As part of the public engagement process, input of what stakeholders value most about the city will be sought in a series of community engagement opportunities, including but not limited to workshops, and visioning and scenario planning exercises.

- **Existing Conditions Map Atlas**  
The Map Atlas will provide a snapshot of existing conditions and trends that are currently influencing Peoria.
- **Draft Strategies, Policies, and Implementation Plan**  
This phase will produce the draft General Plan with the goals and policies that will guide future development within Peoria. It will also include an implementation plan that will ensure that policies are accomplished.
- **Public Hearings**  
This is the official public hearing phase where the Planning and Zoning Commission will hear public comment and consider the plan for recommendation to the City Council. The City Council then considers the plan for final adoption.
- **Voter Ratification**  
Following adoption by the Peoria City Council, the final approved Plan will be forwarded to the City Clerk and scheduled for a public vote. The public vote is tentatively scheduled for November of 2018.

## **DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS**

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One of the most critical components of the General Plan update process is community engagement. To set the City on the right course, the General Plan update will require ongoing, active community participation.

On December 6, 2016, the City awarded the contract to provide professional services for the General Plan Update to Matrix Design Group, Inc. (Matrix). Key components of the Peoria community outreach program are being completed by Matrix, who has a history of creating multi-level outreach programs that engages the broad spectrum of stakeholders, including families, seniors, youth, and other hard-to-reach demographics.

Staff will provide the Planning and Zoning Commission with an update on the General Plan project schedule, along with the status of the community outreach program elements such as stakeholder interviews, the website that will be used as an information/outreach portal, the technical/advisory committees formed, and mobilization efforts for the 'visioning' and community outreach program that will begin to unfold this spring.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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As noted, this is an informational item only and no action will be taken by the Commission at this time. Planning Staff will be available to answer any questions that the Commission may have and discuss future public meeting dates.

It is anticipated that this item will be brought back to the Commission regularly throughout the project, with formal consideration and recommendation expected in early 2018.

**REPORT PREPARED BY**

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