



PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION

STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: 8/15/2024

Agenda Item(s): 2R – 5R

TO: Planning and Zoning Commission
THROUGH: Chris M. Jacques, AICP, Planning Director
FROM: Lorie Dever, Deputy Director
SUBJECT: 2024 City-Initiated Major General Plan Amendments
GPA24-01 (2R), GPA24-02 (3R), GPA24-03 (4R), and GPA24-05 (5R)

NOTE:** Changes to this report since the July 18, 2024 meeting are noted in ***bold italicized text within the Public Outreach Section. The Recommendation Section has been updated as well.

PROPOSAL

Four (4) city-initiated major amendments to the General Plan are proposed by the City in order for the Plan to better reflect the existing conditions and future needs of Peoria.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

As part of the 2024 General Plan Amendment cycle, the City has proposed the following amendments:

- **Chapter 3 - Smart Growth (GPA24-001):** An amendment to the text and Future Land Use Map (FLUM) within Chapter 3: Smart Growth of the Peoria General Plan.

Proposed text and map changes include:

1. Adding the “ASLD Special Land Use” category within the Chapter 3 and assign that category on the FLUM to the area referred to as North Peoria Gateway (NPG) and the Peoria Innovation Core (PIC).
2. On the property identified as APN 201-30-215, amend approximately 6.6 acres designated as “Public Use” to the “Office and Local Commercial” land use category on the FLUM.

- **Chapter 4 - Integrated Transportation (GPA24-002):** An amendment to the text and Circulation Map within Chapter 4: Integrated Transportation of the Peoria General Plan.

Proposed changes include road classification changes, road additions and deletions, and alignment adjustments to better reflect existing conditions and future needs of the City, and to maintain a document that is current with local and regional planning efforts.

- **Chapter 6 - Arts, Culture and Recreational Enrichment (GPA24-003):** An amendment to the recreational guidelines text within Chapter 6: Arts, Culture and Recreational Enrichment of the Peoria General Plan.

Proposed changes include refinements to the park classification guidelines to maintain their relevancy and effectiveness. Additionally, refinements to the text provide better define and celebrate Peoria’s three recreational centers as key assets within the City’s larger recreational network.

- **Chapter 8 - Implementation (GPA24-005):** An amendment to Table 8-1 General Plan Amendment Criteria within Chapter 8: Implementation of the Peoria General Plan.

The proposed change would require no amendment when realigning a roadway segment and/or changing it from “future” to “existing” on the Circulation Map in order to reflect completed road construction through the Capital Improvement Program or via private development.

BACKGROUND

Arizona State Law requires every city in Arizona to prepare and maintain a long-range “general plan” that provides a vision and policies for the growth and development of the city. The Peoria General Plan reflects the aspirational vision and goals of the community and builds on, celebrates, and advances these positive aspects of Peoria.

The General Plan is used to guide Peoria’s future decisions relative to land use, public services, infrastructure and resource management, and provides a clear and defined program for implementation to achieve the shared community vision for Peoria’s future. However, the General Plan is not intended to be a static document; rather, the Plan specifically directs staff to continually re-examine the Plan, and when appropriate, make refinements when they would enable the Plan to better respond to the changing dynamics, economic conditions, trends, and associated growth within the City. The directive to remain agile and responsive to variable conditions has been in place since the Plan’s earliest adoption and continued forward into Peoria’s most recent voter approved General Plan. This is further supported under State Law, which expressly identifies a process for major amendments to the General Plan.

The last comprehensive amendment to the General Plan was ultimately ratified by the voters in November 2020 and certified by the City Council in December 2020. Since then, evolving economic factors and dynamic shifts in conditions make it appropriate to once again take a renewed look at the Plan to ensure it’s best positioned to meet Peoria’s future potential. In this manner, the Peoria City Council has identified four focus areas to continue advancing Peoria forward. They are economic development, water security, innovative government, and public safety. Looking through this lens, the city is aggressively pursuing opportunities and strategies to promote a thriving, balanced and dynamic economy, which can capitalize on the City’s strengths, and supports local job growth and economic expansion. In keeping with these efforts, City staff is proposing a series of refinements to the text and maps within the General Plan to bolster support and best position Peoria for its continued success. These are described and analyzed below.

CHAPTER 3: SMART GROWTH (GPA24-01)

The vast majority of Peoria’s strategic and remaining vacant land is comprised of Arizona State Trust Land as shown in Figure 3 (“Ownership”) within the General Plan. **(Exhibit 1)** Therefore, Peoria’s long-term economic prosperity and quality of life is dependent on collaboration with the Arizona State Land Department. Going further, the city desires to guide development of these strategic parcels through a comprehensive approach, which is discussed further below. These two components provide the basis and rationale for the proposed changes within Chapter 3; however, prior to delving into the specific changes themselves, having a clear understanding of State Trust Land’s similarities and differences to private property is essential.

The Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) was established to manage the Arizona State Trust lands granted to Arizona by the Federal government at the time of statehood. As such, ASLD manages the land and resources on approximately 9.2 million acres across the state, of which approximately 44 square miles (close to 28,000 acres) of land is within Peoria. These Trust Lands can be found *in both developed and undeveloped portions of the city*, resulting in areas that have their own distinct character, preservation opportunities, development potential, and market demand timeline. Emphasis is added to that statement because it is an important distinction between State Trust Land and other public lands, yet it is often overlooked. More precisely, one of the most common misconceptions perpetuated is that State Trust Land is “open space” and

will remain vacant desert in perpetuity, which is inaccurate. Instead, State Trust Land should be thought of and regarded as developable property in much the same way as private land. More specifically, ASLD's stated mission is to enhance the value and optimize economic return of the land for Trust beneficiaries, of which there are thirteen, with Common Schools (K-12) being the largest beneficiary. Up until the optimized value of the land is reached, ASLD *may* allow public use of the land, so long as it brings value to the beneficiaries, which is a particular aspect that distinguishes Trust Land from the way other public lands, such as those managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), which has a recreational disposition only.

Once optimized value of the land has been reached, State Trust Land parcels may eventually transfer to private interests through sale or lease for residential, commercial, or employment development, or for agricultural or natural resource extraction uses. By way of example, two of the most recent Trust Land purchases within Peoria are reflected in the new homes being built within the Aloravita community and the commercial shops along Lake Pleasant Parkway near the Happy Valley Road intersection. Along with understanding that State Trust Land will eventually be developed, it is also important to know that the lease and/or disposition of State Trust Lands is governed by the Arizona Enabling Act, Arizona Constitution, and strict statutory regulations. One example of those statutory regulations is that Arizona State Law requires cities such as Peoria to coordinate with the ASLD to "ensure for the harmonious integration of Trust Lands" into the Future Land Use Map (FLUM) within the General Plan.

Turning towards the Peoria General Plan and associated Future Land Use Map, the intent behind the map itself is to articulate a long-term vision which accommodates growth across the City, including within Trust Land. However, given the nature, location, and amount of Trust Land within Peoria, a good portion of the land still retains much of its original land use designations established decades ago. As such, development of remaining vacant Trust Lands may require the facilitation of a major general plan land use map amendment (MGPA), which by itself is often impractical to accomplish in a timely manner. As such, this impediment removes potentially suitable land from being presented for auction because it does not align with the specific development needs of the subject area. Potentially forgoing economic opportunities within the city is one drawback; however, not necessarily the most important one.

Above all, it is important to remember that at some point, all designated State Land within Peoria will be developed. When the time comes for ASLD to transact on land, it is crucial to understand that it does not occur in the same manner as private property because of its regulatory structure established by federal and state law. The resulting difference in the regulatory structure significantly increases the potential for disjointed development to occur within State Trust Land without an intervening mechanism. Recognizing the potential risk for fragmented development, other valley cities and counties have previously worked with ASLD to establish a method within their respective General Plans to address the need for master planning of their defined strategic areas. Successful economic results from this approach have been more recently seen within Scottsdale, Queen Creek, Phoenix and Pinal County. Utilizing a similar approach, the city has collaboratively worked with ASLD in proposing the text and map changes within Chapter 3 of the Peoria General Plan to ensure smart stewardship of land and resources by requiring comprehensive infrastructure planning within two strategic areas as identified below.

ASLD Text and Map Changes

In recognition of State Land's importance within the city, and to better accommodate future growth and economic development across Peoria, this proposed amendment seeks to refine certain select portions within **Chapter 3: Smart Growth** to allow for the creation of a "Special Land Use" category. The proposed text changes for Chapter 3 are included in **Exhibit 1**. Key highlights are noted as follows:

ASLD Special Land Use provides flexibility to promote new development needed to accommodate economic growth and new businesses so that residents can find jobs in Peoria. The category also provides opportunity for new housing to accommodate the City of Peoria's expanding population, and encourages carefully planned, deliberately designed mixing of compatible uses within the same development area or unit, including residential, retail, employment, public/quasi-public, and open space / recreation, with a range of densities and formats depending on the intended zoning.

The ASLD Special Land Use category may be designated on Trust Lands only, and shall be implemented through the zoning process in association with the following zoning districts:

- *Planned Area Development (PAD)*
- *Planned Community District (PCD)*

While this ASLD Special Land Use category can be applied to any State Trust Land, the general intent is to apply the designation to State Trust Land that is of regional significance and/or the State Land Commissioner has determined is well suited for disposition.

In alignment with proposed text changes identified above, there are two areas of Arizona State Trust Land that are being proposed for reclassification to the new *ASLD Special Land Use* classification. More specifically, the map changes are as follows:

- **Northern Peoria Gateway (NPG):** NPG is approximately 1,600 acres in size and located in the vicinity as shown in **Exhibit 2A**. The request is to modify all existing land use classifications within the NPG boundary to the *ASLD Special Land Use* classification.
- **Peoria Innovation Core (PIC):** PIC is approximately 6,700 acres in size and located as shown in **Exhibit 2B**. The request is to modify all existing land use classifications within the PIC boundary to the *ASLD Special Land Use* classification.

ASLD Justification and Analysis

Summarizing above, the key factors in developing the proposed amendment are:

- Significant portions of vacant Trust Land still retain its original land use designation(s) established decades ago, which may or may not reflect the best use of the property.
- ASLD is obligated to enhance and optimize the value of land for beneficiaries. One of the ways to fund the Trust is through the sale or lease of managed land.
- Requiring a major general plan amendment is an impediment to potentially suitable land from being presented for auction in a timely manner to meet market demands.
- ASLD does not transact land in the same manner as private property, which leaves significant potential for disjointed development without a mechanism established in the General Plan to require comprehensive planning of infrastructure to occur.

2024 MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS (GPA24-01, GPA24-02, GPA24-03 AND GPA24-05)

- The city desires to work collaboratively with ASLD to ensure smart stewardship of land and resources by requiring comprehensive infrastructure planning in two strategic areas within Peoria.
- This designation commits to the subsequent development of a Master Plan (“entitlement”) that cohesively contemplates land use, infrastructure, circulation, open space and other inputs. The entitlement for the North Peoria Gateway (“NPG”) is currently in progress.

Why this approach? The *ALSD Special Land Use* classification allows the city to better collaborate with the Arizona State Land Department to identify both the desired and types of land uses for these strategic areas that economically benefit the City of Peoria as a whole. Unlike more traditional land use categories found within the Plan, this category specifically does not limit allowed land uses to one market segment or use type; rather, it is intentionally broad to allow the City and ASLD to establish a mix of compatible uses based on the specific area in question at the time of rezoning.

How does it do that? This category requires master planning of land uses and infrastructure to occur through the designated compatible zoning districts of Planned Area Development (PAD) and Planned Community District (PCD). More specifically, PAD and PCD zoning designation within the Zoning Ordinance requires more detailed technical analysis upfront at the rezoning stage. Peoria has successfully utilized a similar concept for private development for the Vistancia, Lake Pleasant Heights and Saddleback Heights master planned communities using the *Master Planned Area* (or MPA) land use designation within the General Plan and having it work in tandem with the holistic PAD/PCD zoning approach. More specifically, these communities have all been rezoned to the PCD zoning designation and within their respective zoning documents, it identifies the appropriate mix of land uses, intensities/densities, recreational areas, open space corridors, waterways, along with primary or backbone infrastructure within each of these communities.

Alternatively, without the umbrella-like land use category specifically designed for State Trust Land to establish these secondary zoning guard rails, Trust Land has the ability to develop haphazardly without cohesive infrastructure, which is contrary to the specific goals and policies within the General Plan. Going further, this new ASLD land use category does not negate or remove existing zoning regulations that protect hillside, wildlife corridors or sensitive areas. In this regard, the functionality of the new General Plan land use category has proven successful throughout the valley in other communities, and in similar circumstances within Peoria by way of its master planned communities.

Why now? Peoria continues to experience significant growth across all development sectors (e.g. residential, commercial, and industrial), and is poised for continued success if it can successfully leverage favorable conditions in a timely manner. *Why is that?* As developable land within key economic areas and/or critical transit corridors becomes more and more limited, it is expected that development interest within Peoria will only continue to increase. In addition, the concentration of large tracts of Trust Land within Peoria situated between regional employers makes the city uniquely positioned to attract high-quality businesses, desired services and additional lifestyle choices. To achieve this objective, staff believes this amendment will better position Peoria for continued prosperity by establishing appropriate changes to attract these potential projects, while still preserving the quality of life and natural environment that residents of Peoria place great importance on.

Private Property Proposed Map Changes

Since the adoption of the General Plan in 2020, there continues to be a number of property owners collaborating with the City on how best to position their properties for near-term development. Given the strategic locations of these parcels and alignment on economic objectives, these reclassification requests have been incorporated in various city-initiated major amendments throughout the years. In doing so, the city initiates the first step on behalf of the property owner in repositioning these parcels in order to promote future rezoning efforts at a later date.

For this major general plan amendment cycle, the current owner of the former Peoria Regional Medical Center (PRMC) site desires to reposition the property along Lake Pleasant Parkway towards a commercial designation, more in keeping with the character and existing uses within the area. Currently the seven (7) acre property is designated as *Public Uses, Park / Open Space* and *Waterway*. With this request, the approximate 6.6 acre area designated as *Public Use* within the former PRMC property, along with the adjoining half-street right-of-way would be modified from *Public Uses* to *Office and Local Commercial*. **(Exhibit 2C)** The existing *Park / Open Space* and *Waterway* delineations are being retained as-is.

Justification and Analysis

The existing *Public Use* land use category, in its original context, was specifically selected and intended to be a severely limiting factor as to how this parcel could be developed. In particular, the prior vision for the larger PRMC area was for a medical campus with the heaviest, most-intense, medical-only uses at this location. This vision predated the adjacent education facilities and development of other commercial parcels immediately adjacent to the site.

As proposed, the change to the *Office and Local Commercial* land use category broadens the range of potential commercial, retail, and employment land uses allowed, which better supports the overall economic development potential along the Lake Pleasant corridor. More importantly, this land use category does not restrict the ability for typical medical businesses to be located here; rather, the proposed change better aligns this site to be more compatible in size, scale and intensity with the surrounding character of the area. Similar requests to change to the *Office and Local Commercial* land use category have also occurred within the immediate area, with the most recent being at the southeast corner of Jomax Road and Lake Pleasant Parkway. As such, staff believes this modification further advances the City Council's economic priorities and is in alignment with the goals and policies of the Peoria General Plan.

CHAPTER 4: INTEGRATED TRANSPORTATION (GPA24-02)

The city is proposing an amendment to text within Chapter 4 and the Circulation Map within the Peoria General Plan. This amendment primarily serves as an ongoing maintenance effort and refinement to the Peoria General Plan to keep the document current with on-going local and regional transportation planning efforts. Additionally, the proposed revisions also address traffic circulation changes due to updated development plans and forecasted infrastructure needs. More specifically, the amendment includes the following modifications:

2024 MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS (GPA24-01, GPA24-02, GPA24-03 AND GPA24-05)

- Revisions to the Circulation Map were necessary to address the following:
 - Changes and corrections to the classification of certain roadways,
 - Corrections to map information along our city boundaries to represent data consistent with city and county jurisdictions,
 - Updating and correcting existing and proposed roadway alignments based on the most recent available data.
- Revisions were made to the Chapter 4: Integrated Transportation text to:
 - Reflect the cessation of Peoria-On-The-Go, and
 - Specifically remove “major” and “minor” street classifications to align the General Plan Circulation Map with Peoria’s Engineering Standards.

The proposed text and associated map modifications are denoted in **Exhibits 3 and 4** respectively.

Justification and Analysis

Within the goals and policies of the Peoria General Plan, it requires on-going maintenance at regular intervals to ensure relevancy and accuracy of information within the Plan. This amendment fulfills the maintenance obligation set forth by the General Plan and specifically recalibrates portions of the Circulation Map based on updated forecasts for future infrastructure needs.

Prior to this proposal, the last updates to the Circulation Map occurred in both the 2018 and 2019 city-initiated major amendments. Similarly to those prior efforts, the overwhelming majority of these Circulation Map refinements are intended to have the map better reflect existing roadway segments constructed as part of the City’s CIP program or completed through private development.

CHAPTER 6: ARTS, CULTURE AND RECREATIONAL ENRICHMENT (GPA24-03)

During the last update to the General Plan, recreation guidelines were included within the document to establish park expectations. These were noted as general placeholders that should be regularly reviewed as the recreational industry continues to evolve. As part of this maintenance effort, staff are proposing refinements to the park classification guidelines to maintain their relevancy and effectiveness. Additionally, refinements to the text provide better definition and celebration of Peoria’s three recreational centers as key assets within the City’s larger recreational network. The proposed text modifications and associated map changes are denoted in **Exhibit 5**.

Justification and Analysis

The proposed changes to the park classifications are based on best industry practices, which continue to evolve and improve within the parks and recreational amenity profession. Staff believes these updated designations better recognize the prominence and importance of the diverse and robust park areas within Peoria’s expansive recreational network. In particular, the *Open Space / Conservation Lands* designation recognizes the vast amount of existing public open space throughout the city. Similarly, the *Conservation Park* designation better recognizes the significance and prominence of the Sonoran Mountain Preserve within the recreational network. Lastly, the text improves upon acknowledging and celebrating the immeasurable value of the three (3) Recreation Centers to Peoria residents. In summary,

the proposed changes both satisfy the maintenance obligations and as well as advance the recreational enrichment goals and policies of the General Plan.

CHAPTER 8: IMPLEMENTATION (GPA24-05)

While there are statutory requirements for approving and amending the General Plan that are set forth in State Law, cities and counties are given certain autonomy in establishing individualized criteria to classify when a proposal or request is deemed a “major” or “minor” amendment to the General Plan. Within the 2019 comprehensive update, the criteria were modified based on dialog and collaboration with stakeholders and the community. Results in this endeavor are reflected in **Table 8-1 General Plan Amendment Criteria**.

Overall, the new criteria have been a vast improvement and worked well compared to the previous multi-step process; however, provision 4D falls short of expectations in addressing necessary and routine maintenance to keep the Circulation Map up to date as was mandated by the Plan. While the provision recognizes refinements to roadway alignments can and often do occur, typically either before or at the time of construction; however, the provision is silent in allowing the map to be updated once the roadway segment has been completed either through the Capital Improvement Program or via private development. Although the oversight was unintentional, the resulting delay in updating the Circulation Plan is in direct conflict with stated maintenance obligations. As such, city staff is seeking the following change noted in all capital letters as shown in **Exhibit 6**.

Table 8.1 General Plan Amendment Criteria - #4 Circulation Map

D. Realignment of any roadway AND/OR CHANGE IN CLASSIFICATION FROM “FUTURE” TO “EXISTING” TO RECOGNIZE BUILT CONDITIONS.

The resulting language would clarify that no amendment would be required when staff goes to update the Circulation Plan to reflect the existing or built roadway network.

Justification and Analysis

Overall, this modification would allow the city to provide a more accurate picture of the existing roadway network in a timelier manner. With that said, it does not eliminate the amendment requirement when adding “new” or “future” roadways to the network. Therefore, the city believes the proposal better refines the criteria and improves the ability for the city to meet the General Plan’s stated maintenance obligations for the Circulation Map. As noted above, previous updates to the Circulation Map occurred in 2018 and 2019 respectively. Prior to that, updates to the Circulation Map occurred approximately every two to four years as part of the city’s major general plan cycle. The lack of regular updates resulted in a static, outdated map that posed challenges to both the City and development community. Recognizing this impediment, the criteria was initially amended in the last comprehensive update to address on-going maintenance requirements; however, there remained potential ambiguity in certain instances. Staff believes the proposed clarifies expectations and is alignment with the maintenance obligations required within Integrated Transportation and Superior Services chapters.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Major amendments to a city's general plan are subject to the process outlined by state law, and as such are required to be considered by the municipality within twelve months in which they were submitted. As four city-initiated amendments were submitted and processed concurrently, each followed the outreach process and public hearing schedule, as discussed more in depth below.

60-Day Review

Pursuant to ARS §9-461.06, the proposed amendments were transmitted to various required agencies for review at least 60 days prior to providing notice for the public hearings as shown in **Exhibit 7**. More specifically, the information was transmitted on April 11, 2024, with the formal 60-Day Review period beginning on April 12, 2024. Comments from those agencies were due back to the City by June 19, 2024.

At the time of writing this report, staff received two (2) letters, one from Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the other from Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) as shown in **Exhibit 7**. ADOT indicated no comments or requested changes to the document, while AZGFD provided specific comments on sections as noted in the matrix. The city appreciates the continued collaboration with AZGFD and thorough review of the city's General Plan document. Because the focus of this year's amendment cycle is limited in scope, staff will retain AZGFD's comments regarding specific goals and policies within the various chapters for future consideration when more robust updates are made in a subsequent cycle. In the meantime, the city will continue to work with our agency partners to incorporate appropriate conservation and sustainable practices into the various implementation and regulatory documents where appropriate.

School District Notification

Peoria Unified and Deer Valley School Districts received written notification of this amendment for the 60-day review period. No comments were received.

Public Meetings

The major general plan amendments were discussed at the following public meetings:

- **March 19, 2024:** City Council Study Session
- **April 18, 2024:** Planning & Zoning Commission Study Session
- **April 23, 2024:** Open House (In-Person) at Rio Vista Recreation Center at 6pm
- **April 25, 2024:** Open House (Virtual) through the Microsoft Teams Platform
- **May 7, 2024:** City Council Project Update
- **June 6, 2024:** Planning & Zoning Commission Study Session

All Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council meetings noted above were televised along with recorded for subsequent viewing through the city's website if members of the public were not able to attend. Additionally, staff held the first open house meeting in-person on April 23, 2024 at Rio Vista Recreation Center and then followed up with a virtual meeting on April 25, 2024. Both open house meetings were well attended with approximately 50-55 people at each event. Participants included members of the public along with city staff, and city council members. Refer to **Exhibit 8** for the sign-in sheet from the in-person meeting.

General comments and topics of concern identified at the meetings and through correspondence were similar

in nature and are encapsulated within the *Public Comment* section below.

Public Noticing

The applications were properly noticed pursuant to the criteria within the Peoria General Plan and Arizona Revised State Statutes. Methods included utility billing, legal ad, along with digital and print media.

Public Comments

During the 60-Day Review period, the same package of material transmitted to the various agencies was made available for public review and comment as well. Individuals were able to download the information from the website or view hardcopies at the public libraries or at the Planning Counter during this time.

At the time of this report, staff received correspondence from thirty-nine (39) individuals. Comments received were compiled into an Errata Sheet, as shown in **Exhibit 9** and summarized below. Of the 39 individuals who commented:

- One (1) individual was opposed to all amendments. (GPA24-01, GPA24-02, GPA24-03, and GPA24-05)
- Two (2) individuals opposed the land use modifications within GPA24-01.
- One (1) individual asked for additional information and provided comments associated with Circulation Map changes associated with GPA24-02.
- Twelve (12) individuals were opposed to changes to the Chapter 8 Amendment Criteria in GPA24-05. Of those twelve, nine (9) specifically cited opposition to the proposed land use threshold change, and two (2) cited the proposed change associated with the state land designated property in their correspondence. These two provisions were specifically removed from the proposal on April 25, 2024 as noted below. The remaining individual cited general opposition to any amendment criteria change.
- Twenty-four (24) individuals provided no specific comments regarding the proposed changes; however, the majority cited displeasure with Peoria exploring the potential for an Airpark.

Topics of Concerns:

There were three prevailing areas of concern/opposition cited in correspondence received: 1) All major general plan amendments should be required to go to the voters; 2) Opposition to the General Plan because of Peoria's exploration of an Airpark, and 3) the land use map threshold should remain unchanged. A summary of the comments and staff's response is provided below.

1. All major amendments should be required to go to the voters.

Arizona State Law regulates the process that major general plan amendments are required to go through. A.R.S. specifically states the governing body, which for Peoria is the City Council, is required to decide upon the general plan and any amendments thereof. As such, both minor and major amendments are forwarded to the Peoria City Council for their consideration and decision.

Voters play a limited, but important role when it comes to ratifying a city's plan. State Law identifies the "effectiveness" of the city's general plan is limited to ten years, after which it must be renewed or a new plan adopted by the governing body and submitted for voter ratification. Upon successful voter ratification, the effectiveness timeframe for the general plan is reset to an additional ten years.

Regarding amendments themselves, State law does not prevent or prohibit amendments to the general

plan. Instead, cities are given allowance to establish individualized criteria between what constitutes minor or major amendments. As such, Peoria has established criteria for major and minor amendments within the Plan, which on occasion has been adjusted through the major amendment process in prior years. Additionally, each Peoria General Plan, including the most recently adopted version, has had language within it stating the Plan itself should not be treated as a static document. This has resulted in a number of minor and major amendments being proposed by both private entities and the city throughout the years. In each case, they are transmitted to the Peoria City Council for their consideration and decision, as required by state law.

2. Opposed to the General Plan amendments because they will allow an airport to go in.

The Peoria Airpark is an independent and multi-year exploration process with multiple studies that are either completed, planned, or currently underway, to guide in the project evaluation process. This process is separate from the general plan amendments being proposed, with its own timeline, outreach process, analysis, and decision points. Should the proposed general plan amendments fail, they will have no bearing on the airpark evaluation process. Instead, what the general plan amendment in Chapter 3 offers is better stewardship of land and resources, along with comprehensive planning of infrastructure within strategic areas in Peoria. As Peoria looks for an economic engine to increase prosperity and drive the city forward, whether it be via an airpark, an innovative tech park or through some other mechanism, the General Plan requires that the community grow in a smart manner. To grow in the smartest possible manner in our most economically strategically situated lands all along the Loop 303 area and Lake Pleasant Parkway corridor, which are designated State Trust Lands, is by establishing the ASLD land use category and creating those secondary zoning guardrails as outlined above.

3. The land use threshold should remain unchanged.

As part of the city's initial proposal in Chapter 8 outlined in the April 11, 2024 Project Narrative, it would have changed the Major General Plan Amendment for the land use map threshold from 80 acres to 640 acres. Additionally, it would have added a definition that allowed any state trust land to be processed as a Minor General Plan Amendment, regardless of size. The proposed changes were an attempt to make the process more streamlined and localized as the process differences between a major and minor are nearly indistinguishable from an outreach standpoint given Peoria's robust outreach requirements. Additionally, a minor and major amendment require the same level of comprehensive analysis, and they both go to the elected body for a final decision. However, after holding public meetings on the subject and receiving input from the public, the city opted to pull those changes from the proposal. This change was reflected in the April 25 Project Narrative and PowerPoint provided on the City's website. The only remaining change in Chapter 8 is perfunctory in nature as it allows maintenance of the Circulation Map to occur on a more timely basis as described above.

Planning and Zoning Commission Discussion from the July 18, 2024 Meeting:

- **The Commission held the first of two required meetings for the 2024 Major General Plan Amendment Cycle at Rio Vista Recreational Center.**
- **This hearing was an opportunity for staff to present the amendments to the Commission and for the public to give testimony.**
- **Two members of the public provided comments which are summarized below, along with Staff's response.**
 1. **There is citywide opposition to having the airpark and industrial development facilities in the area of Loop 303 and Lake Pleasant Parkway.**

As illustrated within Exhibit 2B, the existing General Plan land uses within the PIC area contains a range of land use categories, including residential, commercial, mixed-use, open space, waterways, public uses, and employment. In particular, there are existing areas designated along the Loop 303 and Lake Pleasant Parkway corridors that currently allow for a range of employers, which can vary in intensity anywhere from corporate offices, manufacturing facilities, along with general industrial users. Consequently, industrial types of uses can already be developed in these areas as of today.

It is not the intent of the ASLD Special Land Use category to diminish or restrict land use categories within either the NPG or PIC areas, rather the language in the new category is deliberate and purposeful in its approach to best direct growth while working within the statutory limitations of State Trust Land. How? It requires master planning to occur for these designated areas, and it requires collaborations between the City and ASLD to determine the best range of land uses for each of those specific areas in question. Compared to today's lack of regulatory control, this two-pronged approach now gives considerable oversight to the City of Peoria to more effectively and responsibly guide growth in our most strategic areas within State Trust Land.

2. *The proposed changes [to Chapter 3] does not meet three of the six criteria for approving the amendment.*
 - a. *"The amendment constitutes an overall improvement to the General Plan and is not solely for the good or benefit of a particular landowner or owners at a particular point in time."*

Funding for ASLD is provided within the State's general budget. As such, there is no financial gain for ASLD associated with these amendments. Rather, the proceeds from leases and sales of Trust Land go directly to designated beneficiaries, and in this instance, the designated beneficiary is predominantly Common Schools (K-12). As a result, Arizona families with school age children attending public education facilities will see a future direct benefit from this amendment. More locally, as the area develops, the level and access to desirable goods and services for existing and future residents will increase. Besides those aspects, additional employment to the area will increase the number of available job opportunities for residents, along with providing the added benefit of increasing non-residential tax revenue. For these reasons and more, staff believes this criteria has been met.

- b. *"The amendment will not adversely impact the community as a whole or a portion of the community by: Significantly altering acceptable existing land use patterns, requiring larger and more expensive improvements to roads, sewer or water delivery systems than are needed to support the prevailing land uses and which, therefore, may impact developments in other areas, adversely impacting existing uses because of increased traffic on existing systems, or affecting the livability of the area or the health and safety of the residents."*

As noted above, the amendment does not diminish or change the range of land uses currently found in each of these areas. What it does accomplish is to remove the existing uncertainty of disjointed development from occurring in Trust Land by requiring a comprehensive or umbrella-like approach with regard to land uses and infrastructure through the rezoning process. This approach gives the City more oversight into how these areas are to be developed compared to what is in place today. Furthermore, existing City zoning regulations remain unchanged and would be applied to any development within these areas, such as those to protect waterways and sensitive areas. Additionally, any development within these areas would need to comply with the City's policies and engineering standards with regards to utilities.

In summary, the improved oversight provided by this amendment allows the City to better ensure and address potential impacts of any future development during the rezoning process, and ultimately, any development within these areas will be developed in accordance with city policies and regulations. As such, staff believe this criteria has been met.

- c. *“Provides a positive benefit to the community without unduly impacting the City’s water supplies as demonstrated through the application of the economic value per gallon of water measure contained within the City’s adopted Principles of Sound Water Management.”*

As noted above, the amendment does not waive or remove the requirement for these areas to comply with the City’s policies and regulations associated with utilities, which includes water. As such, staff believes this criteria has been met.

KEY FINDINGS

1. The 2040 Peoria General Plan identifies that it “should be considered a living document, as long-range decisions will need to be periodically reconsidered to reflect new conditions.”
2. The proposed amendments have been processed in accordance with Arizona State Law and the provisions of the Peoria General Plan.
3. The amendments constitute an overall improvement to the City’s General Plan and is not solely for the good or benefit of a particular landowner or owners at a particular point in time; and
4. The Smart Growth amendment provides better stewardship of land and resources, along with comprehensive planning of infrastructure within strategic areas along the Loop 303 and Lake Pleasant Parkway corridor.
5. Proposed changes clarify and satisfy the maintenance obligations within specific chapters, and as well as advance the recreational enrichment goals and policies of the General Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the key findings above, staff recommends that the Planning and Zoning Commission take the following actions:

1. Recommend **approval of GPA24-01**, Chapter 3: Smart Growth text and map changes to the City Council.
2. Recommend **approval of GPA24-02**, Chapter 4: Integrated Transportation text and map changes to the City Council.
3. Recommend **approval of GPA24-03**, Chapter 6: Arts, Culture and Recreational Enrichment text changes to the City Council.
4. Recommend **approval of GPA24-05**, Chapter 8: Implementation text changes to the City Council.

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