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# ***INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM***

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**TO:** LARRY TARKOWSKI, TOWN MANAGER  
**FROM:** JOE SCOTT, TOWN PLANNER  
RICHARD T. PARKER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT  
DIRECTOR  
**SUBJECT: “PROPOSAL TO UPDATE *GENERAL PLAN 2020*”**  
**DATE:** 1/14/2011

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The purpose of this memo is to review the status of the Town’s General Plan as it relates to State Laws and the Mayor and Council’s strategic goal to prepare the community for future economic opportunity. This paper will examine the contemporary status of each of the current Planning Elements within the *General Plan 2020*, the potential need for additional elements, as well as the relevance of each to the future growth of the community.

**The Prescott Valley *General Plan 2020*:**

The Prescott Valley *General Plan 2020* was ratified by the voters in March 2002 and serves as a guide for the Town’s physical, economic, and social development. It is a compilation of goals, policies, and implementation strategies reflecting the vision of the citizens. The plan is used by the Town Council and Commissions to make land use and development related decisions accommodating private development and public improvements that nurture economic vitality, environmental quality, and citizenship valued by the community.

At the beginning of 2001, the Town of Prescott Valley initiated an update process for its 1994 General Plan based on legislation known as “Growing Smarter”, passed in 1998, and “Growing Smarter Plus”, passed in 2000. This legislation required that cities and towns adopt an updated General Plan that included elements not previously required by State law and a public participation process that involved ratification of the plan document by voters within the Town. This planning legislation also required that major plan amendments be considered only once annually, and that the entire plan be updated every ten (10) years.

Perhaps the most significant impact of the “Growing Smarter” laws adopted by the State to improve the way communities plan for their future is the way plans are viewed in the context of changes in zoning or land use. Changes in land uses previously considered consistent with a plan by a planning authority must now be congruent with the community’s General Plan in order to be considered legal. This has been the basis for several minor general plan amendments that have been reviewed and approved during the evolution of the Town’s General Plan over the last ten (10) years.

Municipalities with populations under fifty thousand (50,000), like Prescott Valley, were mandated to address seven (7) required plan “elements” in their general plan, each containing strategies and policies the local jurisdiction would employ to manage growth and development, guide change, and leverage opportunities. The required elements were: Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Growth, Environmental Planning, Cost of Development, and Water Resources. Also included in the Prescott Valley General Plan was a separate Economic Development Element, and Recreation, which was included with the required Open Space Element.

To accomplish the goals provided by the seven (7) Elements, the General Plan was complemented by a chapter addressing future plan administration, as well as a chapter addressing implementation strategies and responsibilities. To accomplish the General Plan update objectives and also comply with previous State laws, a significant community involvement process provided the basis for the *General Plan 2020*. The *General Plan 2020* was also distributed to a number of local, regional, and State agencies during the public review period. These public involvement efforts were recognized by the Arizona Planning Association as being the best in conjunction with a planning effort in the State in 2002.

The outcome of the fourteen (14) month update process is the current Prescott Valley *General Plan 2020*, which was adopted by the Town Council on January 17, 2002 and ratified by the voting public on March 12, 2002. The current approved plan is organized into the following chapters:

**Chapter 1. Introduction:** Describes the location and context of Prescott Valley and summarizes the planning process (including public involvement) that resulted in the Prescott Valley *General Plan 2020*.

**Chapter 2. Vision and Guiding Principles:** Articulates the community vision for Prescott Valley in 2020, and provides a series of guiding principles that serve as a bridge between the vision Statement and the goals and policies set forth in each of the *General Plan 2020* elements.

**Chapter 3. Growth Areas Element:** Identifies 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.

**Chapter 4. Land Use Element:** Designates the proposed general distribution, location and extent of such uses of the land for housing, business, industry, agriculture, recreation, education, public buildings and grounds, open space, and such other categories of public and private uses of land that may be appropriate in the Town.

**Chapter 5. Circulation Element:** Consists of the general location and extent of existing and proposed freeways, arterial and collector streets, bicycle routes and any other modes of transportation, as may be appropriate.

**Chapter 6. Environmental Planning and Water Resources Element:** Contains analysis, policies and strategies to address anticipated effects, if any, of plan elements on air quality, water quality and natural resources associated with proposed development under the *General Plan 2020*.

**Chapter 7. Recreation and Open Space Element:** Includes an inventory of open space areas, recreational resources and designations of access points to open space areas and resources, an analysis of forecasted open space needs, and implementation strategies to promote a regional system of integrated open space.

**Chapter 8. Cost of Development Element:** Identifies policies that the municipality will use to require development to pay its fair share toward the cost of additional public service needs generated by new development, with appropriate exceptions when in the public interest.

**Chapter 9. Economic Development Element:** Provides guidance for economic development within the Town's jurisdiction to: attain a range of housing and employment opportunities that meet the needs of residents and workers alike; attract families and businesses; create demand for planned land uses; and establish and fund public service levels that preserve Prescott Valley's quality of life.

**Chapter 10. General Plan Administration:** Describes the administrative dimensions and procedures for the *General Plan 2020*.

**Chapter 11. Implementation Strategies:** Sets forth an implementation program of actions, procedures, projects, programs, and/or techniques that contributes to carrying out the policies contained within each of the *General Plan 2020* elements.

**Proposed 2013 Update:**

Until recently, State law required that towns update a community plan every ten (10) years. On this basis the Town's *General Plan 2020* would need to be updated by March of 2012. However, in 2010 the Arizona Legislature approved HB 2145, amending Section 11-804 of Arizona Revised Statutes, allowing that a city or town is not required to readopt an existing general plan or adopt a new general plan until July 1, 2015.

During the most recent strategic budget planning retreat, the Mayor and Council highly prioritized the updating of future growth planning, economic development, and resource management strategies to prepare the community for the next decade. On this basis, staff

concluded that updating the *General Plan 2020* now is timely, rather than waiting until 2015, as is now provided under the law.

We propose that the plan update be completed over the course of the next ten (10) months, with a draft being available in October 2011 for public review. This schedule affords enough time for ample public review in anticipation of the March 2013 election, if desired. This proposed timeline anticipates staff time to refresh the document, review by a citizen advisory committee, and also corresponds to the beginning of the new fiscal year that enables budget planning for publication, distribution and/or election costs.

It is expected that the update of the General Plan can be completed within twelve to eighteen (12-18) months, in time for the scheduled election, if necessary. For efficiency and cost considerations, it is proposed that existing Town staff will take the lead in the review and update process of each existing Chapter including text changes, updating of referenced data, maps, and charts. In addition to updating and amending the Chapters, a public participation component will also be implemented that involves the residents of Prescott Valley, along with collaboration with local, State and federal agencies, including adjacent municipalities, to review the draft plan prior to being adopted.

What's new since the *General Plan 2020* was approved? The General Plan is considered a living document, in that it is subject to amendments and additions per the administration procedures of Chapter 10. As such, it is important to review what has been added or amended since the adoption and ratification of the *General Plan 2020* and what may be incorporated into an updated plan. Since approval in 2002, there have been a number of Minor and Major Amendments, particularly to the Land Use and Circulation Elements, in accordance with Chapter 10, as shown in RFCA "Exhibit 2". Since adoption, there have also been other related plans approved that complement the *General Plan 2020*. These will be incorporated into the updated General Plan.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan was approved November 7, 2002, with the intent to outline areas of need, concerning current and future parks and recreation services for the subsequent five to seven (5-7) years. The plan was to be reviewed approximately every eighteen to twenty four (18-24) months. The plan is now due to be reviewed. It is suggested that the approved Parks Master Plan be updated and combined with the existing Recreation and Open Space Element.

Further, an Affordable Housing Strategy was approved on August 14, 2003, to complement the Prescott Valley *General Plan 2020*. The General Plan Land Use Goal A7 states that the Town shall provide for a fully balanced residential mix, which includes a wide range of housing by location, type of unit, and price, to accommodate various income levels, family size, age, and physical restraints, and addresses the need for both owner occupied and rental housing. The Town entered into an agreement with the Arizona Department of Housing for technical assistance in order to draft the Affordable Housing Strategy. The plan includes a series of suggested goals and implementation strategies to meet some of the obstacles that were identified, and to make housing affordable for everyone. Housing Elements are required for cities and towns with populations over fifty thousand (50,000) and are optional

for smaller communities. Since a plan has already been prepared, it is suggested that the Affordable Housing Study be updated and be included as a separate element of the *General Plan 2020*.

The Robert Road Area Specific Plan was adopted on June 9, 2005. The *General Plan 2020* identifies the Robert Road, Spouse Drive and Loos Drive locations as areas “that may benefit from planning studies to provide guidance on appropriate land uses and that might stimulate new growth and revitalize existing commercial and residential properties”. This Area Specific Redevelopment Plan is a first step toward enhancing Town Core neighborhoods and providing guidelines for infill development and changes in land use. It is suggested that the plan be condensed and included as a related plan in the Land Use Element, and included on the Land Use Plan to provide guidance for rezoning of properties in the plan boundary.

Also of note are the Appendices, listed in the Table of Contents, which are provided as reference documents “under separate cover”. Appendix “A” provides socioeconomic data along with population and land use trends and is identified for updating based on the release of 2010 Census data. Local jurisdictional data is scheduled to be released in May of 2011. Town data tables for age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, households, families and housing may not be available until December of 2012.

### **Update Strategy:**

It is suggested that the current *General Plan 2020*, and proposed new and revised elements, can be reviewed and updated by Town staff over a ten (10) month period to include needed changes to text, maps, charts, and diagrams. Relevant Census data would be included when it becomes available. A public participation plan will be involved in the review process of the revised draft plan through a series of work group meetings comprised of citizens that have been involved in the Citizens Academy process, as a formal Citizens Advisory Group. It is anticipated that a revised draft Prescott Valley General Plan could be scheduled to go before Mayor and Council for adoption as early as January 2012 and be placed on the General Election Ballot for citizen vote in March 2013.

As suggested, it is proposed Town staff will take the lead in the review and update process of each existing Chapter, including text changes, and updating of referenced data. It has been discussed with the GIS Division Manager that they will provide support for revising and updating maps and charts, as may be required in the process. The Departments that will be involved in the chapter updates are indicated below.

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| Chapter 1. | <b>Introduction:</b> Community Development                  |
| Chapter 2. | <b>Vision and Guiding Principles:</b> Community Development |
| Chapter 3. | <b>Growth Areas Element:</b> Community Development          |
| Chapter 4. | <b>Land Use Element:</b> Community Development              |

- Chapter 5.           **Circulation Element:** Community Development and Public Works
- Chapter 6.           **Environmental Planning and Water Resources Element:**  
Community Development and Water resource Manager
- Chapter 7.           **Recreation and Open Space Element (Incorporating the Parks  
and Recreation Master Plan):** Parks and Recreation and  
Community Development
- Chapter 8.           **Cost of Development Element:** Economic Development Manager  
and Community Development
- Chapter 9.           **Economic Development Element:** Economic Development  
Manager
- Chapter 10.          **General Plan Administration:** Community Development
- Chapter 11.          **Implementation Strategies:** Community Development
- Chapter 12.          Housing Element: Community Development - NEW**

**Public Review and Approval:**

In accordance with A.R.S. Section 9-461.06, prior to the Mayor and Council consideration of a Major Amendment to the General Plan, the Planning Commission shall hold at least two (2) public hearings in two (2) different locations and promote citizen participation, before forwarding a recommendation to the Mayor and Council at a Public Hearing. The adoption of a major amendment to the General Plan is required to be approved by affirmative vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Mayor and Council.

Prior to any Public Hearing scheduled for the Planning and Zoning Commission, staff suggests several meetings with a proposed Citizens Academy Council (to be determined) for comments. After incorporating any recommendations into the draft plan, the required sixty (60) day Agency Review period will begin. During this time, it is proposed that several public workshops also be conducted to receive public comment on the Draft General Plan. It is proposed that the Draft General Plan be provided on the Town website and all Town information outlets, including discussion on the public information television channel, to further expand opportunities for public comments and questions about Draft General Plan. The proposed timeline for the *General Plan 2020* Amendment is indicated on the schedule below:

Activity	Approximate Date
Distribute Materials and Begin Review and Update	January 2011
Staff Review and Update Period	February 2011 Through October 2011
Compilation of Amended Plan	October 2011
Review by Citizens Academy Council	November 2011 Through December 2011
Sixty (60) Day Agency Review Begins	December 2011
Deadlines to Post Signs for Outreach Meetings	TBD
Outreach Meeting No. 1	January 2012
Outreach Meeting No. 2	February 2012
Sixty (60) Day Agency Review Ends	February/March 2012
Deadlines to Post for Planning and Zoning Commission	TBD
Planning & Zoning Commission Hearing No.1	January 2012
Planning & Zoning Commission Hearing No. 2	February 2012
Deadlines to Post for Town Council Hearing	TBD
Town Council Public Hearing and Action	TBD (No Later than January 2013)
Town Council Approval of Tentative Budget	July 2011 and/or July 2012
Possible Election Date	March 2013 or March 2015