



**MINUTES**  
**TEMPE TOMORROW – GENERAL PLAN 2050**  
**COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP (CWG)**  
**December 6, 2022**

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Tempe Tomorrow General Plan 2050 Community Working Group (CWG), of the City of Tempe, which was held in hybrid format in person and via Zoom at the Tempe Public Library, 3500 S Rural Road, Desert Willow Program Room (Meeting Room A), Tempe, AZ.

**Regular Meeting convened at 6:02 PM**

**Present:**

**Staff:**

Vice Chair Anne Till	Ryan Levesque, Deputy Director – Community Development
Julie Armstrong	Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner
Myrna Baez	Brenda Clark, Neighborhood Services Specialist
Sydney Bethel Price	Josh Rutherford, Economic Development Special Project Adm.
Lilliana Cardenas	Robbie Aaron, Planner II
J.P. Coughlin	Jacob Payne, Planner I
Jana Lynn Granillo	Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II
Patrick McNamara	
Robert Moore	
Donald Ortiz	
Sarbeswar Praharaaj	
Katherine Schmidt	
David Sokolowski	
Logan Tokos	
Nolan Williams	

1) **Call to order** by Vice Chair Till

2) **Attendance Roll Call:** Vice Chair Till made the roll call. A quorum was present with 15 members present.

3) **Public Comments:**

*Persons wishing to address the Commission on any matter may do so at the discretion of the Chair. However, Arizona Open Meeting Law limits Commission discussion to matters listed on the posted agenda. Other topics may be placed on a future agenda for discussion.*

Mr. Ephraim McLoughlin referenced the comments he made at last month's meeting regarding reducing density. Not everyone will use public transportation, so high density will cause the roads to get worn down and puts a strain and the sewer system. For land use, he would like to make sure that no more neighborhoods have to go through

street diets or bump outs. He does not see them as a necessary benefit. That money could be used to fix or replace some roads since some of it comes out of the same budget.

#### 4) **Voting of the Meeting Minutes**

Vice Chair Till called for a motion to vote on the meeting minutes from November 1, 2022.

**Motion** by Commissioner Sokolowski to approve the Meeting Minutes of November 1, 2022. Seconded by Commissioner Baez. Motion passed on **14-0** vote.

**Ayes:** Vice Chair Till, Commissioners Julie Armstrong, Myrna Baez, Lilliana Cardenas, J.P. Coughlin, Patrick McNamara, Robert Moore, Donald Ortiz, Sarbeswar Praharaj, Katherine Schmidt, David Sokolowski, Logan Tokos, and Nolan Williams.

**Nays:** None

**Abstain:** Commissioner Jana Lynn Granillo

**Absent:** Chair Salais, Commissioners Kyle McIntosh and Shane Peterlin.

#### 5) **Presentation on General Plan Elements:**

*Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner, noted that extra meetings in mid-November and mid-January were added to cover all of the General Plan topics. Unfortunately, there was not a quorum at the November 15<sup>th</sup> meeting. They will reorganize the calendar to cover the topics. They hope to have a draft of the General Plan in early May. Public comments will continue to be received until it goes to City Council. Staff is putting together a matrix of all the comments. Some of them may not apply to the General Plan, but they will be documented.*

*Mr. Adhikari introduced Josh Rutherford, Economic Development Special Project Administrator, who will be taking over Jill Buschbacher's responsibilities regarding the General Plan.*

Staff conducted a presentation and continued discussion on the General Plan Elements of:

- Projected Land Use, Residential and Density Map, and land use categories – Robbie Aaron

Robbie Aaron gave a recap of what the Land Use element covers. He also stressed that it does not identify or change zoning.

#### 6) **Activity and Discussion:** A review of the Projected Land Use and Residential Density Map, and land use categories for Tempe Tomorrow - GP 2050

Mr. Aaron proceeded to go over both the land use map, and a separate residential density map. Based on a request from both the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the CWG, staff provided a percentage breakdown from projected GP2040 land uses to the current GP2040 land uses (not including Rights-of-Way). He noted that during the 8.5 years since the GP2040 was adopted, there have been a total of 30 General Plan Amendments.

Commissioner Moore asked why it is necessary to have an amendment, when the GP2040 was just a recommendation, and the zoning is not being legally changed.

Staff advised that the City is legally bound by the General Plan designation, especially with the density. When someone applies for a zoning change, they will have to justify it and how it fits in with the General Plan.

Commissioner Schmidt asked if the General Plan gets approved by the City Council.

Staff stated that it would go before the Development Review Commission, and if recommended for approval by them it will then go to the City Council.

Commissioner Granillo asked if the recreation/cultural area were in the City property.

Staff advised that, for the most part, they are.

Commissioner Granillo asked if any of it was private property.

Staff advised they would have to look into that and noted that recreation/cultural makes up a very small piece of the General Plan.

Vice Chair Till asked if there is any comparison between the GP2030 and GP2020 plan that shows the amount of General Plan Amendments that were processed.

Staff stated they did not have that information at this time.

Vice Chair Till stated that she had looked at some City documents on the web and some of them point to the General Plan, but not to any specific ordinance.

Staff advised that each zoning district has its own density regulation. There are some zones designated as "NS", which means Negotiated Standards, as in the "CC (City Center)" zoning district. Changes to those two zones are done through a PAD process.

Commissioner Praharaj stated he was fascinated by the table showing the GP2040 percentage comparison and he thanked staff for putting it together. With regard the water category, he noted that it seems that the percentage goes down when looking at current to predicted. He asked if there was an explanation for which areas, we are seeing the decrease.

Staff stated that they were perplexed by the water designation on the map, and how areas shown as water were decreased. They know how they gained areas with water designation, which is due to the portion on the GP2040 listed as "open space", but it is now water. For example, the easternmost part of the Tempe Town Lake was a river bottom at one point in time.

Commissioner Praharaj noted that the document also shows a forecasted reduction in residential use, however when he looks at slide nine it asks what locations in Tempe should see an increase in residential density within the next 30 years. He asked why we are asking about increasing density when we are reducing the percentage of residential use. He asked if this meant going vertical.

Staff noted this was not necessarily a loss or residential units, but rather the strictly residential land use. A lot of the residential will become part of mixed use, so there is still density to be had.

Vice Chair Till asked if there is a percentage of that mixed use that is required to be for residential use.

Staff advised that there is not. However, staff noted that most mixed use districts are more residential as you tend to have ground floor commercial, with everything else being residential.

Commissioner McNamara asked if there is anything that can be put in the General Plan to have new developments actually comply with the mixed use requirements because often as not, the commercial space sits empty. They put it there in order to get the zoning, but a lot of them do not seem to even try to fill the space.

Staff noted that enforcement is another thing, but there has been discussion about we can better fill those areas, and what they want to see moving forward to encourage those spaces being filled. Staff referenced the Cul-de-sac project as a good example of this.

Commissioner Coughlin suggested a distinction in the land use goals regarding vertical versus horizontal residential be put into the General Plan.

Vice Chair Till referenced live/work being a part of mixed use and noted that it is geared towards the people who live there, rather than the general public.

Staff noted that a good example of live/work is along 1<sup>st</sup> Street and Farmer, on the backside of the buildings that face Rio Salado. They have live/work units and there are little businesses. The point of live/work is so that you can live in a unit but use the bottom floor as your office/retail space where you can sell your items.

Commissioner Tokos stated she likes the idea of horizontal mixed use, but it seems like you would run into the problem where if you are in a mixed use district, then building a market next to a stackable building is fine. However, if you are a single-family residence next to mixed use, and you want to open a coffee shop, the code would make that very onerous even though they are the same kind of location.

Staff stated that there are some home-based businesses that are currently allowed in single-family districts, such as barbers, beauty salons, etc. However, the number of clients allowed at any one time is limited.

Commissioner Williams referenced the Cultural Resource Area (CRA) land use and noted that he lives in Davey Park, which is in one of these areas. He stated that it was mentioned earlier that the Recreation/Cultural designation was put in 20-30 years ago, with the intent of making the neighborhoods stable. However, he was wondering what was meant by the word "stable" and if there is a way of measuring that stability as a metric. In his experience, there are a lot of renters living in his neighborhood, but not a lot who could afford to buy a house in the neighborhood. He asked if affordability is accounted for in the stability metric.

Staff stated that the CRA is designed to strictly keep the density on the site as it was in 2003.

Commissioner Williams asked where the CRA land use designation comes from, whether it was enacted by law or by a previous General Plan.

Staff advised that it was first instituted in the 2030 General Plan.

Commissioner Williams wanted to note for the record that as someone who currently lives in the CRA and would one day like to afford to own a property in that area, he finds it very exclusive and makes him feel that he is not welcome there.

Commissioner Sydney Bethel Price asked if a lot of the CRA fall under an historic overlay or historic designation, which is why they are so expensive.

Staff stated that a lot of them do line up with homes that were built in the late 1940's and throughout the 1950's.

Commissioner Granillo asked for clarification on if the “recreation” in Recreation/Cultural refers to “parks”.

Staff stated that parks are referred to as open spaces.

Commissioner Granillo stated that if you increase the population, you also need to increase recreational spaces for people. She also noted that she does not see a designation for food, health, or where people can gather. She would like to see things not just implied in the plan, but specifically stated, that if you increase population you need to increase parks and recreation facilities.

Staff advised that there was a Parks and Recreation Master Plan that was adopted last year that looks into the standards of how many people are coming into Tempe. This factors into other areas, such as streetscapes, retention areas, urban plazas, etc. Whenever a larger project comes in, staff encourages that developers provide open spaces for the residents on the site. .

Staff mentioned some of the plans that Parks & Recreation is working on, specifically an equity plan which looks into access to parks and potential service gaps. Staff also works with other regional jurisdictions and the Maricopa County as there are a lot of things available for Tempe residents outside the city too.

Commissioner Schmidt noted that she hopes that a disability access is looked at when it comes to recreation. She asked where group homes, foster care facilities, assisted living, and even rehab for prisoners, fall under the land use.

Staff advised that these fall under the residential land use. If someone wants to open a group home in Tempe, they have to call the City. We have separation requirements for group homes from each other. Staff gave a brief breakdown of the zoning code for group homes.

Commissioner Praharaj commented that there is a land use category of Private Open Space in the existing 2040 General Plan land use and asked how that will feature in this revised plan.

Staff stated that private open spaces was an HOA term for their open spaces. The interpretation staff got from the 2040 General Plan was that in order to label an area a private open space you would need to get a signature from the property manager. This did not happen in the 2040 General Plan, and staff is contemplating if they will try this in the 2050 General Plan.

Commissioner Tokos asked how open public spaces work with gated areas. Those spaces are available to the people who live in the building, but not to the public at large.

Staff advised that would fall under private open spaces. They noted that most of the public open space are owned by the City of Tempe, or are on land that the City owns. Examples were given about sitting areas on Mill Avenue, as well as walking trails. Even if an open space with within a gated community, it is an amenity for the people who live in that area.

Commissioner Sokolowski stated that he would like to see more mixed commercial space, even in residential neighborhoods. A lot of times we build big box stores that you have to drive too, however if you had smaller cafes or farmers markets nearby, most people would walk to them instead of driving. With regard to park space, he stated that in South Tempe they probably have three times the amount to park space than North Tempe. He thinks this should be levelled based on population.

Vice Chair Till stated that she thinks the food market idea is great, but it has to be written in a way that it cannot be taken advantage of. She noted that maybe the food market could be supplemented by use of food truck.

Staff advised the use of food trucks have a zoning restriction.

Commissioner Tokos stated she likes the small market idea and wonders why it can be done in some areas, but not others.

Staff noted that is influenced by the zoning on the land.

Commissioner Moore noted that in previous meetings, some had proposed rapid transit on Rural Road to facilitate development in the corridor. On the map and the 2040 General Plan, it was still noted as being low-density, single-family. He asked if we have figured out how we would facilitate that type of development down that area with the 2050 plan without affecting the single-family homes in the area that are directly up against Rural.

Staff showed a slide based on the input received so far from surveys on potential land use changes, and the areas involved.

Vice Chair Till asked if there were any guiding principles for where changes could be made, such as being close to transportation.

Staff stated that when planners think about land use changes they think about a variety of things. For example, someone may comment that an area should be mixed use, however it would not make sense since it is far from public transportation, amenities, etc.

Commissioner Coughlin asked if, for the guiding principles, the land use goals section be an appropriate area for the Commissioners to provide feedback.

Staff advised that it would.

Staff advised the commission that the General Plan is a high level visionary document. Many other plans such as Transportation Masterplan, Parks, and Recreation Masterplan, Water and Wastewater Water Masterplan, Character Area Plans, and other area plans delve into the details to support the General Plan. Thus, the General Plan should be thought of as the high level document, and some details could be developed in the ensuing plans.

Vice Chair Till asked how many survey comments were received.

Staff advised they received over 100 survey responses. The Community Working Group (CWG) had some nine responses, and the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), which is made up of about 60 members, had about ten responses. It was noted that staff received feedback from some people about the survey being too technical to understand.

Staff advised that there will be another public meeting on January 19 at the Tempe History Museum to get more feedback.

**Vice Chair Till** called for a motion to adjourn

Motion passed unanimously by a show of hands (15-0)

7) **Questions & Discussion**  
None

8) **Community Working Group, and City Staff Announcements**

**Meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.**

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Prepared by: Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II  
Reviewed by: Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner