



MINUTES
TEMPE TOMORROW – GENERAL PLAN 2050
COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP (CWG)
November 1, 2022

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

Regular Meeting convened at 6:02 PM

Present:

Staff:

Chair Andre Salais	Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner
Vice Chair Anne Till	Brenda Clark, Neighborhood Services Specialist
Julie Armstrong	Jill Buschbacher, Economic Development Program Manager
Myrna Baez	Robbie Aaron, Planner II
Lilliana Cardenas	Jacob Payne, Planner I
Jana Lynn Granillo	Joanna Barry, Administrative Assistant II
Patrick McNamara	
Robert Moore	
Donald Ortiz	
Sarbeswar Praharaj	
Katherine Schmidt	
David Sokolowski	
Logan Tokos	

- 1) **Call to order** by Chair Andre Salais
- 2) **Introductions:** Joanna Barry was introduced as the new Administrative Assistant for the CWG meetings, replacing Sarah Adame.
- 3) **Attendance Roll Call:** Chair Salais made the roll call. A quorum was present with 13 members present.
- 4) **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 stated that he thinks we should lower the density. He suggested that when the Mayor goes to MAG, he should request that other cities should start building homes on their open land so that Tempe is not so congested. Regarding land use, especially streets, he stated that since we are a growing city, we should not be making streets smaller. Especially when you make four lanes into two lanes, then take out the middle lane or add a median with trees planted in it. When the two lanes are congested, emergency vehicles and fire trucks will no longer be able to use the middle lane for emergency access and this could put lives in danger.

5) **Voting of the Meeting Minutes**

Chair Salais called for a motion to vote on the meeting minutes from October 4, 2022.

Commissioner Ann Till noted that the minutes listed her as having attended this meeting, however she did not. She requested the minutes be corrected to note this. Staff advised they will correct it.

Motion by Chair Salais approve the Meeting Minutes of September 6, 2022, as corrected.

Motion passed on **12-0** vote.

Ayes: Chair Salais, Julie Armstrong, Myrna Baez, Lilliana Cardenas, Jana Lynn Granillo, Patrick McNamara, Robert Moore, Donald Ortiz, Sarbeswar Praharaj, Katherine Schmidt, David Sokolowski, and Logan Tokos.

Nays: None

Abstain: Vice Chair Ann Till

Absent: Sydney Bethel Price, J.P. Coughlin, Carmetta Currie, Shane Peterlin, Mariah Kerrihard, Kyle McIntosh, Kate Vawter, and Nolan Williams.

6) **Presentation on General Plan Elements:**

***NOTE:** Prior to the presentation, Ambika Adhikari, Principal Planner, advised the Commissioners about the Technical Advisory Group (TAG), the composition of the group, and their role in the General Plan 2050 process.*

Staff conducted a presentation on the General Plan Elements of:

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

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

Commissioner Sokolowski asked if the land use map is similar to what has already been adopted, for example based on the light rail, etc.

Staff advised it is close, however this is a projected land use map. We are trying to project what the land use will be in 2050.

Commissioner Schmidt asked if this means that a developer can come in and change the zoning so they can build condominiums in a commercial area, and if that was part of the projections.

Staff advised it is part of the projections of what type of land use will occur. The City tries their best to project this so that the underlying land use in the General Plan allows for certain rezoning. Not every rezoning request will fit with the General Plan, and this is when they would have to submit a General Plan Amendment, which is a public process.

Chair Salais asked how much influence the public exerts on this General Plan land use element compared to what the projections are.

Staff advised they are listening to everyone, and the final product will be somewhat of a balance of what we have heard and also that reflects the current zoning on the land.

Vice Chair Till asked if the General Plan will help the public, since developers have the edge over residents, which is not fair sometimes. Some of the developments really impact a neighborhood, but it is not possible for residents to organize against them.

Staff stated that is more of a case-by-case development, project-specific basis, for items such as a General Plan Amendment. In those situations, postcards are sent out and the item is heard before the Development Review Commission and/or then the City Council. This process includes hearing the voices of the residents of Tempe. The goal is to take everyone's input into consideration to address most of the wants/needs as feasible and also by

resolving any conflicting input the staff receives from different groups of residents. Staff then gave a recap of the recent public event to gather input about the General Plan 2050 at Legoland Discovery Center at Arizona Mills Mall that was attended by approximately 153 members of the public.

Commissioner Praharaj stated that from a community perspective, he believes it would be nice to know how this plan will really ensure that new developments do not reduce the amount of open space. It would be nice to highlight the changes they are proposing from the current plan to the projected 2050 plan, so the community knows that while development is important, their space for living and playing is being secured for the future. He likes the way the forecasting is done for land use but asked if we have learned if our previous forecasting has worked or not. He asked if we could have a segmented forecasting to show the comparison from projected versus actual land use.

Staff stated that regarding open spaces, they have received a lot of input about increasing it. When we think about land use and what is coming in and how we can increase open spaces, there are some goals and strategies in the land use outlet to do just that, whether it be a percentage by 2050 or a certain number of acres. Regarding forecasting, staff has been working on this and comparing the projections in the General Plan 2040 to where the City was in 2013 to where we stand right now. They hope to have something on this to show the Commission at the next meeting.

Commissioner Baez asked if it was possible to gauge salaries and types of jobs when it comes to job projections, and whether employees would even be able to afford to live in Tempe.

Staff advised they had spoken to their contacts at MAG to get some of those employment type breakdowns. It would be hard to break it down by actual salary, however it could be broken down by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code and get to a certain level that will give an idea of what type of jobs are projected and what exists right now. Staff also stated that Tempe Economic Development works proactively to attract jobs that are in the higher salary range and focus on office and industrial projects. They cannot control all projects that come in, but they put their resources, time and effort are generally towards those jobs that pay a higher salary.

Vice Chair Till asked if anyone has an idea of how many people work online.

Chair Salais noted that would probably also impact other projections, where maybe 50% of the workforce is remote and may even live in another city or state.

Staff advised that data is hard to gather since the information they receive from MAG only breaks it down by NAICS codes and not by in-office or online. They noted that MAG and the Department of Air Quality does a commute survey each year that asks who you work for, how far away is it from where you live, how you get there, if you telecommute, and if there are any other transit options available.

Commissioner McNamara asked that in lieu of land use and density regulations, particularly for the downtown, lakeside, and Apache areas, why not adopt a form-based code giving developers more room for creative new uses.

Staff stated that they do not believe the City is opposed to a form-based code, but it is something that is easier said than done. Several Arizona cities have adopted form-based code for parts of their downtowns. Staff advised the Commission about the prior attempt by the City to create a Transportation Overlay Code that was form-based, but remained a draft.

Chair Salais asked if data was available from the survey they were asked to complete.

Staff went over the survey responses and showed a map with the density points.

Commissioner Granillo ask if there is a preparedness plan in conjunction with the growth aspects.

Staff stated that there is an emergency management team who attends the TAG meetings, and a short element towards the end of the plan. We are also planning to add a Public Health Friendly element to the plan in response to the COVID pandemic.

Commissioner Granillo asked how the transportation corridors work, with suggestions for increased density, and stated that residents get upset with traffic and they do not want their streets clogged.

Staff advised that all our decisions here are not done in a vacuum and we consider the infrastructure and how to best manage it. For example, such as having a mixed-use project in close proximity to the places that people wish to travel to.

Commissioner Moore asked why commercial land use receives a residential density.

Staff noted that in the Zoning Code, there are commercial districts that allow for residential density through a Use Permit process. It is uncommon and is made for a redevelopment of a commercial site.

Commissioner Schmidt stated it appears we are moving to a mixed-use residential environment like European style, where people live above the building floors where businesses are housed. She asked where the accommodations are for seniors, especially those who need Americans with Disability (ADA) compliant places to live.

Staff noted that this is something that the Circulation and Transit sections can discuss about aging-in-place. Mixed-use does not always mean a high-rise building. For example, Baseline and Rural is a mixed-use community without verticality. Further, the General Plan does address the ADA issue briefly in some of its elements like circulation and public buildings and facilities.

Commissioner McNamara asked if the City would consider loosening zoning for single family zones. For instance, allowing two units on a single-family lot and three or four units on a corner lot or collector road. He noted this may be more of a zoning question but may fit in the general plan as a goal.

Commissioner Tokos seconded the comment.

Staff stated this is something the City is currently looking into. We allow Accessory Dwelling units (ADUs) in single family homes on multi-family lots and there seems to be an appetite in the City for an expansion of this program.

Vice Chair Till stated that people have always lived in multi-family in single family residences, with large families living together. Allowing homes to be split into more units encourages investors to buy the homes and rent them. She likes what she sees at Baseline and Rural. There is also a lot of potential for mixed use and connectivity along railroads on either side.

Chair Salais noted there is a difference between splitting a home in the same walls and adding an accessory building in the rear of the lot. ADUs (often also called Granny flats) allow for autonomy of own space for the occupant while still being close to family and support systems.

Commissioner Schmidt stated she is concerned about a big population of seniors becoming homeless, because it is too expensive for many to reside here.

Vice Chair Till note some elderly residents have behavioral and mental issues that do not allow for cohabitation.

Commissioner Tokos stated that allowing ADUs in single family neighborhoods could also help create other income streams for senior or other folks wanting to age in place and having trouble paying for home maintenance.

Commissioner Sokolowski noted that looking at the trends, are we going to have to lose commercial for residential. He stated we dropped a lot of pins in south Tempe but asked if that is where the commuters are heading.

Staff noted that residential and commercial grow in tandem, so we may see more mixed-use, but it would not be viable for the mass erasure of commercial land uses.

Chair Salais stated that the travel patterns of commuters to Tempe and commuters within Tempe could be very different, and we need to consider them.

Commissioner Baez asked if we have coworking spaces in Tempe.

Staff advised that we have quite a few; MAC6, the Wainsmith, UAT, and smaller coworking spaces in mixed-use projects all over the city.

Commissioner Granillo stated she would like to see language about preserving the neighborhoods, presumably the Character of the Areas, as well as language addressing the way we gather as a community, such as community spaces that are not isolated in homes or high-rises.

Staff advised that the Land Use chapter of the General Plan will have an element called "Neighborhood preservation and revitalization element" that specifically deals with neighborhood preservation.

Chair Salais noted this rings very similar to subjects brought up at the Legoland meeting: green spaces, places for people and not cars. He stated it sounds like people would like to see a suggestion or requirement that a certain amount of space be designated as "open", perhaps a plaza or park.

Commissioner Moore agreed that we need to nurture existing social, economic, and cultural resources and community assets.

Staff stated that we may not have the tools to require this in the General Plan, but we can definitely insert language to get that ball rolling. We always make sure developers meet the General Plan goals and how the project moves the city forward.

Commissioner Armstrong agreed that we need to maintain integrity of our neighborhoods and have neighborhood association involvement in preserving neighborhoods.

Commissioner Tokos noted that for making more accessible, usable open space, we could put stricter requirements on gating developments. Gates break up pedestrian pathways and make biking more difficult.

Vice Chair Till stated that some of the alleyways around the parks and homes are lost opportunities for connectivity and suggested taking advantage of these spaces.

Commissioner Sokolowski had a concern about neighborhood conservation language that could mean keeping homeownership and anti-renter attitudes. It could be argued that ADUs change neighborhoods. Preservation to 100% is extreme; the reality of Tempe is our neighborhoods are changing.

Vice Chair Till noted that speed bumps have to be approved, but ADUs can go up. Medians and speedbumps get held up when they have adverse effects on one property owner even though the neighborhood as a whole may want the change.

Chair Salais noted that ADUs still need approval, and they have to meet standards. He stated that compromise is needed and his neighborhood on Hardy could benefit from the addition of light multi-family without compromising the character of the area.

Chair Salais called for a motion to adjourn

Motion passed unanimously by a show of hands (13-0)

8) **Questions & Discussion**

None

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

Staff advised that the Tempe Tomorrow survey is open until November 9th and encouraged members to reach out to their community and encourage them to take the survey.

Meeting adjourned at 7:02 pm.

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