

CONSENSUS STATEMENTS

From Community Outreach Programs following the 91st Arizona Town Hall

*In programs held around the state to follow up on the fall Town Hall on Land Use, audience members were asked to participate in a Town Hall-style discussion. The question posed was: **What recommendation or recommendations should receive priority and how can we help make the recommendation(s) a reality?** [from the recommendations that were generated at the 91st Town Hall] Consensus statements prepared from the discussions at the Outreach Programs are set forth below.*

YUMA (January 8, 2008)

First, we need to collaborate more regionally. We also need to focus more on the regulation of lot splits.

Harnessing the power of private/public partnerships is important to help control growth and to take into account the needs of schools, the county, the military, water, and natural habitats.

Proposition 207 has created confusion and we should all try to gain a better understanding of its implications.

We should also make attempts to educate residents of Yuma about federal and state lands within our community which will help with better planning.

Finally, we should have better planning which includes setting aside transportation corridors for future growth.

PHOENIX/WEST VALLEY (January 9, 2008)

We need to have collaborative partnerships in studies addressing land uses and we need to better harness the power of public/private partnerships. As one example, efficiencies could be better accomplished through joint uses of facilities and resources. We should also explore more partnerships with transportation planning and expenses.

We need to bring diverse groups of people together to address the complexity of issues, which includes affordable and workforce housing. Extreme growth is creating many challenges for housing—specifically our labor market. This, in turn, creates transportation issues when the workforce is forced to live further away from the urban core.

As we grow, we need to be considering other options for workforce and affordable housing including density and set asides.

PAYSON (January 10, 2008)

Better regulation of lot splits needs to be addressed. Currently wildcat subdivisions create a lot of problems with infrastructure needs such as roads and water. Diversification of revenue sources is also critical. We should explore revenue from unique Arizona assets—specifically copper and other mineral resources and our forests. When addressing revenue sources, however, we should be cognizant of unintended consequences especially incentives related to new revenue sources.

State trust and reform is needed. Rural areas are hampered in their ability to have preferred development because of current limitations with the sale of state trust lands. The limited resources of the State Land Department also hamper preferred development.

When planning in relation to state trust lands and in general, it is absolutely essential that we collaborate regionally. Regional collaboration would create planning processes that are better developed for everyone.

FLAGSTAFF (January 10, 2008)

Counties need more authority to regulate water adequacy. Changing the current law on water adequacy from requiring a unanimous decision to a simple majority would help. Counties also need greater authority for regulating lot splits. Focusing on the need for this from a public safety perspective (instead of a property rights perspective) appears to be a successful way to develop the political will needed to change the law.

We also need to better identify priorities and enact state trust land reform. These efforts will have a big impact on how Arizona grows in the next 50 years.

A broad-based citizen organization would be of immense value. As part of this, we should enlist and educate our youth. One of the fastest ways to impact change is to educate our next generation.

Regional collaboration is also essential. We need to move from a localized view to a statewide view.

SIERRA VISTA (January 17, 2008)

Regulating lot splits is critical in our quest to better manage water usage—especially when two-thirds of new development is occurring outside the formal subdivision process. The city and county should better support well-planned subdivisions. In addition, methods need to be put in place to better control the use of water in unregulated lot splits.

With respect to state trust lands, we should consider having the city or county involved in determining the minimum price for the sale of state trust land.

We should also consider expanding the leasing of state trust lands. For example, land could be leased to developers and the funds used as an additional resource for the State Land Department.

Educational outreach is important so that Arizonans better understand these issues and act on them. It is also important that we better inventory our current natural resources, especially water. Part of this assessment should include identification of historical uses of the land and a preference for the historical and natural habitats, when possible

We can help make these recommendations a reality by lobbying our legislators, and by partnering with groups to which we belong to enact these changes.

DOUGLAS (January 17, 2008)

Within the City of Douglas, city council members need to keep their eyes on the horizon and work as hard on future issues as they do on addressing our current concerns. County issues to address include how to provide necessary services to new developments and how to better address the problems posed by unregulated lot splits or what is sometimes referred to as “wildcat” subdivisions.

Infill developments would help solve some of these issues and we should consider more incentives to encourage infill. We need to consider new models of communities. These new models should move away from the model of a dense urban center surrounded by less-dense suburbs, and should embrace models described as polycentric or multimodal.

Responsible growth that retains the character we all want could best occur through systematic coordination with citizens and governmental entities and other interested groups. We should also engage in more regional coordination that includes adjacent counties and Mexico.

Part of any planning is assessment—assessment of water and assessment of other resources. This should occur before actions such as code revision. We also need to plan for infrastructure and emergency and other services before we allow subdivisions or other development to occur in outlying areas.

TUCSON (January 29, 2008)

State trust land reform must be a priority, but there are many other recommendations that are also important—including a better analysis and understanding of Proposition 207 and more public-private partnerships.

With respect to Proposition 207, a government agency should challenge this in court so that we can all have more clarity about its implications and better develop guidelines.

Better regional collaboration would help us to address all of these priorities as the growth is occurring, not just in isolated cities or counties, but throughout the state.

EAST VALLEY (January 30, 2008)

In the next 20 years, we are expecting millions of new residents in the East Valley. Apache Junction, Mesa, Queen Creek and other area cities need to work together better both economically and politically.

This type of holistic partnership and planning should happen now—before the stakes become higher and are more difficult to resolve. Federal partnerships are also important. BLM lands must be considered in the equation as should infill development.

We should look to see if we can have more joint legal authority with affected communities. Gateway Airport is an emerging model of this kind of joint legal authority.

Another model to consider is Superstition Vistas. Superstition Vistas is an opportunity to showcase to the rest of the state an effective model of land use planning reform.

PHOENIX (January 31, 2008)

One of the methods for making several of the Town Hall recommendations a reality is to participate in “Reality Check,” a program facilitated by the Urban Land Institute and designed to collectively engage people as a community when planning for growth.

It is urgent that we act now to plan for future infrastructure needs and that we set a realistic timeline. This planning should include infrastructure and rights of way on state trust land.

State trust land reform is critical. Members of the Town Hall need to take a strong stance with the legislature and the governor so that reform is accomplished.

This reform should include funding the State Land Department and making it a true asset manager. It should also include principles of conservation, and it should take into account the needs of neighboring communities.

KINGMAN (February 6, 2008)

It is essential that we reform state trust land. To have an educated public, we need to have more land for schools. Restrictions on the sale of state trust land have exacerbated the problem. We need to have legislation that changes how we handle state trust land—not only for schools, but also for transportation planning and for preserving important natural resources. It’s better for everyone if we let the State Land Department have more authority to manage and sell state trust land.

When looking at state trust land reform, we should consider the proposal made by former U.S. Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt to hold some parcels for up to 50 years for conservation.

As evidenced by an effort in Kingman, it is sometimes difficult to balance the desires of those who want state trust land to be developed with those who prefer that the parcels stay as they are.

Developing a statewide vision for growth and land use may help to guide these difficult decisions and different viewpoints as would regional collaboration.

PHOENIX (Rotary 100 - February 15, 2008)

State trust land reform is essential—including giving the State Land Department more authority to sell and transfer land.

Moreover, as urban areas become more developed, we need to be cognizant of historic neighborhoods and strike a better balance to ensure that we preserve important historic sites.

Public/private partnerships should be explored to address the regulation of lot splits and unplanned development.

Having state and local leaders identify the top 20 land use planning, conservation, and environmental opportunities within the next five years (recommendation #10 in the summary piece) would be a way that this group could become active and help inspire more public involvement with these important issues.

PINETOP/LAKESIDE (February 19, 2008)

State trust land reform is necessary so that we can have better methods of exchanging land, which will allow us to better plan for scenic and wildlife corridors as well as commercial and residential developments. Protecting our natural resources—especially water—is also critical.

While it is important that we address these immediate concerns, we cannot lose sight of the need to create a vision for the future.

Collaboration is important for all these efforts and should include our tribal neighbors because, “the streams don’t know where the lines are.”

Collaboration should be regional. It should also be incorporated into a statewide arena. This collaboration should include framework studies that bring all the different interests to the table.

SCOTTSDALE (February 28, 2008)

Our rapid growth creates many challenges. With respect to natural resources—especially water—we need to do a better job of encouraging conservation. We should also address the conservation of energy. One method may be to condition the issuance of building permits on whether the builders utilize energy conservation methods such as solar energy.

State trust land reform is essential. This issue is a perfect opportunity to use collaboration and private/public partnerships. Because the issues surrounding state trust land reform can be complicated, we need to encourage voters to become more aware of the impact of current state trust land laws as well as the need for reform.

PHOENIX EAST VALLEY – CAMELBACK KIWANIS (March 6, 2008)

Envisioning the future and regional collaboration are essential. We need to begin by identifying priorities and then develop private/public partnerships. Input and action today will have a significant impact on our future—especially as it relates to transportation.

State trust land reform is critical. As part of this reform, the State Land Department needs to be provided with adequate funding. We also should incorporate a regional vision as we look at state trust land reform.

Finally, as we continue to grow, it is essential that we balance development with the preservation of our beautiful desert landscape.