

Land Use and Growth

Introduction

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LAND USE patterns in Coconino County have been shaped not only by land use plans, **ZONING**, and **SUBDIVISION** regulations, but also by physical factors such as topography, water availability, and infrastructure. Land ownership, railroad lines, tourist attractions, **STATE TRUST LAND**, large land holdings by other jurisdictions including federal agencies and Native American Tribes have also contributed to the existing land use patterns. Future development is affected by these historic patterns as well as transportation corridors, population trends, employment growth, infrastructure, services, and water availability.

This chapter reflects the guiding principles of the *Coconino County Comprehensive Plan*; it addresses existing and future land uses, recognizes the need for **CONSERVATION** of land as part of the development process, and promotes the use of **INTEGRATED CONSERVATION DESIGN** and other **SMART GROWTH** concepts to ensure the county's long-term viability.

As Coconino County plans for future growth, designated activity centers provide opportunities for residential, commercial and industrial development within communities. Promoting a mixed use approach not only helps create a range of employment opportunities and a stable economy, but it also provides opportunities for a variety of housing choices and a multimodal transportation system rather than one dependent on automobiles. Designating areas for more intensive activity is intended to promote responsible growth that offers residents a range of choices, minimizes the environmental impacts of that growth, reduces the cost of infrastructure and services, and ensures capacity to support future generations.

The policies in this chapter support new development that follows available and planned infrastructure, utilities, and services, and is balanced with the available water supply. The policies are meant to promote a range of housing choices, utilize land resources more efficiently and conserve environmentally sensitive features, while identifying locations appropriate for development. They protect the **NATURAL ENVIRONMENT** and the character of our communities.

Methods for achieving these goals include:

- ✓ Promoting orderly, concentrated growth in or near existing communities with appropriate levels of infrastructure and services in place.
- ✓ Redevelopment, **INFILL**, and developing at higher densities within existing communities.
- ✓ Utilizing Integrated Conservation Design strategies to reduce and mitigate the impacts of new development.
- ✓ Wisely using State Trust lands and federal lands.
- ✓ Insuring that impacts on services and infrastructure from any new development are adequately covered by developers.

- 38 ✓ Maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of the County's **CAPITAL**
39 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP)** as a mechanism to guide development.

40 This chapter is divided between two purposes: 1) a description of the existing land-use
41 conditions in Coconino County; and 2) Smart Growth Strategies that can respond to these
42 conditions.

43 Existing Land Use Conditions

44 • *Physical Characteristics and Ownership Patterns:*

45 With 18,619 square miles (nearly 12 million acres), Coconino is the second largest county in
46 the United States and the largest in Arizona, but is one of the most sparsely populated. It is
47 characterized by rugged mountains, deep canyons and thick forests of pine, spruce, and
48 piñon, aspen and oak. Within its borders are many scenic sites; the most popular is the
49 Grand Canyon. Other attractions are Vermilion Cliffs National Monument, Oak Creek
50 Canyon, Sunset Crater Volcano National Monument, Wupatki National Monument, Walnut
51 Canyon, Navajo National Monument, San Francisco Mountain (Arizona's highest point at
52 12,633 feet), and Lake Powell (with 1,960 miles of shoreline).

53 Within the unincorporated portions of the county, only 12.% of the land is privately owned.
54 Native American tribes also own approximately 39% of land within the county; comprised
55 of both on and off reservation land. County regulatory authority applies to tribally owned
56 lands off of the reservation (**FEE SIMPLE LANDS**) but does not apply to reservation lands
57 (**TRIBAL TRUST LANDS**). The Navajo Nation (27%), the Hopi Tribe (5.6%), the
58 Hualapai Tribe (4.9%), the Havasupai Tribe (1.5%), and the Kaibab Tribe (0.1%) own land
59 within Coconino County. The federal government owns and manages more than 39% of
60 land within the County. The **US FOREST SERVICE (USFS)** (27.3%), the **NATIONAL**
61 **PARK SERVICE (NPS)** (6.7%), the **BUREAU of LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM)** (5.1%),
62 and the Department of Defense (0.2%) serve as the primary managers of this federal land.
63 State agencies control the remaining 9.5% of the land; of which the **ARIZONA STATE**
64 **LAND DEPARTMENT (ASLD)** owns 9.4%. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the private land is comprised of
65 large ranches.

66 A summary of the tribal, incorporated, and unincorporated communities in Coconino County
67 can be found in the Appendix of this Plan (*see Appendix A: Places of Coconino County*).

68 • *Influence of the Flagstaff Regional Plan, Area Plans, and Rural Planning* 69 *Areas:*

70 Planning for the future occurs simultaneously at the regional, County, and local levels.
71 Agencies such as the Arizona State Land Department, Forest Service, BLM, and Park
72 Service develop plans for managing their lands. For example, the State Land Department
73 coordinates with jurisdictions on general and comprehensive planning efforts.

74 In 2013, the **FLAGSTAFF REGIONAL PLAN 2030** was completed and adopted by both
75 the Flagstaff City Council and the Coconino County **BOARD of SUPERVISORS (BOS)**.
76 This is a regional plan as well as the general plan for the City of Flagstaff. The plan applies

77 to the City of Flagstaff but also to an area of about 460 square miles of the unincorporated
 78 County; known as the **FLAGSTAFF METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**
 79 **(FMPO)** boundary. (See *County Area Plans with FMPO Boundaries map at the end of this*
 80 *Chapter*). Like this Comprehensive Plan, the Regional Plan contains goals and policies to
 81 guide growth. Its themes of concentrating development and protecting **OPEN SPACE** are
 82 consistent with those of this plan. Within the FMPO boundary the Regional Plan established
 83 **RURAL GROWTH BOUNDARIES** around some of the private land currently under
 84 County jurisdiction and within existing County adopted **AREA PLANS**. These county Area
 85 Plans are quite large and the rural growth boundaries established by the Regional Plan
 86 include portions of, but may not include all of, the following County adopted Area Plans:

- 87 • Doney Park/Timberline/Fernwood Area Plan (adopted 2001)
- 88 • Fort Valley Highway 180 Corridor Area Plan (adopted 2011)
- 89 • Kachina Village Area Plan (adopted 2009)
- 90 • Mountaineer Area Plan (adopted 1991)
- 91 • Bellemont Area Plan (adopted 1985)

92
 93 To date the Board of Supervisors has adopted a total of nine (9) Area Plans and one (1)
 94 **RURAL PLANNING AREA** Plan. In addition to the five (5) Area Plans listed above, the
 95 following Area Plans located in the county outside of the FMPO boundary, have also been
 96 adopted by the Board of Supervisors:

- 97 • Parks Area Plan (adopted 2001)
- 98 • Valle Area Plan (adopted 1999)
- 99 • Red Lake Area Plan (adopted 1992)
- 100 • Oak Creek Canyon Area Plan (adopted 1989)
- 101 • Diablo Canyon Rural Planning Area Designation (adopted 2005)

102 An Area Plan is an official amendment to the *Comprehensive Plan* and so holds the same
 103 weight and authority as the Comprehensive Plan itself. They reflect the local residents'
 104 vision of the future for their community/neighborhood/area. Some Area Plans include a
 105 **DESIGN REVIEW OVERLAY ZONE** to help developers and the County integrate new
 106 commercial, industrial, and multi-family development projects into the fabric of the existing
 107 community. All Area Plans contain goals and policies for future development, focusing on
 108 the unique concerns of the community. These plans can address specific neighborhoods,
 109 local roads, community character and land uses. Zone changes and conditional use permits
 110 must be consistent with the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan as well as those of
 111 the appropriate Area Plan. (See *County Area Plans with FMPO Boundaries map at the end*
 112 *of this Chapter*).

113 Additionally, the Regional Plan identified the potential for ten (10) **RURAL ACTIVITY**
 114 **CENTERS** and one (1) suburban activity center within the FMPO boundary in areas
 115 currently under County jurisdiction. Most of these Rural Activity Centers coincide with an
 116 Area Plan previously adopted by the County; but not in all cases. For example the Regional
 117 Plan identified the potential for (4) Rural Activity Centers in the Doney
 118 Park/Timberline/Fernwood Area Plan, (1) in Kachina Village Area Plan, (1) in Fort Valley
 119 Highway 180 Corridor Area Plan, (1) in Bellemont Area Plan, and (1) in Mountaineer Area

120 Plan. Additionally, the Regional Plan also identified Activity Centers in areas where a
 121 County Area Plan has not been established in the Townsend/Winona area (Rural) and
 122 Flagstaff Ranch Road area (Suburban). Four identified Activity Centers within Flagstaff
 123 City Limits could potentially have impact in County jurisdictional areas. If these areas are
 124 to grow as activity centers as identified by the Regional Plan, Area Plans and or master plans
 125 should be established to guide the coordinated and strategic development of the area.

126 For areas which fall under more than one planning document, development should comply
 127 with all plans equally. No one plan supersedes another in terms of importance. This
 128 Comprehensive Plan honors all goals, policies and growth illustrations of the Regional Plan
 129 as adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

130 **Coconino County Land Use Issues**

131 • **Rural Character:**

132 Many residents of unincorporated communities within the County share strong beliefs about
 133 conserving the county's **RURAL CHARACTER**. Each resident defines "rural" differently
 134 and desires different levels of amenities. "Rural" is a highly revered term because it often
 135 equates to personal freedom, and residents are often concerned that nearby higher-density
 136 development will negatively affect their lifestyle. The *Coconino County Comprehensive*
 137 *Plan* strongly emphasizes Integrated Conservation Design, which encourages more efficient
 138 land use through shared open space and smaller lot sizes or **CLUSTER DEVELOPMENT**.
 139 The County's ability to implement conservation design depends on residents' willingness to
 140 change their perception of rural character from one that favors 2½ and 5 acre lots with no
 141 open space to one that embraces smaller individual lots with larger areas of conserved open
 142 space.

143 • **Gated Communities and Public Access:**

144 Buyers seek gated communities for reasons related to security, sense of place, and unique
 145 community features. They typically demand a lower level of public services than other
 146 types of development. They fill a market demand and a market niche. However, as with
 147 most issues, gated communities have pros and cons. Walls and barriers affect viewsheds,
 148 rural character, and sense of community. Additionally, having access to open space and
 149 landscapes is a unique and important attribute of Coconino County and an intrinsic value of
 150 the rural lifestyle. Developments adjacent to such places should retain physical **ACCESS**
 151 for public use to these open spaces and landscapes. For this reason, gated communities are
 152 cautioned that in Coconino County they will be required to maintain public access to these
 153 lands, provide multimodal and infrastructure connectivity to other subdivisions, connect
 154 neighborhood **TRAILS** to community and regional trails, and mitigate viewshed and
 155 character impacts.

156 • **Inholdings:**

157 **INHOLDINGS** present additional challenges for development within the County. There are
 158 three major classifications of inholdings with the County; a) those surrounded by public
 159 lands such as national forest or national park which tend to have a high value as low-density
 160 or open space; b) those surrounded by tribal lands where different laws, such as the
 161 prohibition of alcohol sales, are not applicable to developments on the inholding; and, c)

162 those within incorporated areas such as two County islands within the City of Flagstaff
 163 where signage, lighting, design and use allowances are different from the neighboring
 164 properties. Because the County must treat all properties of the same zoning classification
 165 similarly, it can be difficult to prevent such incompatible uses or standards on inholding
 166 properties. Outreach to the surrounding property owners early in the process is critical so
 167 that they can work with proposed inholding developments to work towards compatibility
 168 with the surrounding jurisdictions' plans and regulations.

169 • **Checkerboard Development:**

170 The majority of private ownership of land within Coconino County is a checkerboard
 171 configuration with State Trust lands. Currently, much of this land is used by ranchers for
 172 grazing which benefits the County by providing unfragmented open space and wildlife
 173 habitat. In **CHECKERBOARD AREAS** when alternating private sections are developed for
 174 residential purposes, the potential for selling the adjacent State Trust land sections can
 175 increase. However, the Arizona State Land Department follows a Five Year State Trust
 176 Land Dispositions Plan required under the Arizona Growing Smarter Act that guides the
 177 identification of lands under consideration for disposition. Under these plans, sales and
 178 leases are targeted in growing urban markets where the lands have access to municipal
 179 services including water and wastewater service. Although the State Land Department does
 180 not normally target rural lands for disposition, it does maintain the authority to sell these
 181 lands. The pressure to do so could mount when these sections no longer generate revenue
 182 from grazing leases, when they become difficult to manage, or when the number of access
 183 roads to the intervening private sections increases. Should the State Land Department
 184 decide to dispose of their land to benefit the Trust, or a ranch owner elects to sell off
 185 portions of their ranch for other uses, the integrity of these unfragmented ranchlands can be
 186 lost. This reinforces the need to support working ranches and work with the State Land
 187 Department to retain priority open space parcels for conservation.

188 • **Lot Split & Wildcat Subdivisions:**

189 State law allows property owners to **LOT SPLIT** property up to five ways without
 190 subdivision review and approval. Successive owners may also split, provided the resulting
 191 parcels are not smaller than the minimum size required by the zoning. Consequently, many
 192 areas are developing through this lot split process rather than going through the planning
 193 process for subdivisions. The results are whole areas (or "**WILDCAT SUBDIVISIONS**")
 194 with minimal roads and utility improvements, no open space, habitat fragmentation, and the
 195 potential for drainage issues. Unfortunately in Coconino County the number of parcels
 196 developed through lot splitting exceeds those approved through the subdivision process.

197 State law also allows owners to divide land into parcels of 36 acres or more with no County
 198 oversight, although they must record a plat and submit a public report. These developments
 199 are commonly referred to as **40-ACRE RANCHETTES**. The most common zoning district
 200 within the county is the General (G) Zoning District which allows for a 10-acre minimum lot
 201 size, thus each 40-acre parcel could be divided into four lots without the need for a
 202 subdivision being recorded or a rezoning. At present the County's Subdivision Ordinance
 203 provides for very limited authority to oversee lot splits where resultant parcels are greater
 204 than 10 acres.

205 Counties in Arizona have long desired greater control over lot splits so they can address
 206 issues related to roads, utilities, and proper drainage which are often substandard. Residents
 207 perceive several advantages to lot split development: the ability to maintain an area's rural
 208 character and low population density, shorter time frames for approval, and, in some cases,
 209 lower initial land costs. Most problems related to lot splits involve roads. Neighbors may
 210 feud over easements, maintenance, drainage issues, and traffic. In addition, lot splits often
 211 fragment wildlife habitat, offer no opportunity for preserving open space, and disregard
 212 topography and other building constraints such as **FLOODPLAINS**. The County Planning
 213 and Zoning and Code Compliance Divisions spend a significant amount of staff time and
 214 resources fielding and investigating complaints on issues related to access and boundary
 215 disputes. Overwhelmingly these complaints come from property owners of these lot split
 216 parcels and wildcat subdivisions. Because these parcels were developed in this manner,
 217 rather than through the subdivision process, the County often cannot mitigate the situation.
 218 Often the only resolution for these property owners is in civil court; a fact that does not
 219 make most property owners happy or satisfied with their County offices.

220 The County should pursue amending the law or upgrading standards for lot splits. The goals
 221 of such changes should be to provide better access for emergency vehicles, reducing
 222 problems related to dust and drainage, and protecting rural character, ecological integrity,
 223 and property values. Options include strengthening road standards, oversight of easements
 224 to ensure proper drainage, requiring road maintenance agreements, and providing incentives
 225 for good planning through integrated conservation design.

226 • **Paper Development:**

227 During the last few decades, and particularly in the most recent housing boom, platted
 228 subdivisions or land divisions occurred without eventual development. These entitlements
 229 remain posing an issue: the conditions under which they were platted may be far different
 230 and substandard to what would be required when development finally does occur. While
 231 this trend is not historically unusual, the problem has intensified as a result of the 2008
 232 recession and consequent downturn in the real estate market.

233 If the County does nothing, build-out will continue at low densities until private land is no
 234 longer available. If this occurs and the County has not improved this situation, the
 235 remaining entitlements will prevent the County from pursuing Smart Growth (see 2nd section
 236 of this chapter) strategies in these areas.

237 • **Second Home Ownership:**

238 Approximately 20% percent of all homes in Coconino County, in both incorporated and
 239 unincorporated areas, are used for seasonal occupancy. In the unincorporated areas of the
 240 county, the percentage of second homes is much higher. In Kachina Village and
 241 Mountaineer, for example, second homes comprise about one-quarter of all residences; in
 242 Pinewood, about 80 percent; and in Blue Ridge and Forest Lakes, nearly 90 percent. As the
 243 Phoenix metropolitan area continues to grow, the demand for seasonal homes will continue
 244 to be strong. Additionally, many people are buying retirement homes well in advance of
 245 their retirement and using them as second homes, vacation rentals or long-term rentals in the
 246 meantime. This use, while supporting a growing sector of the tourist industry, may have

247 unintended impacts such as changing the character of some neighborhoods and communities
248 and affecting affordability.

249 • **Nonconforming Uses:**

250 A **NONCONFORMING USE** is one that was legal prior to 1964, when the *Coconino*
251 *County Zoning Ordinance* was adopted, or it was legal prior to the adoption of an
252 amendment or change in zoning classification. According to state law, nonconforming uses
253 can exist indefinitely. Many nonconforming lots that do not meet current minimum lot sizes
254 were created prior to 1964 or 1981, when a new *Zoning Ordinance* was adopted. These lots
255 are legally entitled to building permits. Every amendment to the *Zoning Ordinance*, more
256 than 60 since its adoption in 1981, has the potential to create a new set of nonconforming
257 situations. For example, when the ordinance was amended in 1986 to prohibit new
258 billboards, all existing billboards became legally nonconforming. Other nonconforming
259 uses include **MANUFACTURED HOME** parks in single-family residential zones,
260 commercial uses such as RV parks in residential zones, single-family residences in
261 commercial and industrial zones, and manufactured homes in zones that allow only site-built
262 homes. Owning a non-conforming property has financial implications for property owners.
263 It may be hard to secure lending on such properties and **CONDITIONAL USE PERMITS**
264 may also be required to do extensive repairs or remodeling. Because such uses are allowed
265 to continue indefinitely, the County processes numerous requests to improve, enlarge, or
266 alter them. And although the *Zoning Ordinance* encourages removing nonconforming uses
267 or bringing them into compliance, this may not always be possible or economically viable.
268 Additionally, many of these uses have historic value to the County. Discerning between
269 which uses have value while continuing to bring other uses, such as billboards, into
270 compliance with code can pose challenges.

271 • **Housing Affordability:**

272 There has been considerable discussion about the County's role in providing
273 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**. Many factors contribute to the cost of homes. Large lot
274 zoning has resulted in higher land prices, and development costs have increased because
275 easily accessible lands have already been developed. In addition, the cost of installing
276 utilities and infrastructure such as wells and on-site wastewater treatment systems is high.
277 Although land in more remote areas can be less costly than land in an established
278 community, the long term costs of utilities, community services, and transportation from a
279 rural location to an urban employment center, for example, can often be greater than any
280 initial savings. In general, the provision of County services becomes more costly as one
281 moves away from developed communities, ultimately decreasing the potential to provide
282 affordable housing in the County. Concentrating development can help decrease the costs to
283 providing services and infrastructure that will help to improve housing affordability.

284 The County has promoted housing affordability using land-use planning mechanisms such
285 as amending the *Coconino County Subdivision Ordinance* to decrease the minimum required
286 street width and simplify the subdivision process. Other approaches have included
287 encouraging higher densities, clustered subdivisions, and locations for manufactured homes.

288 Allowing accessory units for rental would also help make owner-occupied housing more
289 affordable and long-term rental could provide additional housing opportunities for residents.

290 Designing accessory units that are clearly subordinate to the principal dwelling would
 291 maintain the residential character of the area and therefore eliminate the need for a zoning
 292 change.

293 Updates to the zoning and subdivision ordinance will give further consideration to this issue.

294 • **Military Installations:**

295 US Naval Observatory and Camp Navajo are two military installations in Coconino County
 296 which provide tremendous value to our national security and local economy, Coconino
 297 County is well aware of the potential threats that new development and changes in land
 298 use can have on the mission of the installations. As the economy improves and new
 299 development is proposed for the greater Flagstaff area under County jurisdiction, the
 300 County sees the benefit of a coordinated, proactive community-based planning effort to
 301 assess emerging threats, opportunities and constraints. In 2015 the Board of Supervisors
 302 supported several projects, including the Joint Land Use Study, for the purpose of
 303 protecting our mutual interests, to include those areas surrounding or impacting the US
 304 Naval Observatory Flagstaff Station and Camp Navajo. Through community involvement,
 305 the study would identify compatible and incompatible land uses regarding dark skies
 306 protection and strategic open space that is mutually beneficial as military buffers and
 307 resource protection.

308 The Naval Research Observatory and Camp Navajo have been seeking partners with whom
 309 they could work on acquiring State Trust Land adjacent to their operations in the Centennial
 310 Forest. This property has high wildlife value and would provide their installations a buffer
 311 zone.

312

313 **Goal:** Respond to the specific and varied land-use conditions found in Coconino County
 314 with creative policies and strategies that protect important community values.

315 **Policies:**

- 316 1. Seek changes to Arizona State Statutes allowing for State Trust Reform or some other form
 317 of legislation allowing for exchange of State Trust lands.
- 318 2. Discourage gated communities unless connectivity and public access is provided and
 319 development is in conformance with other appropriate policies and applicable plans.
- 320 3. Commercial use of inholdings within the National Forest and National Parks is strongly
 321 discouraged and when development of inholdings is proposed, the existing density should
 322 not be increased and the proposed development should utilize integrated conservation design
 323 methods.
- 324 4. The County supports changes to state law to give counties greater authority over lot splits.
- 325 5. Development projects within inholdings should be consistent with land management plans
 326 and character of surrounding lands.

- 327 6. Outreach to the surrounding jurisdiction should take place early and often when
 328 development is proposed on inholdings. Annexation by surrounding jurisdiction is
 329 supported in order to ensure compatible land uses.
- 330 7. The County encourages and supports property owners in the development of platted
 331 subdivisions rather than lot splits and seeks to update the *Subdivision Ordinance* to help
 332 incentivize design that is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan* and Area Plans.
- 333 8. To eliminate land use or zoning conflicts, transition nonconforming uses to a conforming
 334 use and work to alleviate the negative impacts of nonconforming uses over time. When
 335 amendments to the Zoning Ordinance are adopted, thought should be given as to whether
 336 existing uses should be considered nonconforming or granted legal status.
- 337 9. The County encourages affordable housing efforts and will work to create incentives
 338 through zoning ordinance revisions that would promote a variety of housing types as well as
 339 accessory rental units.
- 340 10. In order to protect and maintain the mission of the Department of Defense installations, the
 341 County values the findings of the Joint Land Use Study and incompatible land uses
 342 affecting the mission of existing military installations shall be discouraged.
- 343 11. Revisit the viability of the existing yet undeveloped platted subdivisions to reassess
 344 development standards for future build out and to consider utilizing integrated conservation
 345 design to redesign the lots, roads, energy, water and wastewater systems.

346

347 Landscapes & Open Space Land Uses

348 Open space describes unfragmented, undeveloped land that provides scenic, ecological, and
 349 recreational uses. In many instances, open space is set aside for resource protection or
 350 conservation; it may be managed as forestland, **RANGELAND**, or agricultural land. In other
 351 cases, land may be designated open space because it requires special management for hazards.
 352 Over three-fourths of the non-Indian Reservation land within Coconino County is managed by
 353 the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the National Park Service (NPS), the Bureau of Land
 354 Management (BLM) and Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). State Trust lands are not for
 355 public use. Maintaining controlled point of access has been an important ongoing management
 356 issue for these agencies. Benefits derived from preserving open space include protecting
 357 **WATERSHEDS** and water quality, minimizing **HABITAT FRAGMENTATION**, providing
 358 recreational opportunity and enhancing our quality of life.

359 The **ARIZONA PRESERVE INITIATIVE (API)** allows State Trust lands with high
 360 environmental and open space values to be temporarily reclassified for conservation while
 361 municipalities, counties, or other groups raise funds to buy the land. In 2010, the County
 362 conserved more than 2,250 acres that included 1,400 acres of **WETLANDS** at Roger's Lake
 363 using the Arizona Preserve Initiative. In 2012 and 2013, the City of Flagstaff was able to
 364 purchase more than 2,500 additional acres at Picture Canyon and Observatory Mesa from the
 365 State Land Department. While API has been effectively used to conserve open space in the
 366 County, as of 2015 there is no funding for the match program.

367 Open space can be acquired for conservation without being purchased by donation or acquisition
 368 on fee simple lands by developing a **CONSERVATION EASEMENT**. Conservation easements
 369 allow landowners to retain their property but limit development rights in perpetuity.
 370 Conservation easements on private lands are obtained by donation or acquisition of development
 371 rights based on an appraised value agreed upon by the landowner. Federal tax benefits may be
 372 available to the landowner if the conservation easement meets certain standards for open space,
 373 natural or cultural resource, or recreational values, and is held by a qualified land trust or
 374 government agency. Conservation easements do not have to allow public access. They can
 375 include working farms and ranches to protect agricultural lands. Several land trusts working in
 376 Arizona came together to form the *Arizona Land Trust Network* to provide education and
 377 information related to conservation easements and land **STEWARDSHIP**.

378 An outstanding example of a conservation easement in Coconino County is the Cataract Ranch
 379 (south of Grand Canyon National Park). This conservation easement is approximately 40,880
 380 acres, with 34,480 acres held by the Nature Conservancy and 6,400 acres by the County Board of
 381 Supervisors. These entities will permanently protect the landscape from mining activity,
 382 subdivisions, and other development while allowing grazing and livestock production to
 383 continue. Even though Coconino County has acted as an easement holder, the County would
 384 prefer to have landowners work with local, qualified nonprofit land trusts on future conservation
 385 easements and supports efforts to establish a land trust in northern Arizona for this purpose.

386 Another method of protecting open space is allowing some portion of a landscape, rangeland, or
 387 ranch to be developed at a higher density to protect other portions. This strategy is a form of
 388 **TRANSFER of DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS (TDR)**. In 2005, Arizona amended its state statutes
 389 to authorize Counties to permit TDR through the adoption of an ordinance. The statute also
 390 allows for the development rights to be transferred to incorporated areas from the unincorporated
 391 county through an intergovernmental agreement. As of 2015, Coconino County has not adopted
 392 a TDR Ordinance.¹

393
 394 **Goal:** Ensure the conservation of open space for the environmental, social and economic
 395 wellbeing of the County.

396 **Policies:**

397 12. The County will work with private landowners, public land managers, Tribal entities, and
 398 the Arizona State Land Department to protect open lands for the purposes of maintaining
 399 scenic viewsheds, preventing the fragmentation of open lands, preserving important wildlife

¹ A.R.S. §11-804 states: "In applying an open space element or a growth element of a comprehensive plan, a county shall not designate private or state land as open space, recreation, conservation or agriculture unless the county receives the written consent of the landowner or provides an alternative, economically viable designation in the comprehensive plan or zoning ordinance, allowing at least one residential dwelling per acre. If the landowner is the prevailing party in any action brought to enforce this subsection, a court shall award fees and other expenses to the landowner. Each county shall incorporate this subsection into its comprehensive plan and provide a process for a landowner to resolve discrepancies relating to this subsection."

- 400 habitat, conserving working lands, protecting watersheds and water resources, providing
401 buffers from developed areas, and protecting environmentally sensitive lands.
- 402 13. Open-space zoning shall be maintained for federally owned or managed public lands, and
403 when such lands become private through purchase or exchange, zoning changes for future
404 development shall be in conformance with the *Coconino Comprehensive Plan*, Area Plans,
405 and other approved plans for adjacent public lands.
- 406 14. Coordinate efforts to maintain compatible uses next to lands managed as open space.
- 407 15. In order to protect open spaces and landscapes, the County supports the development of a
408 Transfer of Development Rights Ordinance in coordination with other jurisdictions.
- 409 16. The County supports local land trusts.
410

411 Ranchland Land Uses

412 The intent of this land use category is for a rural lifestyle allowing for large ranches, agricultural
413 grazing land, and an open environment. Virtually all the federal and State Trust land in the
414 county, except land under Park Service jurisdiction or designated as wilderness, is used for cattle
415 grazing. In addition, approximately three-quarters ($\frac{3}{4}$) of the county's private land consists of
416 large ranches used almost exclusively for grazing cattle. Less prevalent uses include sheep,
417 horses, buffalo, llama, and ostrich ranching. Eleven (11) ranch owners, with private land
418 holdings exceeding 10,000 acres each, collectively own nearly one million acres. Of this one
419 million acres, nearly 80% is owned by the Navajo and Hopi tribes.

420 Ensuring the quality of the county's expansive ranchlands is important. The vast landscapes of
421 rural Coconino County are significant not only for their economic, visual, and historical values,
422 but also because they contain large areas of contiguous habitat that provides for **WILDLIFE**
423 **CORRIDORS** and ecosystem services. Ranchers, as the stewards of the largest tracts of private
424 land in the County, protect working landscapes for future generations when using
425 environmentally appropriate range-management practices. Their stewardship is as important in
426 ensuring **HABITAT** as the conservation of federal and State Trust lands. Grazing activity is
427 rarely confined to privately owned ranchlands; rather, it extends to state and federal lands
428 through State Trust land leases and federal grazing allotments. Generally, the County would like
429 to see most State Trust sections in rural areas remain undeveloped and leased for grazing or
430 managed for conservation in conjunction with large ranches. Assuming that ranches are
431 managed in a way that preserves environmental values, the best solution may be increasing the
432 length of the leases. As of 2014, leases could be for no more than 10 years.

433 In Coconino County, ranchers are offered an additional method for long-term planning of their
434 property. Ranch owners can petition the Board of Supervisors to form a Rural Planning Area,
435 which provides a means of developing incentives to retain certain portions of the ranches for
436 conservation while identifying income sources such as beef, tourism, wood products, and energy
437 development. If a ranch contains State Trust land that may be under consideration for the
438 creation of a Rural Planning Area for the purpose of conservation, the rancher will need ASLD
439 permission to include State Trust lands in such a district. The Rural Planning Area concept was

440 added to state statutes as part of the *Growing Smarter* legislation. In 2005, the Coconino County
 441 Board of Supervisors approved Arizona's first Rural Planning Area: the 426,000 acre Diablo
 442 Canyon Rural Planning Area.

443

444 **Goal:** Conserve working ranches, un-fragmented landscapes, and the county's rural
 445 character.

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446 **Policies:**

447 17. The County will work with property owners using a variety of strategies to maintain
 448 working ranches as a viable method of land management to maintain open space and
 449 preserve landscape integrity.

450 18. Private, federal and State Trust lands shall be considered in a regional context in order to
 451 preserve landscapes.

452 19. The County supports the development of Rural Planning Areas to provide coordinated and
 453 strategic planning for the long-term viability of ranchlands.

454 20. The County encourages alternatives to the conventional pattern of 40-acre lot development,
 455 using Integrated Conservation Design Methods, or strategic sales of small portions of the
 456 overall property in order to retain ranching on the remainder.

457 21. Seek changes to Arizona State Statutes allowing for State Trust Reform or some other form
 458 of legislation allowing for exchange of State Trust lands.

459

460 **Residential Land Uses**

461 Residential land uses fall into five categories that accommodate a range of densities as well as
 462 several land development patterns that are typical within Coconino County. These are further
 463 described below.

464 • **Ranchette Residential (0-0.1 du/ac):** The intent of this land use is for a rural lifestyle with
 465 a range of densities from 10 acre lots to 40 acre ranchettes and larger as well as the
 466 agricultural land uses that are related to rural living. This type of residential development
 467 tends to emphasize privacy and self-sufficiency over convenience and services.
 468

469 • **Rural Residential (0.1-1 du/ac):** This land use is intended to accommodate low-density
 470 residential uses, with minimum lot sizes varying from 1 to 10 acres, as well as light
 471 agricultural uses that are related to rural living. Landowners may develop large lot single-
 472 family rural residential, or cluster development on smaller lots using integrated conservation
 473 design techniques to conserve open space, views, and natural habitat.
 474

475 • **Suburban Residential (0.2-10 du/ac):** This land use is intended to accommodate single-
 476 family residential use within platted subdivision neighborhoods having lot sizes ranging
 477 from 5,000 square feet to 5 acres. Density will be determined by availability of adequate

478 water, sewer and roadway infrastructure and the subdivision should be designed with
479 connections to open space, parks, trails, and community services.
480

- 481 • **Urban Residential (10-20 du/ac):** This land use is intended to accommodate apartment and
482 condominium complexes and will primarily be located in incorporated municipalities or in
483 areas where a full range of urban services and infrastructure are available. This category
484 may also be appropriate for residential uses placed above commercial or within employment
485 activity and rural activity centers.
486
- 487 • **Planned Development:** To provide flexibility, promote mixed use and cluster development
488 concepts, and to encourage integrated conservation design that will result in sustainable
489 developments, the County allows for Master Planned development through the rezoning
490 process.

491 Most residential development in the County features 2½- to 10-acre lots. This trend is likely to
492 continue due to the infrastructure costs associated with higher density. However, preferably the
493 style and intensity of residential development aligns with surrounding character. It should be
494 concentrated near developed areas and activity centers, progressing to lower densities as distance
495 from those areas increases. Many residential areas near incorporated cities act as bedroom
496 communities where most residents commute to the city for jobs and/ or services. Having
497 neighborhood commercial services in residential areas can reduce transportation needs and
498 provide a sense of place. In remote areas with few services and limited infrastructure, density
499 should remain very low and projects should provide high levels of open space and environmental
500 sensitivity.

501 Being able to address development as a whole, rather than lot-by-lot, results in being able to
502 provide higher quality infrastructure, allows for the creation of shared assets such as wastewater
503 systems and results in higher protections for the natural environment. Modernization of the
504 *Subdivision Ordinance* including incentive based standards are needed in order to make the
505 subdivision process advantageous.

506
507 **Goal:** Ensure a range of housing choices in a variety of communities that are well-designed
508 in terms of character, natural environment, and availability of services.

509 **Policies:**

- 510 22. The County encourages design of subdivisions that protect environmentally sensitive
511 features or special characteristics of the property.
- 512 23. Where infrastructure and services are limited, the County favors Rural Residential densities
513 by using clustered development near identified Activity Centers.
- 514 24. Very low density such as Ranchette Residential uses shall be maintained in areas without
515 water, utilities, and fire protection.

517 Commercial Land Uses

518 Commercial land uses are scattered throughout the county, historically on or near state highways
519 or interstates. Most can be characterized as neighborhood commercial or tourist/highway
520 commercial.

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- 521 • **Neighborhood Commercial:** Use includes general retail and office facilities, grocery
522 stores, gas stations, restaurants, post offices, and feed stores.
- 523 • **Tourist/highway Commercial:** Use includes hotels, motels, campgrounds, RV parks, gift
524 shops, and recreational facilities. Convenience stores and some other uses serve both local
525 residents and tourists.
- 526 • **Regional Commercial:** Uses like shopping centers, “big-box” retail establishments, and
527 movie theaters are usually located in incorporated cities and towns. The County adopted a
528 *Zoning Ordinance* amendment in 2001 prohibiting retail establishments over 70,000 square
529 feet.
- 530 • **Residential Commercial:** Uses fall into two categories, those invisible to neighbors and
531 those with minor impacts. One is “home occupations” such as consulting services, internet
532 businesses, and other activities that do not draw customers to the place of business. They
533 are secondary to the home’s use as a residence and should be nearly invisible to neighbors.
534 “Cottage industries” are also commercial uses that can occur in residential areas. These
535 businesses have a greater impact on the neighboring area including allowing customers on-
536 site and additional structures on the property.

537 In most of the unincorporated county, commercial uses serve both residents and tourists. In
538 some locations, however, commercial businesses cater almost exclusively to highway travelers
539 and tourists and should be located at or near major intersections to manage points of vehicular
540 access, limit pedestrian conflicts, and buffer the surrounding neighborhood. In other areas, they
541 cater almost exclusively to local residents in which case they should be oriented less to the high
542 traffic roadways and more to the neighborhood to allow for pedestrian and bicycle access and
543 neighborhood safety. Considering commercial activity during the development process helps
544 ensure that neighborhood-oriented businesses are convenient to local residents, reducing their
545 need to travel long distances for basic services.

546 Hundreds of home businesses are scattered throughout the county. Home occupations and
547 cottage industries allow entrepreneurs to combine home and workplace, and also allows small
548 businesses to start with a low overhead, but may eventually grow and need to then move to a
549 commercial or industrial area. Additional commercial uses have been approved in
550 unincorporated residential areas including, but not limited to, accommodations for tourists, feed
551 stores, kennels, and recreational facilities. Mitigating impacts of commercial businesses in
552 residential areas is key to maintaining the character of neighborhoods. The character of
553 residential areas can be best preserved by encouraging neighborhood businesses rather than
554 regional commercial businesses such as shopping malls.

555 Future commercial areas in Coconino County are likely to continue to be either neighborhood
556 commercial or highway commercial. E-commerce and other new business models will bring a

557 decrease in typical brick and mortar establishments. The County seeks to adapt to these trends
 558 through adaptive reuse of existing commercial property and developments and allow an
 559 expansion of appropriate uses in commercial zones, such as technology, small business start-ups,
 560 agriculture, manufacturing and live/work entitlements. This Comprehensive Plan and the nine (9)
 561 Area Plans encourage locating commercial development at major intersections and in existing
 562 communities; indeed, most commercial land use has evolved at such locations. These plans also
 563 strongly discouraged “strip development” because it promotes inefficient movement and detracts
 564 from an area’s visual character. Design guidelines for new commercial and industrial uses have
 565 been adopted in a number of communities through the Area Plan process. The Area Plans for the
 566 communities of Doney Park/Timberline/Fernwood, Oak Creek Canyon, Kachina Village, and the
 567 Fort Valley have design guidelines. While the Mountaineer Area Plan has not adopted any, it
 568 does suggest revisiting the topic. Such guidelines can significantly improve the quality of the
 569 built environment without narrowing architectural choices or increasing costs all while
 570 maintaining community character.

571

572 **Goal:** Ensure commercial development is well-designed and appropriately located within
 573 communities and activity centers.

574 **Policies:**

575 25. Commercial development projects shall be located and designed in a manner that is
 576 compatible with the character of the area in which the project is proposed.

577 26. The County supports locally based, neighborhood commercial businesses.

578 27. Regional commercial uses such as shopping malls and large retail establishments are
 579 encouraged to locate within incorporated municipalities in order to obtain a full range of
 580 urban services.

581 28. Large resort commercial uses should only be sited in appropriate locations that can be
 582 adequately served by roads, water, sewer and other public facilities and services, and shall
 583 be discouraged from locating in inholding areas.

584 29. In reviewing the environmental impacts of a proposal, the County will require development
 585 projects to demonstrate sensitivity to the natural and cultural environment including
 586 preservation of views, trees and native vegetation, consideration of wildlife, preservation of
 587 dark skies and conservation of water resources.

588 30. In order to facilitate efficient and safe traffic movement and to avoid aesthetic problems,
 589 strip commercial development is strongly discouraged in favor of clustered, mixed use
 590 commercial development that supports multi-modalism and walkability.

591 31. Where new commercial development projects are proposed adjacent to residential areas
 592 connectivity shall be provided while efforts to mitigate sound, smell, unsightly views shall
 593 be required.

594 32. Rezoning to commercial shall be consistent with applicable planning documents and zone
 595 changes shall be conditioned based on specific site plans and for specific uses.

- 596 33. The County shall expand entitlements for light industrial and other uses that are consistent
597 with the objectives of commercial zoning.
- 598 34. The County shall promote and expand opportunities for home occupations and cottage
599 industries in residential areas that do not intrude or diminish the residential character of
600 neighborhoods.
- 601 35. The County shall promote live/work opportunities by allowing residential use for caretakers
602 and owners on commercial properties.

603

604

605 **Mixed Use and Activity Centers**

606 Finally, the development scenario of mixed-use offers an alternative; a residential use within or
607 adjacent to a commercial building or a commercial use within or adjacent to a residential
608 building. For example: lofts or apartments above a shop or office and conversely the coffee shop
609 on the ground floor of the apartment building. Currently, the *Zoning Ordinance* only permits
610 this by rezoning to a “planned community” zone.

611 The Flagstaff Regional Plan 2030 designated several major intersections and commercial areas
612 as Activity Centers, which may include small-scale retail facilities, offices, schools, transit stops,
613 parks or other civic facilities, and other businesses designed to meet residents’ needs.
614 Designating Activity Centers outside of the FMPO boundaries can help to concentrate
615 development and allow for community hubs where people can live, work and play and allow for
616 multi-modalism. The County should pursue the designation of such areas with input from local
617 communities. Allowing residential uses in association with commercial uses in these activities
618 centers should be supported.

619

620 **Goal:** Increase creative and mixed land uses which result in self-sustaining communities and
621 walkable and vibrant activity centers.

622 **Policies:**

- 623 36. Design flexibility that results in a mix of compatible land uses is strongly encouraged.
- 624 37. Explore the establishment of a new zoning district for mixed use development and
625 entitlements for residential under existing commercial zones.
- 626 38. Work with communities to designate and describe the future of Activity Centers in their
627 area.

628

629

630 **Industrial and Light Manufacturing Land Uses**

631 Industrial uses are important to the economy of Coconino County. Because most industrial
 632 facilities need municipal water, sewer, fire protection, and other services, they are located within
 633 and near cities and towns.

- 634 • **Industrial:** Uses tend to have heavy equipment and the potential for noise, smoke, odor
 635 other impacts to neighboring properties. These uses while important to Coconino County
 636 must be sited with caution.
- 637
- 638 • **Lighting Manufacturing:** Uses may be more compatible with other land uses such as
 639 commercial or activity centers because activities take place inside buildings with limited
 640 traffic associated with them.

641 The county has several assets that are key to the logistics for industrial activities. One is the
 642 major railroad running east-west across the County and the potential for additional rail spurs.
 643 Another is the interstate highway system linking Mexico with an east-west route across the
 644 Country. Finally, there is the proximity the International Ports of Entry at Los Angeles and Long
 645 Beach, which are within one day of travel.

646 As of 2014, in total, there are approximately 700 acres of industrially zoned land in the County.
 647 Areas of heavy industrial zoning and development were located near Winona (56 acres) and on
 648 Leupp Road (186 acres) in the Doney Park area. A total of 187 acres are industrially zoned in
 649 Bellemont. Considerable additional development is possible at both the Flagstaff Ranch Road
 650 and Bellemont locations; preferably including warehouse, distribution, and light manufacturing
 651 uses that do not require large amounts of water. While there has been discussion over need for
 652 more industrially zoned land, the County is hesitant to speculatively zone as it did in Bellemont,
 653 where many sites are still undeveloped. Reasons for the lack of development in this area are
 654 partly due to the cost of developing in unincorporated areas and partly due to the increase in the
 655 price of property zoned industrial.

656 With ever increasing ways to mitigate impacts to neighboring properties, some operations that
 657 have typically been classified as industrial and light manufacturing uses may become more
 658 acceptable in additional zones. For example, temporary processing of forest materials may be
 659 appropriately located near harvesting sites on general zone properties. Additionally, some light
 660 manufacturing operations have similar impacts as those of office buildings and could potentially
 661 locate in commercial areas. These issues could and should more appropriately be pursued
 662 through amendments to the *Zoning Ordinance*.

663 Mining has never had a significant economic impact on Coconino County. Mining activity is
 664 confined to sandstone quarries north of Ash Fork and to cinder and materials pits throughout the
 665 county. However, many mining claims could be reactivated if markets for certain minerals, such
 666 as uranium, improve. Most mining activity occurs on State Trust or federal land over which the
 667 County has no jurisdiction. Additionally, on private land, mining operations greater than 5 acres
 668 are exempt from County zoning per State Statutes. Additionally, mining activities taking place
 669 outside of the County directly impacts the County. Coal mined in Navajo County is transported
 670 by train to the Navajo Generating Station in Page and is used to produce electricity.

671

672 In 2008, the Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution opposing uranium mining within Grand
 673 Canyon and its watersheds. More than 2,000 uranium mine claims had been established in the

674 Tusayan ranger district in a period of five years preceding the resolution. Impacts of uranium
 675 mining affect the county in a variety of ways including impacts on watersheds and water quality
 676 including the contamination of Horn Creek and public safety issues including the transportation
 677 of uranium through the County. In 2012, a federal ban on new uranium mining claims was
 678 continued for 20 years, however existing rights to claims on both the north and south rim remain
 679 viable.

681 **Goal:** Encourage development of the industrial lands within the County, provided they are
 682 compatible with the policies of this plan as sustainable employment centers and to
 683 maximize their strategic multimodal location.

684 **Policies:**

685 39. The County promotes and supports industrial uses based on compatibility with the
 686 surrounding uses and impacts to environmental resources.

687 40. The County shall support industrial development projects in areas that are currently zoned
 688 industrial and where an adequate levels of infrastructure exists or could be reasonably
 689 developed.

690 41. Industrial uses along scenic corridors or at community gateways are discouraged unless they
 691 enhance and protect the aesthetic quality of the area.

692 42. Continue to review uses allowed in the *Zoning Code* to expand compatible industrial and
 693 light manufacturing opportunities in the County.

694 43. Rezoning to industrial shall be consistent with applicable planning documents and zone
 695 changes shall be conditioned based on specific site plans and for specific uses

696 44. In order to protect local interest, the county will continue to actively discourage and prevent
 697 uranium mining in the Grand Canyon watershed.
 698

699 **Public Use/Service Land Uses**

700 Large public use/service/utility land uses, often referred to as **LOCALLY UNDESIRABLE**
 701 **LAND USES (LULU's)**, feature facilities such as sanitary landfills, wireless communication
 702 towers, wind farms, aggregate operations, and high-voltage transmission lines. Most, if not all,
 703 of these facilities are essential for basic economic infrastructure or social purposes. The County
 704 strives to site such facilities in a way that minimizes disturbance and maximizes mitigation to
 705 reduce impacts. The 2001 *Wireless Telecommunications Facilities Ordinance* encourages
 706 providers to locate wireless communication facilities in disturbed areas or in areas where towers
 707 already exist. It discourages towers in scenic viewsheds and residential areas and encourages co-
 708 location of facilities. The 2012 Energy Plan Element (*included as Appendix D of this Plan*)
 709 discusses similar mitigation policies for wind farms. Although some land uses (like mining) are
 710 exempt under State Statute, most public use/service land uses can only be approved through a
 711 conditional use permit and public hearing process. The County is also working to create
 712 performance standards for permitted uses to ensure impacts to neighbors are limited.

713 State legislation requires the County to maintain land suitability for aggregate mining operations.
 714 State maps showing locations of these operations are not yet available. The state also requires the
 715 County to adopt policies to preserve currently-identified, aggregate mining operations and to
 716 avoid their encroachment by incompatible land uses that may impede the expansion of future
 717 aggregate mining operations.

718 Aggregates are particulate materials such as sand, gravel and crushed stone, used in construction
 719 to make concrete and are typically mined from riverbeds. This chapter's goals and policies are to
 720 minimize potential conflicts between aggregate mining and nearby uses for the benefit of both
 721 parties.

722 **Goal:** Minimize the impacts of public use/service land uses on the environment and
 723 community character.

724 **Policies:**

725 45. The County shall work closely with applicants for public use/service land uses to minimize
 726 the potential impacts on residential areas, rural character and the environment.

727 46. The County shall coordinate with developers of these types of facilities to educate and
 728 inform the public as to the importance of these larger public uses that serve a greater
 729 community need.

730 47. The County shall continue to engage the public on the siting of potentially incompatible uses
 731 through the Conditional Use Permit process.

732
 733 48. The County shall justly distribute locally undesirable land uses (LULUs) and not overburden
 734 some areas or populations with negative impacts from shared infrastructure.

735 49. The County shall integrate existing and potential aggregate mapping data into County GIS
 736 once it is available from the State and shall adopt legal and practical means to protect
 737 identified aggregates from incompatible land uses through the development review process
 738 and any other applicable mechanism.

739

740 **Smart Growth Strategies**

741 Coconino County's land area, rural character, existing population densities and expected patterns
 742 of population change create unique growth related issues. Outside of the Flagstaff area, the more
 743 typical problems of urban sprawl simply are not a major cause for concern. Of more concern are
 744 the issues of land consumption, loss of habitat, loss of rural character, and the availability and
 745 cost of infrastructure and services.

746 Identifying future growth areas and strategies to mitigate the negative impacts of growth makes
 747 good planning sense. Locating and designing future development wisely is essential to meeting
 748 the County's goals of maintaining healthy ecosystems, encouraging smart growth and for cost
 749 effective development of infrastructure.

750 Because accommodating future growth responsibly hinges on making sound land use decisions,
 751 this plan advocates the use of Integrated Conservation Design and promotes coordinated

752 development of properties. This section discusses key factors in designating growth areas, looks
 753 at the future of federal and State Trust lands, and examines the County's options for paying for
 754 future growth, including **INFRASTRUCTURE** improvements planning.

755 Managing growth in the County involves balancing ideals. Continuing the existing large lot
 756 development patterns, for example, hastens land consumption but preserves residents' traditional
 757 perceptions of "rural character". Many residents have moved to certain areas specifically to
 758 enjoy this "rural lifestyle." Likewise, exchanging national forest lands and selling State Trust
 759 lands is unpopular with adjacent property owners because there is the perception that these lands
 760 are protected from development as open space, which is not the case. In some cases, these state
 761 or federal lands occupy areas where transportation corridors and utilities could be logically
 762 extended, making them prime candidates for development. Redevelopment with higher-density
 763 development and infilling is also typically controversial with neighbors, even though it reduces
 764 land consumption and allows us to protect more open space. Although this Comprehensive Plan
 765 generally discourages high-density development in remote areas, developers could provide levels
 766 of infrastructure and service to support new communities such as at Glittering Mountain. As a
 767 long term growth strategy, development of new communities should be coordinated with growth
 768 boundaries and designated activity centers through the adoption of new Area Plans.

769
 770
 771

772 **Concentrating Growth and Activity**

773 To concentrate growth, there are several management strategies that the County can utilize. The
 774 Flagstaff Regional Plan establishes Growth Boundaries and Activity Centers. These same
 775 concepts can be utilized outside of the Regional Plan area, but need local public involvement to
 776 establish. The most likely mechanism for this process will be in the update of existing and the
 777 creation of new Area Plans.

778 The Regional Plan established **RURAL GROWTH BOUNDARIES** within the FMPO around
 779 some of the private land currently under County jurisdiction and within five of the existing
 780 County adopted area plans. These county Area Plans are quite large and the rural growth
 781 boundaries established by the Regional Plan include portions of, but may not include all of, the
 782 adopted Area Plans. In some areas, private inholdings were not included within the **GROWTH**
 783 **BOUNDARY** because future development was intended to conform to the existing zoning.
 784 These areas lie within a national forest, farther from established communities; they include Hart
 785 Prairie, Rogers Lake, and lands south of Lake Mary Road. Concentrating new development
 786 within specific growth boundaries further protects **LANDSCAPES** and habitats, conserves
 787 resources, and minimizes impacts on **ECOLOGICAL PROCESSES**. New growth must also be
 788 supported by a range of development opportunities providing a diverse employment base,
 789 affordable housing, and access to services. Identifying specific locations as planned or desirable
 790 growth areas not only provides additional certainty to developers, but it also conserves both
 791 natural and economic resources.

792 Outside of the Flagstaff Regional Plan area, existing and new area plans could further define or
 793 establish growth boundaries and activity centers, particularly for growing communities such as
 794 Blue Ridge, Forest Lakes, Mormon Lake, and Pinewood/Munds Park. Updates to the existing

795 Area Plans for the central core area of Parks and Valle might also be appropriate. Such
796 boundaries and activity centers would facilitate approval for higher density or commercial
797 development in areas that are already served by infrastructure and in areas where fire protection
798 and other services are available. This type of planning will require coordination with private
799 property owners, public land managers, and the State Land Department to be successful. Further
800 it addresses the need to avoid leapfrog development and “single parcel” approaches. Within the
801 ten-year horizon of this Plan, future planning efforts by the County Community Development
802 Department will focus on updating and creating new Area Plans. In these planning efforts,
803 identification of activity centers and growth boundaries will ensure implementation of the goals
804 and policies of this Plan.

805

806 **Redevelopment, Infill, and Higher Density**

807 Infilling is likely to be a viable method for accommodating growth in the near future. The
808 Regional Plan and all of the County’s Area Plans call for developing the existing private land
809 base before looking to other lands (*see County Area Plans with FMPO Boundaries map at the*
810 *end of the Chapter*). Additional growth could be accommodated using a variety of approaches
811 including expanding the existing Rural Growth Boundaries within the FMPO area, and
812 developing new Activity Centers to promote concentrated mixed use development in key areas.
813 Both of these approaches include redeveloping certain areas to increase their density, and
814 encouraging economic growth in existing bedroom communities to be self-supporting.

815 New growth could occur in other parts of the county; for example near major highways or at key
816 interchanges, and within new mixed-use communities where infrastructure has been provided as
817 part of the development of the community. There are a few small portions of State Trust land
818 with the potential for development adjacent to existing development (for example, in
819 Grenehaven) or they are already developed (for example, on Route 66, just west of the Flagstaff
820 city limits, and at Twin Arrows). By concentrating growth in higher-density areas, the County
821 hopes to address infrastructure needs and provide for orderly and quality development in phases.
822 This would only happen if developments worked with the County, through the subdivision
823 ordinance and master plan process and by phasing development.

824

825 **State Trust Lands and Federal Lands**

826 State Trust lands for the State of Arizona are managed as a trust, which includes thirteen (13)
827 beneficiaries, the largest of which is Arizona K-12 public schools. The mission of the Trust, as
828 outlined in State Statutes, is to maximize revenues for the Trust beneficiaries. In Coconino
829 County, most State Trust lands are leased for grazing, while some are also leased for commercial
830 and other purposes, such as recreation. Some State Trust lands have been sold in the Flagstaff
831 area, both for development and for the conservation of open space to serve area residents.
832 Within the Flagstaff urban growth boundary, the Regional Plan identifies 5,508 acres that may
833 become eligible for future development. The State Land Department coordinates with
834 communities to plan for development of State Trust lands in a matter that is harmonious with
835 community character and planning policies for the area.

836 In rural areas where private or State Trust land may be suitable for assemblage, Rural Planning
 837 Areas should be developed to guide the exchange of State Trust lands, establish criteria for
 838 transfer of development rights, and prioritize areas for conservation easements. Generally
 839 though, the County would like to see most State Trust sections in rural areas be retained as open
 840 space and leased for grazing or managed for conservation in conjunction with large ranches.

841 Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands can be exchanged for private
 842 lands, a process that has been used extensively over the last half century. Land exchanges can
 843 direct growth away from remote or environmentally sensitive lands and focus it near existing
 844 communities where infrastructure is available or easy to accommodate. The process is initiated
 845 by owners of private inholdings. An environmental assessment must be completed by the federal
 846 land management agency, and exchanges are based on fair market value. This occurred in the
 847 1990s in Blue Ridge, where isolated private sections were traded for forestland adjacent to
 848 existing development. This program allows the land managers to consolidate lands, protect
 849 important habitat areas, and free up additional land for growth.

850 Private parcels are good candidates for land exchange when they are inholdings, contain
 851 **RIPARIAN AREAS**, open meadows, or other environmentally sensitive lands. In addition, some
 852 very remote parcels should be acquired to prevent wildlife habitat fragmentation and avoid the
 853 problems associated with providing services to such areas. Acquiring such lands means trading
 854 existing federal lands for development. In some cases, these lands can be located in
 855 communities outside the county. The *Flagstaff Area Open Spaces and Greenways Plan*
 856 identified forestlands in the Doney Park area as low priority for retention as open space; lands
 857 that could eventually be exchanged for future development. There are likely additional lands
 858 adjacent to existing communities where growth and the extension of services is logical.

859 Because most federal land lies within the open space zone, a zone change is required for
 860 development after the exchange and such changes are not automatic. The property owner
 861 typically requests a zoning reclassification based on zoning in the immediate area. This request
 862 must be approved by the **PLANNING and ZONING COMMISSION (P&Z)** and the Board of
 863 Supervisors (BOS), providing an opportunity to appropriately vet compatible development with
 864 existing surrounding uses.

865

866 **Goal:** Concentrate development near existing infrastructure and services while conserving
 867 ecosystems and landscapes.

868 **Policies**

869 50. The County strongly supports compact infill development in existing urban, suburban and
 870 rural activity centers before outlying and more remote lands are considered for development.

871 51. Identify priority areas for Rural Planning Areas to support the logical development and
 872 conservation of such lands.

873 52. Rezoning to higher density is discouraged on remote inholding where the provision of
 874 infrastructure is not a logical extension of existing improvements.

- 875 53. The County supports federal acquisition through exchange or purchase of private inholdings
876 surrounded by National Forest or BLM lands that are important habitat areas, that contain
877 environmentally sensitive lands, or that would reduce fragmentation.
- 878 54. Promote regional collaboration by partnering with Federal and State agencies, communities,
879 and private landowners on the protection of environmentally sensitive lands and open space
880 for its value to wildlife and on the preservation of our dark skies to conserve the overall
881 quality of life enjoyed by residents of Coconino County.
- 882 55. The County will consider designating growth boundaries within existing County adopted
883 Area Plans as well as when new Area Plans are being created or existing Area Plans are
884 being amended or updated.

885

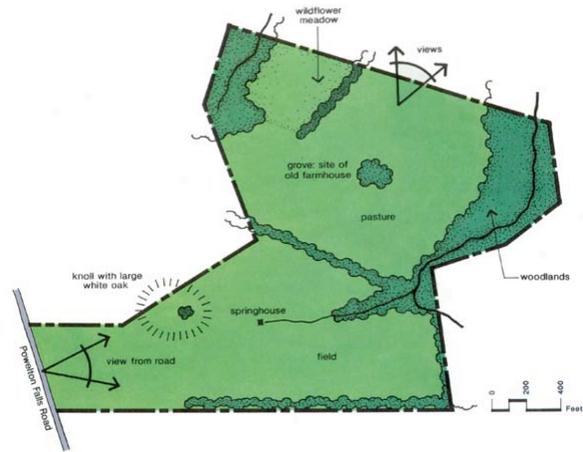
886 **Integrated Conservation Design**

887 The Comprehensive Plan advocates a system of land use planning that reverses the trend of
888 consumptive sprawl. Another method for achieving this goal involves integrated conservation
889 design, a conservation-based approach that offers a wide range of options for developments
890 featuring large parcels of land. Integrated conservation design does not negate the rights of
891 private property owners; on the contrary it offers expanded, more flexible, options for
892 development.

893 Conservation-based planning differs from the “standard development grid” in two key ways.
894 First, it offers protection for **ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE FEATURES** such as
895 wetlands, riparian areas, steep slopes, and wildlife habitat. The value of such environmental
896 amenities is evident from the high percentage (40 percent) of people who purchase golf course
897 lots even though they don’t play the game²; these buyers want the open space views associated
898 with such properties. Second, conservation-based planning often integrates recreational
899 amenities such as sports fields and playgrounds into new subdivisions, benefiting entire
900 communities. Imagine a property featuring forestland and an open meadow that provides
901 important wildlife habitat. Conventional development approaches advocate dividing it into
902 individual lots and scattering houses throughout. Integrated conservation design, on the other
903 hand, advocates tucking the houses into forested areas but leaving the meadow undeveloped.
904 Likewise, if the property contains a wetland or floodplain, conservation-based methods would
905 place any buildings outside of these areas, leaving valuable habitat, open space, or other
906 amenities that all property owners could enjoy.

² Arendt, 1999. Reproduced by permission of APA Planners Press inte.

Example Site Before Development



Integrated Conservation Design identifies the environmentally sensitive features & natural assets of the site *before* drawing lot lines & roads.

907 The process for developing a property
 908 using integrated conservation design
 909 methods also differs from conventional
 910 development processes. In Coconino
 911 County, a parcel’s zoning determines its
 912 permitted density or the number of units
 913 allowed “by right” within in a specified
 914 area. Developers and engineers typically
 915 begin the design process by drawing roads
 916 and lot lines on a map. In contrast,
 917 conservation-based planning advocates
 918 identifying environmentally sensitive
 919 features before identifying the most
 920 suitable building sites; based on factors
 921 such as the allowable density and the
 922 natural features of each parcel. The next
 923 design step entails aligning streets and
 924 trails. The final step is drawing lot lines.
 925 There are options and incentives and
 926 varying methods to integrated conservation design.

927 Integrated conservation design applies to a wide range of development projects, not just to low-
 928 density, high-end subdivisions. Two good examples of successful conservation design for
 929 moderately priced homes are found in Doney Park, where zoning density was increased to
 930 accommodate open space. Integrated conservation design could also work well for
 931 manufactured homes. Regardless of the type of development, integrated conservation design lets
 932 landowners maximize the use of their properties while offering the fundamental advantage of
 933 protecting a network of conservation and open space lands throughout the county.

934

935

936 The County would prefer to work with property owners and developers to explore creative
 937 designs that best apply to a particular area or site. There are “planning tools” that could be
 938 utilized, specifically in the development and design of new subdivisions that encourage the
 939 expanded use of integrated conservation design techniques. Several of these integrated
 940 conservation design techniques or “planning tools” are more specifically described below:

941 **Cluster Development:** This approach involves “clustering” development on portions of a
 942 property that are not environmentally sensitive and allowing the same net density that would be
 943 permitted with a conventional design. This approach not only reduces infrastructure costs, but it
 944 also lowers building costs, which are typically more expensive in areas such as floodplains and
 945 wetlands. For example, consider a 100-acre parcel with a zoned minimum parcel size of 2½
 946 acres for 40 lots. In this scenario, these 40 lots could be reduced to just under one (1) acre in size
 947 and clustered together within an area that takes advantage of a major viewshed or conserves an
 948 environmentally sensitive feature, leaving 60 acres of open space.

Conventional Development vs. Integrated Conservation Design



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Integrated conservation design (right) accommodates the same amount of development as its conventional counterpart (left); in this example 32 lots. The difference, however, is that the integrated conservation design provides that 65% of the site be dedicated to open space, a permanent amenity shared by all property owners. Conventional development gives each owner a 2½ acre parcel surrounded on all four sides by neighbors whereas integrated conservation design provides each resident uninterrupted views of the surrounding landscape and access to over 50 acres of land.

949 ***Transfer of Development Rights:*** This is a program that can relocate potential
 950 development from areas where proposed land use or environmental impacts are considered
 951 undesirable (the “donor” site) to another (“receiver”) site chosen on the basis of its ability to
 952 accommodate additional units of development beyond that for which it was zoned, with minimal
 953 environmental, social, and aesthetic impacts. Even though the State has enacted legislation
 954 (ARS 11-817) to provide for Transfer of Development Rights ordinances, the County has not yet
 955 adopted such an ordinance that would allow and thus encourage the use of this integrated
 956 conservation design technique.

957
 958 ***Building Envelopes:*** This design approach features dispersed clusters of home sites each
 959 with a designated “building envelope,” or the space in which structures are permitted to be built.
 960 In this scenario, the land surrounding each site, plus all other undeveloped land, is held in
 961 common by all owners for conservation purposes. The home sites are strategically located to
 962 minimize impacts on the environment.

963 ***Density Bonus:*** Another approach for encouraging integrated conservation design is to offer
 964 an incentive in the form of a **DENSITY BONUS** for including open space in a development. If a
 965 specified percent of a project is set aside as open space (preferably for public access and use),
 966 perhaps the number of units could be increased by a specified percent or number. However, for
 967 this to occur the County would need to amend its Zoning Ordinance. The details of such
 968 amendments would be worked out with resident input through the public hearing process that is
 969 requisite for all ordinance amendments.

970 **Ordinance Amendments:** Updating the County’s Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to
 971 allow for best practices and integrated conservation design techniques to be used by right would
 972 be a proactive step towards conservation and development.

973
 974 **Goal:** Ensure new development implements integrated conservation design practices.

975 **Policies:**

976 56. The County supports integrated conservation design, clustered subdivisions, density
 977 bonuses and transfer of development rights in order to conserve portions of the property that
 978 are environmentally sensitive or for shared public or open space.

979 57. Work with developers early on to incorporate integrated conservation design practices into
 980 projects.

981 58. Incentivize integrated conservation design through amendments to the Zoning and
 982 Subdivision Ordinances.

983
 984 **Capital Improvements**

985 Capital improvements include a wide range of physical infrastructure facilities and systems
 986 needed to support communities. The most basic include transportation infrastructure, water and
 987 **WASTEWATER** systems, utilities, libraries, and schools, as well as facilities required for public
 988 safety, medical and health care, parks and recreation, and solid waste disposal, among others.
 989 Various entities are responsible for capital improvement projects. In the public works arena, for
 990 example, Coconino County administers road, drainage, flood control, parks, and transit projects.
 991 Other entities such as school, fire, and special **IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS**, as well as private
 992 sector organizations address capital improvements in their respective areas. The *Coconino*
 993 *County Comprehensive Plan* encourages such entities to coordinate in ensuring that facilities are
 994 provided in the right places, when needed.

995 Typically, Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) identify, prioritize, and schedule capital facility
 996 improvements over a certain period, usually 5 or 10 years, but some-times up to 20 years. This
 997 allows local governments to match their capital expenditures with needs of existing and
 998 developing communities; in some cases, the CIP can guide development in a preferred direction.
 999 In Coconino County, priority is placed on critical infrastructure improvements necessary for
 1000 public safety and well-being.

1001 Capital improvement planning should consider the overall socioeconomic effects of proposed
 1002 projects, which should be compatible with the existing community character and should not
 1003 affect neighborhoods negatively. Scenic, environmental, and other resource-related impacts are
 1004 also important considerations. Furthermore, generally accepted planning principles call for only
 1005 the logical extension of existing infrastructure to avoid the long-term negative impacts of sprawl,
 1006 avoid unnecessary leapfrog development, and ultimately provide capital improvements in the
 1007 most cost-effective manner and to serve the greatest number of residents.

1008 **Goal:** Coordinate capital improvements in a timely, orderly, and cost-effective manner.

1009 **Policies**

1010 59. The County will set an example in its capital improvement planning process by considering
1011 the overall social, economic, energy, and environmental effects of proposed projects.

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1012 60. Capital improvements shall be planned, constructed, and operated in a manner that provides
1013 for the logical extension of existing infrastructure, is compatible with community character,
1014 and in harmony with scenic and environmental resources.

1015 61. Private development projects shall coordinate infrastructure improvements to be consistent
1016 with public Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs).

1017 62. As part of the capital improvement planning process, the County will identify and determine
1018 the means of dedicating sites and acquiring rights-of-way for future improvement projects.

1019

1020 **Cost of Development**

1021 Another challenge the County faces is paying for growth. One possible option is assessing
1022 **IMPACT FEES** to cover the cost of capital projects associated with new development. Ideally,
1023 cost-recovery methods are tied to a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) adopted by the County.
1024 Through capital improvement planning and successful allocation of the costs associated with
1025 new growth, residents are assured an acceptable level of County services.

1026 Development projects must pay for on-site infrastructure such as wastewater, circulation and
1027 utility improvements and oftentimes are required to pay for off-site improvements, such as turn
1028 lanes and water lines. However, the only way other public facilities such as new **PARKS** and
1029 trails, sheriff's facilities, traffic signals, utility upgrades, schools, and highway improvements get
1030 paid for is through the general tax revenues. Additional from the development itself are often
1031 not enough to cover the additional costs. Instead, funds originate from bonds, special districts,
1032 impact fees, and/or dedications. Bonding and dedicated sales taxes have funded school
1033 improvements, and more recently, open space and park improvements. Special districts have
1034 funded road improvements.

1035 Coconino County has not yet chosen to assess impact fees on new construction, although it has
1036 the legal authority to do so. Such fees could be added to the building permit fee to offset a
1037 portion of the cost of the capital projects required to support the new development. Needs are
1038 determined via a study that covers the geographic area around the development. Impact fees can
1039 only cover the incremental cost of the capital facility that is attributable to each house, and fees
1040 must be spent in the area where they were collected to benefit residents. Jurisdictions around the
1041 country charge impact fees to cover costs for road improvements, police and fire stations, parks,
1042 libraries, traffic signals, and many other public services and facilities.

1043 In a rural county where few permits are issued in any given area, it is difficult to implement an
1044 impact fee program. Impact fees have been discussed for the Doney Park area to improve roads
1045 and parks; however, because few permits are issued there, the fees would pay for a very small
1046 percentage of the improvements. Another issue is that impact fees can only pay for

1047 improvements related to new development, not existing deficiencies, and the connection between
1048 improvements and development is not always clear. Further study is required to determine the
1049 feasibility of impact fees and other sources of revenue for future capital improvements.

1050
1051 **Goal:** Ensure every new development pays its fair share of costs associated with that
1052 development.

1053 **Policies**

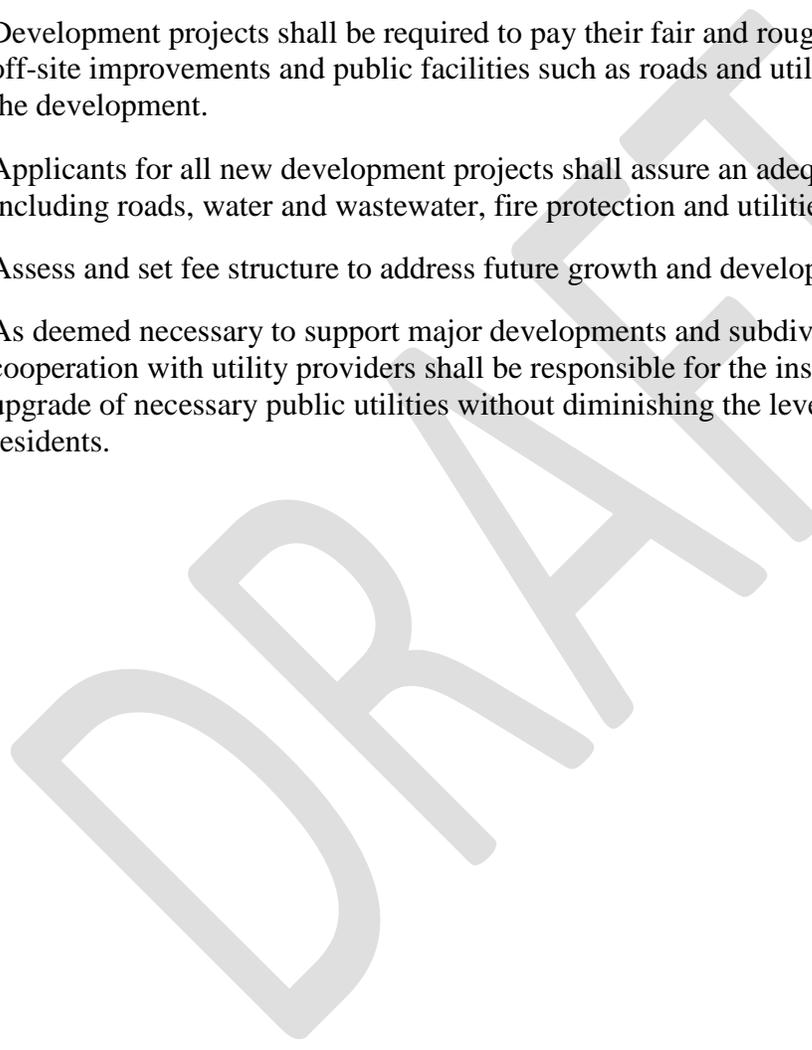
1054 63. Development projects shall be required to pay their fair and roughly proportional share for
1055 off-site improvements and public facilities such as roads and utilities necessary to support
1056 the development.

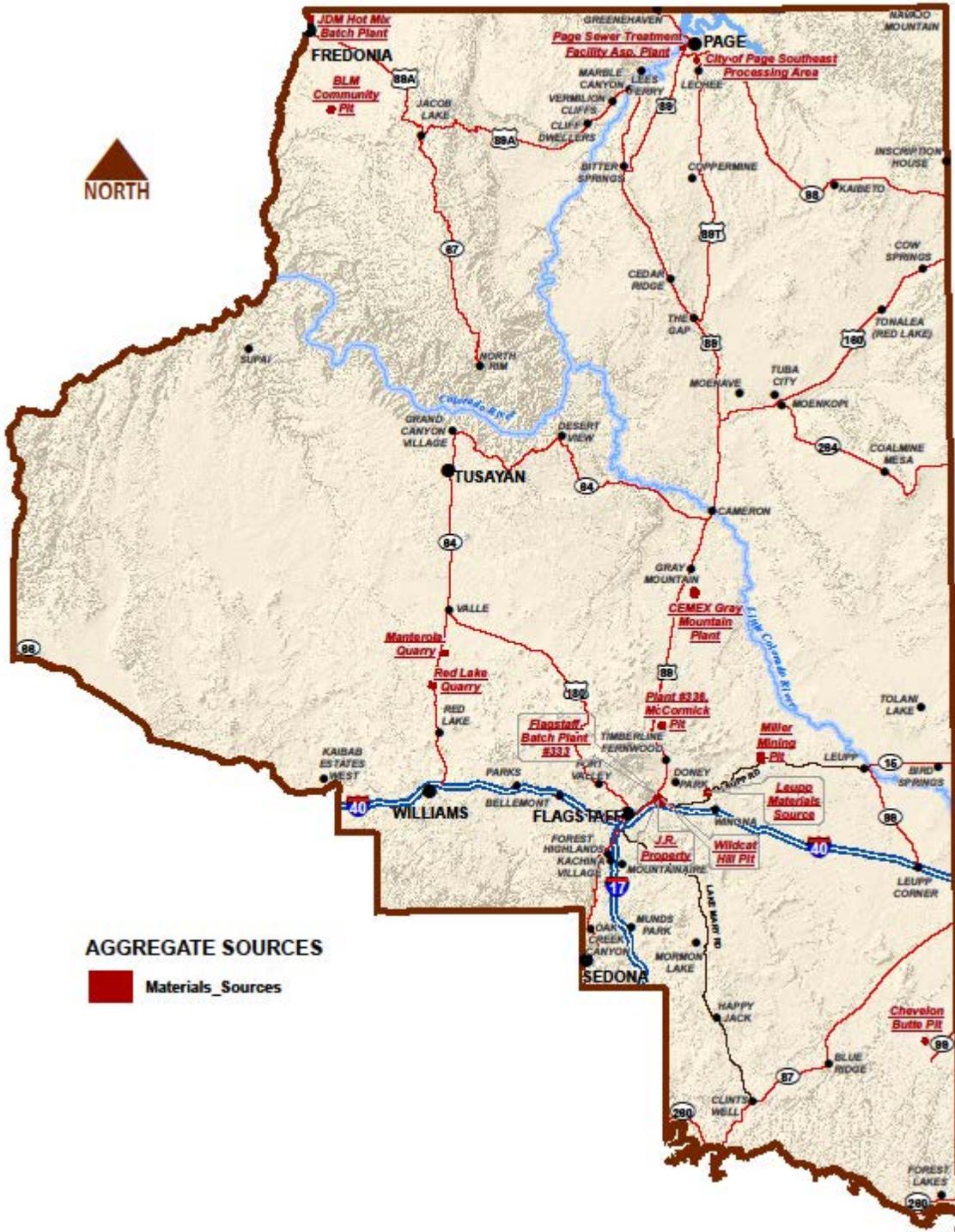
1057 64. Applicants for all new development projects shall assure an adequate level of services
1058 including roads, water and wastewater, fire protection and utilities.

1059 65. Assess and set fee structure to address future growth and development projects.

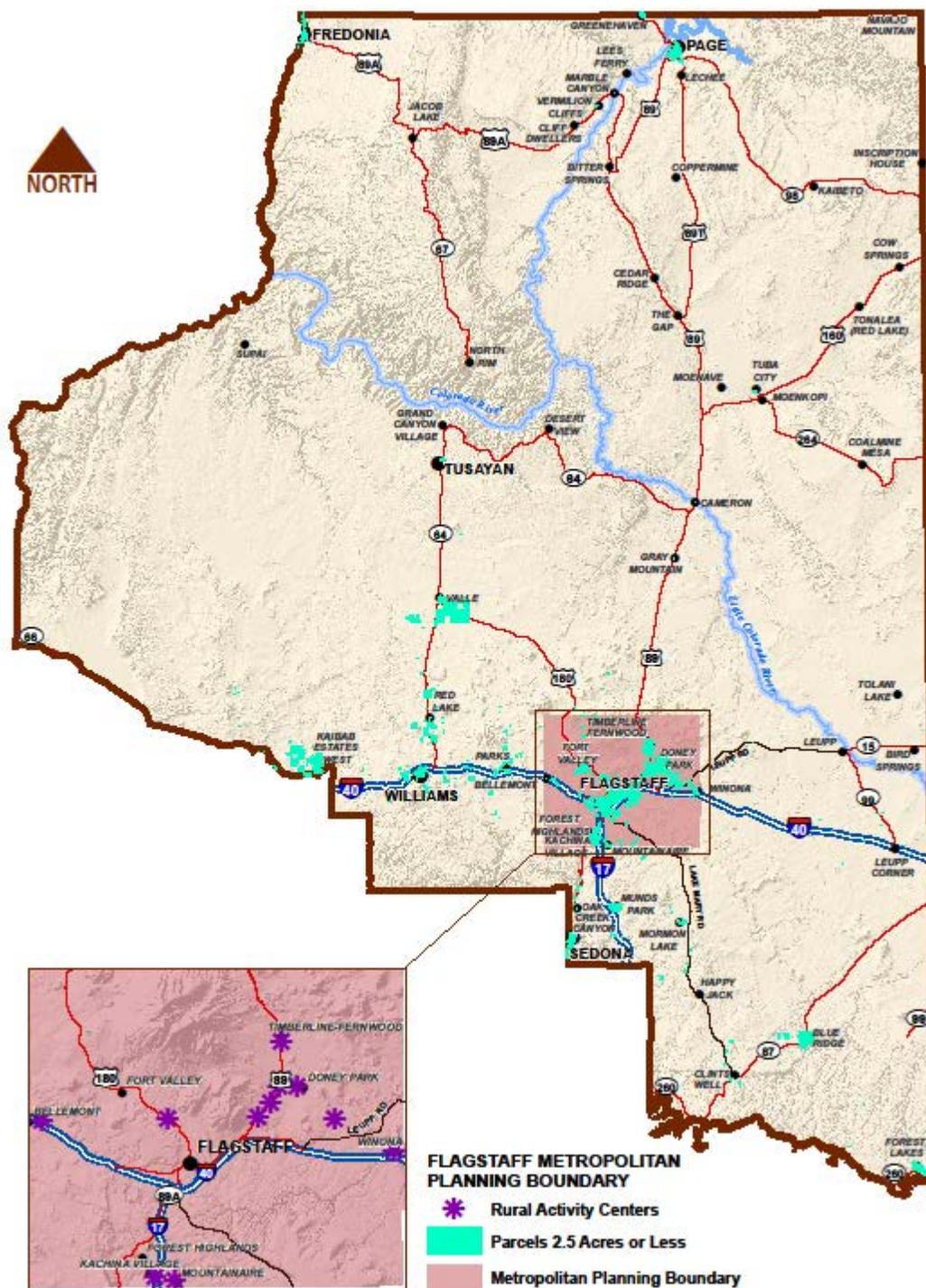
1060 66. As deemed necessary to support major developments and subdivisions, developers in
1061 cooperation with utility providers shall be responsible for the installation, construction, or
1062 upgrade of necessary public utilities without diminishing the level of service to existing
1063 residents.

1064





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