

Defining Moments:

The Evolution of Conservation and Land Use Planning in Pima County



View of the Coyote Mountains from the County's Diamond Bell Ranch. Photo by Brian Powell.

For the last 10 years, a transformation has played out in slow motion in Pima County. It is now 2010, and many of those who will continue to benefit from this change have not yet been born. The contentious debate over urban sprawl that went on for roughly 40 years and polarized developers and environmentalists, has largely dissipated, and a degree of collaboration between both sides has emerged that had not been seen before. Both sides are very much active and aware of their different objectives, but more and more we see efforts made to focus on where these objectives overlap. The concerns over urban sprawl have not disappeared, but where once an "anything goes" attitude prevailed, new policies emerged to create conceptual boundaries that now define where and how growth should occur. Growth continues in Pima County, slowed considerably by economic recession, but now guided by the new awareness that arrived with the county's adoption in 2001 of what has come to be one of the nation's most comprehensive conservation and land use planning efforts - the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP).

A Growing Conservation Ethic at the National and Local Levels

Preserving and enhancing the health of natural resources is by no means a new concept for Pima County. Indeed, as early as 1929, just 17 years after statehood, the County leased 29,988 acres of prime Sonoran Desert habitat, which was federal land at the time, to create Tucson Mountain Park. Eighty years later, that visionary decision by the Pima County Board of Supervisors continues to influence development in or near the Tucson Mountains.

The creation of Tucson Mountain Park was the first significant local expression of a conservation ethic that had been growing in popularity throughout the United States since the latter part of the 19th century. By the turn of the

20th century, the European model of land use and belief that nature was to be used to serve the practical needs of people, began to give way to a new way of thinking. The new model was a hybrid representing on the one hand the utilitarian thinking of Gifford Pinchot, the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, and on the other the passionate preservationist views of John Muir. Pinchot believed in multiple uses of forests, such as timber harvesting, cattle grazing, camping and hunting, but with those uses managed to sustain the health of the forests for generations to come. Muir agreed that those activities were appropriate in some places, but also maintained that some natural areas were so extraordinarily beautiful and unique that they needed to be set aside as parks that could be enjoyed by future generations. Pinchot was one of the earliest advocates for a policy of sustainable use of the land. In 1909, he wrote:

“We are prosperous because our forefathers bequeathed to us a land of marvelous resources still unexhausted. Shall we conserve those resources, and in our turn transmit them, still unexhausted, to our descendants? Unless we do, those who come after us will have to pay the price of misery, degradation, and failure for the progress and prosperity of our day. When the natural resources of any nation become exhausted, disaster and decay in every department of national life follow as a matter of course. Therefore the conservation of natural resources is the basis, and the only permanent basis, of national success. There are other conditions, but this one lies at the foundation.”

Between 1901 and 1909, President Theodore Roosevelt, an avid outdoorsman and conservationist, used the executive pen to convert the philosophies of Muir and Pinchot (his friend and confidante) into the most far reaching system of national forests and national parks ever created in the nation’s history. He established the Forest Service as a separate bureau of the Department of Agriculture in 1905. During his tenure, nearly 200 million acres were added to the national forest system, including the 1.7 million-acre Coronado National Forest in 1908, roughly three times the acreage set aside in all previous years. He created five national parks and the Grand Canyon National Monument, which became a national park in 1919.

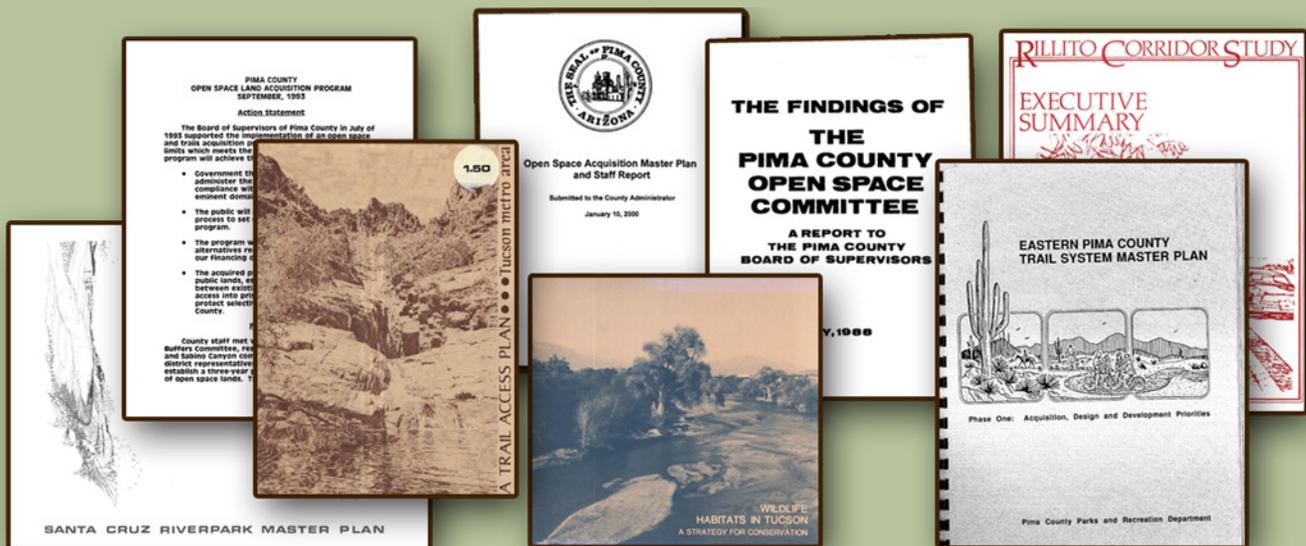
Clearly, the interest in preservation of the natural landscape that was building in Arizona, and especially in Pima County during the 1920’s, evolved from the sustainable land use ethic of advocates like Muir, Pinchot, Roosevelt and, closer to home, the forester and wilderness advocate Aldo Leopold.

Leopold joined the Forest Service in 1909 and immediately was assigned to the Apache National Forest. He became intimately familiar with the area around Escudilla Mountain, north of Alpine, Arizona, and the vast pine and spruce forests that now are protected as the Blue Range Primitive Area in eastern Arizona and Western New Mexico. Widely known for his naturalist writing and especially for his book, A Sand County Almanac, Leopold proposed and helped establish the first officially designated wilderness area in the United States, the Gila National Wilderness, in New Mexico.

It was individuals like Leopold who may have influenced the way some Tucson and Pima County residents began thinking about the desert and mountains of Southern Arizona. For decades, the County has been acquiring land for flood control projects, park expansion and other purposes. But it was not until the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) that the County developed an informed approach to land conservation.

New Direction for Pima County

The SDCP is a far-reaching concept that threw the County to the forefront of regional conservation planning. While the Plan’s beginnings date back to the Federal government’s listing of the Cactus ferruginous pygmy owl as an endangered species in 1998, this effort soon evolved into a much larger concept. The SDCP effectively calls for the protection of our historic and cultural resources, working ranch landscapes, biodiversity, mountain parks, scarce desert riparian areas and water resources. As a whole, however, the Plan seeks to balance the community’s sense of place with the conservation of important cultural and natural resources, while fostering economic and sustainable growth.



Prior to the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan several other nature based planning efforts helped to shape the reserve system in Pima County today. A list of some of these reports dating back to 1976 is included in the Appendix.

The County early on decided that a plan of this scale must be long-lived and effective. It must also be based on fact, the best science available, and enjoy broad community support. After extensive public and expert participation, a steering committee of over 80 members made up of diverse interests supported a science driven plan that would ultimately delineate areas suitable for conservation and areas suitable for development. A cornerstone element of the Plan is the Maeveen Marie Behan Conservation Lands System which, in 2001, was incorporated into the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The marriage between of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan and the Conservation Lands System produced a "blueprint" that guides future growth and conservation actions.

To understand how we arrived at this juncture, we must first know where we have been.

The Growth Debates

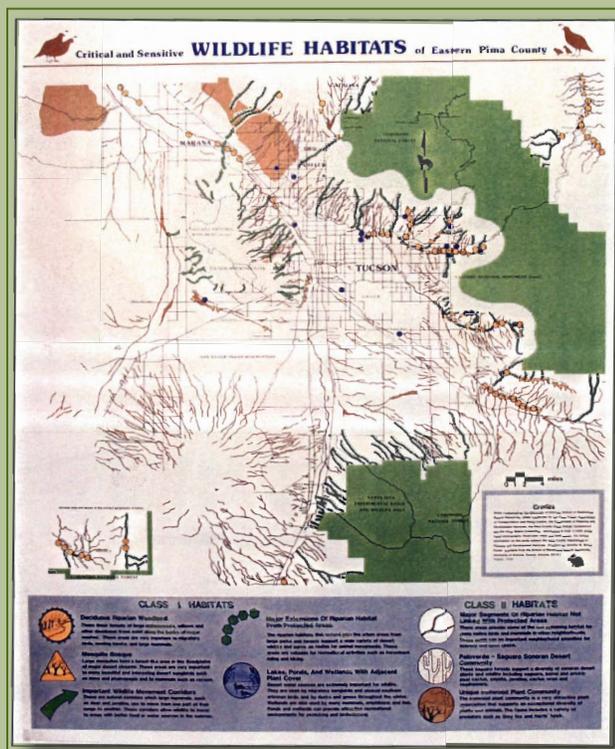
Many years ago, Frank Lloyd Wright declared, "If you don't want to live in a city pick a spot ten miles beyond its outermost limits and then go 50 miles further." Hardly anybody had heard that observation fifty years ago, and yet the impulse that prompted it was clearly reflected in the growth debates that played out in Pima County beginning in

the 1970s. The legacy of those debates is the awareness that the kind of sprawl Wright hinted at could be prevented by acknowledging that some places in our environment should be protected or excluded from man-made development.

The SDCP and Pima County's successful conservation acquisition programs evolved from a series of community debates in the late 1960s and 1970s over the shape and intensity of growth in Tucson and eastern Pima County. Pima County residents had been watching large tracts of Sonoran desert bulldozed to make way for new housing development. However, the boom years for the building industry coincided with an increasing public awareness that the area's natural landscape was its greatest asset from an aesthetic, scientific and economic standpoint. To a degree that alarmed many, that natural landscape was rapidly being converted to suburban housing and shopping centers. The debates were part of long-time growing divisions between developers and builders and others in the business community on the one hand and environmentalists on the other.

Developers saw restrictive land use and zoning codes as violations of private property rights and an impediment to economic success; environmentalists saw the absence of such controls as a recipe for the irreversible destruction of the Sonoran desert. Conservationists and their associates argued that urban sprawl would imperil the area's long-term economic success, rather than enhance it, by eradicating the natural amenities that had made Tucson a unique and popular destination for travelers. The iconoclastic writer Edward Abbey, among other critics, pointed to burgeoning Phoenix as the perfect example of excessive and insensitive growth. Phoenix was widely accepted as exactly what most Tucsonans did not want to become.

Abbey lived in Tucson during the boom years in the sixties and seventies and lamented its growth in a polemic published in the New York Times in 1976. After listing all the reasons why "Nobody in his right mind would want to live here," he says of the burgeoning population: "But all the same they keep coming. The growth figures would shock even a banker. Tucson has grown from a population of 45,000 (counting dogs) in 1950 to an estimated 332,000 today." At the time, nearly three-quarters of Arizona's population was concentrated in Tucson and Phoenix. "If present patterns continue," he wrote in 1976, "the two will become one in the near future. If the water holds out." The headline on the article, "The BLOB Comes to Arizona," played off the title of an old horror movie about an amoeba that escapes from a laboratory and keeps growing until it threatens to swallow the planet. The metaphor was not lost on readers in Tucson.



Affectionately referred to as the "bunny map", this 1986 map advocated for protection of critical and sensitive wildlife habitats as part of regional planning. Bill Shaw, University of Arizona School of Renewable Resources.

Awareness and Frustration

In a sense, the frustrations of all factions testified to the failure of attempts during the previous three decades to develop a cohesive vision of how the Tucson region should plan for its future. Numerous studies had been completed but none was implemented across all jurisdictions. As County Administrator Chuck Huckelberry wrote in a memorandum to the Board of Supervisors on January 31, 2000, "While the early initiatives, and almost each effort since the 1920s, have demonstrated awareness of the natural and economic resource issues at stake, few plans have been implemented, and few implemented plans have been effective tools for guiding population growth in a rational manner that protects the resource base."

Some of the battles of the late 1960s and early 1970s emerged as defining moments, precipitating events that would have a lasting impact both on the area's physical appearance and on the trajectory that future policy-making would follow. Some of the conflicts were triggered by transportation proposals and others by new housing and commercial developments. The flash point in all cases was a concern over the effects of urban sprawl. The population of metropolitan Tucson had grown at an alarming rate, nearly doubling every ten years between 1940 and 1970, igniting fears among those already here that without controls, Tucson would inevitably become like one of the congested cities they had left behind. The 1940 U.S. census listed the Tucson metropolitan area with a population of 58,000. By 1970, it was up to 323,000, a trend that would continue through the year 2000, with a population of 486,600, making it the 30th largest city in the country, at the time.

The growth outpaced local government's ability, or in some cases the desire, to finance or construct needed infrastructure. Some who advocated controlled growth subscribed to the speculative belief that, "If you don't build it, they will not come." The population of the metropolitan area burgeoned nonetheless.

Traffic congestion was among the more obvious problems associated with such rapid growth, and attempts to deal with it were another significant flashpoint for controversy. One of the most volatile transportation plans emerged in 1968, a time when local planners were studying ways to lessen congestion by redistributing vehicular traffic along three expressways that would form a loop around the periphery of the metropolitan area.

The most controversial of these proposals involved the Catalina Express way, a northward extension of Campbell Avenue from the vicinity of the University of Arizona through the Catalina Foothills to Oracle Road, ultimately linking to the Florence Highway at Oracle Junction. The idea triggered opposition from a broad coalition of residents. When the County Planning and Zoning Department held a hearing on the issue in the now defunct Pioneer Hotel in 1970, roughly 1,000 residents showed up, but only three spoke in favor of it. The plan was consequently discarded. In retrospect, the organizational effectiveness of this grassroots effort may be seen as the birth of the controlled growth movement in Tucson.

The coalition that had defeated the Catalina Express way expanded and re-emerged in 1972 as the prime mover in a larger controversy over a parcel of foothills land known at the time as Rancho Romero. Developer John Ratliff proposed the creation of a satellite community on 4,300 acres along Canada del Oro Wash, east of Oracle Road in the foothills of the Santa Catalina Mountains. Plans called for that community to reach a population of 17,000.

The proposal set off an explosive debate over the effects of urban sprawl. Just as residents and political leaders had coalesced in the 1960s to protect the lush desert of the Tucson Mountains when the federal government threatened to re-open the area to mining, so they did again in the 1970s over the rezoning application that would have permitted a satellite community at Rancho Romero. The rezoning request was denied by the Board of Supervisors. The controversy took a series of complicated land swaps and roughly 10 years to play out, but the end result was that instead of being used for a new suburb, the land on the east side of Oracle Road was dedicated in 1983 as Catalina State Park and the land west of the park eventually became the modern suburb of Rancho Vistoso. Both conflicts reflected a fundamental reality, namely that sense of place is an important aspect of Pima County's persona. By and large, residents preferred a city that was integrated with the natural landscape, and not divorced from it. They expressed this preference in the candidates they elected to public office,

State's first 'great urban park' opens

By Steve Williams
The Arizona Daily Star

MAY 26 1983

Gov. Bruce Babbitt praised the long-awaited Catalina State Park as Arizona's first "great urban park" during dedication ceremonies yesterday.

"This is the first time the State Parks Board has established a large open space right in the path of urban development," the governor told about 100 people who attended the ceremonies in the park north of Tucson.

The effort to establish the 5,500-acre preserve on the western edge of the Santa Catalina Mountains was born during a fight to block a housing development on the land a decade ago.

Duane Miller, chairman of the Parks Board, said the number of state parks has grown from five to 18 since he joined the board in 1965. "As far as making a park a reality goes, Catalina was probably the most difficult one."

★ An improved education system is only hole in state's economic-growth plan, Babbitt says. Page 6B.

A group of citizens called the Catalina Park Coalition formed 10 years ago yesterday to block a proposed housing development on the land and seek establishment of the park.

A 1973 petition drive against the development drew 3,700 signatures, and the Pima County Board of Supervisors denied rezoning for the development. Voters approved a \$4.5 million bond issue in 1974 to enable the county to buy the land and trade it with the state so the park could be established.

The land exchange was completed in February 1981, and Babbitt said, "Catalina State Park is, for all practical purposes, a reality." After more than two years of delays because of state Parks Department budget cuts, the park did become a reality yesterday.

The new state park includes 55 camping spaces, 88 picnic tables and grills, water and sewage systems and more than four miles of paved roads. The park, which is east of the Tucson-Florence Highway 14 miles north of Tucson, also provides public access to the Romero Canyon trail in the adjoining Coronado National Forest.

Steve Plevel, Catalina district ranger for the Coronado National Forest, said after the ceremonies that the Southern Arizona Hiking Club is building a two-mile trail under Forest Service supervision to connect the Sutherland Ridge trail with the Romero Canyon trail.

Admission to the park for Arizona residents is \$2 per vehicle for day use and \$3 a night for camping. Fees for out-of-state residents are \$3 for day use and \$4 a night for camping. Annual day-use permits are \$20 for state residents and \$30 for non-residents.

Backpackers may leave their cars at the Romero Canyon trailhead for \$1 a night.

in the bond elections that provided funds for purchasing important natural areas and in the community activism that surfaced over issues like the Tucson Mountains mining and the Rancho Romero development.

Rancho Romero: The Aftermath

Perhaps the most significant effect of the Rancho Romero conflict was the interest and support garnered among the electorate and the community of using public money to purchase private land for conservation. In 1974, as a direct result of the Rancho Romero controversy, the County held its first bond election in which voters authorized \$4.5 million to purchase land for conservation, \$3.8 million of which was used to buy 2,071 acres of Rancho Romero and 583 acres of the Rail N Ranch. In addition, approximately \$1 million in bonds went for the expansion of Tucson Mountain Park. The Rancho Romero land purchased by the County eventually was deeded to the State for creation of Catalina State Park, in exchange for which the State gave the County land of equal value contiguous to the Pima County Fairgrounds on Rita Road. As noted earlier, Ratliff was then permitted to develop the satellite community that today is Rancho Vistoso, west of Oracle Road.

The 1974 bond election was a landmark in Pima County history. Its success was a clear indication that the appeal of the conservation ethic had broadened across

socio-economic boundaries. It laid the foundation for bond elections in 1986, 1997 and 2004 that generated over \$200 million for the development and expansion of parks, the purchase of several large ranches, the protection of riparian areas and the creation of a variety of flood control and watershed enhancement projects, all of which contributed to the area inventory of undeveloped lands surrounding the metropolitan Tucson region. In addition, the use of bonds redirected growth.

Plan or Be Planned: Regional Planning in the Tucson Metropolitan Area

Like most communities across the country, Pima County had a variety of planning documents prior to the 1990s that defined policies governing natural resources, residential and commercial development and historical and cultural features. However, true regional planning has been elusive.

Regional planning is a community's attempt to create a habitable environment based on local values, the carrying capacity of natural resources and the economic realities associated with infrastructure expansion. The term suggests that a planned future is preferable to haphazard and unregulated growth, especially in a region where water is in limited supply. Regional planning as a concept also embodies considerable optimism since it implies that some



Past landuse planning and visioning documents.

level of consensus is achievable and that implementation of a rational plan for efficient and effective growth is possible. However, despite public interest in growth issues and various attempts at regional planning, such optimism was only minimally rewarded until the development of Pima County's Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP) at the turn of the 21st century. And even though that plan had a regional outlook and widespread citizen participation, it was not in the strict sense of the term a regional plan because it lacked the full participation of all jurisdictions in Pima County. It was only recently that the City of Tucson and Town of Oro Valley adopted a major portion of the Plan, the County's Conservation Lands System, but only for annexations. Growth management is generally defined as a coordinated set of regulations and policies that guide the location, intensity, design, and timing of development. Unlike traditional land use regulations, such as zoning and subdivision review, growth management often begins with the adoption of policies that may define urban boundaries or infrastructure service areas. Growth management emphasizes the element of timing so that locations for expansion are known and phased infrastructure plans for roads, sewer lines and other utilities, are in place. It defines an urban form, anticipating growth rather than reacting to it.

First Planning Efforts

Land use planning for the Tucson area can be traced back to August 1931 when the Pima County Board of Supervisors and the Tucson City Council hired Ernest P. Goodrich of New York City to assess the regional planning needs of the Tucson metropolitan area, which was already bristling with activity. Goodrich's 1932 report cited among other liabilities "The lack of control of the urban development... the spreading of the housing development over unnecessarily large areas and the lack of control outside" the Tucson city limits. Subsequently, fifteen local citizens united in the late 1930s and created Tucson Regional Plan Inc. to promote regional planning and to encourage the development of a comprehensive, long-range plan. In early 1940, the group contracted with the prominent planning consultant, Ladislav Segoe, of Cincinnati, to examine existing conditions in the Tucson area and create a regional plan. At the time, Segoe was providing planning and zoning assistance to some 50 urban areas across the nation. During the era when the Great Depression was reshaping the nation's social and economic landscape, Segoe was already widely respected as chairman of the committee that prepared the first federal document clearly describing the historic transformation of the United States from a predominantly rural to an urban society.

The Landmark Segoe Plan

Segoe's Regional Plan was transformed into a Comprehensive Plan for the Tucson region and completed in 1943. Two years later, the Tucson City Council adopted three of its sections (Plan for Thoroughfares, Plan for Railroad facilities and Grade Separation and Plan for Public and Semipublic Buildings). Three other sections were never adopted, though they were revisited in the early 1950s.

Segoe's analysis of the Tucson region and the resulting recommendations were perceptive, far-reaching, and exhaustive. However, the Arizona Legislature at that time had not yet given counties any planning authority. In 1949 a state enabling act permitted counties to plan and zone the same as cities, allowing for creation of a county planning and zoning commission. In 1952, the first county zoning code was adopted, and area or zoning plans such as the Rincon and Catalina Foothills plans were developed in the late 1950's, important attempts to shape unincorporated areas but still not a regional plan.

Segoe's plan, conceived and sponsored by a private organization, provided the impetus that led to public planning agencies in Tucson.

In 1975, thirty-five years after he began work on his regional plan, Segoe returned to Tucson, and in an interview with the Tucson Daily Citizen noted, "The idea was to prevent scattering and sprawl over the urban area." Ironically, six decades after the plan was completed, "scattering and sprawl" were widespread and remained a major concern of local planners and many residents.

From Segoe to GLUP

In 1950, subsequent to the Segoe Plan, the Tucson Urban Land Use Study was developed which provided the foundation for the General Land Use Plan (GLUP). The GLUP was adopted in 1960, and projected a population of 1.4 million by the year 2000 including significant development of Avra Valley. Large subdivisions, located in today's Rincon Valley and Oro Valley areas, were already beginning to define the geographic extent of the urban area. Together with an accumulation of area, community, neighborhood, and zoning plans, the GLUP served as the long range land use plan for unincorporated Pima County for many years.

During the 1970's, a major effort to update and expand on the GLUP was made jointly by the City of Tucson, Pima County, South Tucson and the Pima Association of Governments (PAG). The draft 1975 Comprehensive Plan took three years to prepare. The process provided an opportunity for community dialogue on issues germane to comprehensive planning. However, the draft document, which was never finalized, proposed policies that ignited

extraordinary controversy. Some factions criticized it as “social engineering.” Business interests saw it as far too restrictive. Environmentalists saw it as a continuation of pro-growth policies. Ultimately, the plan failed to get adopted because it represented too great a change from what different groups perceived the status quo to be. The City of Tucson eventually adopted a subset of the full document as its general plan, but its terms were applicable only within city limits and hence did not constitute a regional plan.

The failure of the 1975 plan prompted some former members of Tucson Regional Plan Inc. to create a new group, Tucson Tomorrow. That group released a broad visioning document in 1982 calling for a new City-County regional land use plan and recommending that new development be planned on the basis of available infrastructure.

The Search for Goals Continues

In 1983, Tucson Tomorrow spawned another private, non-profit group called “Goals for Tucson,” which identified local goals and priorities. The following year, a panel comprised of members of the Urban Land Institute and the American Institute of Architects produced an urban design report that represented an independent, outside perspective on metropolitan Tucson, its environment and urban setting. The report’s recommendations included an increased importance attributed to city and county planning and zoning, encouragement of “mixed-use activity nodes” to bring residential uses closer to employment centers and further protection of dry washes, rivers, and floodplains, concepts that eventually became codified in County regulations. Echoing the Segoe report of 1943, the 1983 report once more stressed the need for a comprehensive, regional perspective to guide land use. Another report that identifies urban form policies and actions was produced by the Urban Design Commission and adopted in principle by the Board of Supervisors.

In 1985, the Board of Supervisors appointed an Open Space Committee to inventory and classify open space and recommend methods of preservation, including informing the Comprehensive Plan. Draft findings emphasized a network of dedicated and linked open space, urban open space corridors, and the protection of public preserves. That same year, the Board of Supervisors formed a comprehensive plan working committee to achieve a regional perspective on goals, objectives and policies. The Regional Vision of Eastern Pima County and several individual vision statements were early results of the committee’s efforts but it was, once again, the work of one jurisdiction. Pima County’s vision statement is defined by the Conceptual Land Use Element (CLUE) which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1989. The

CLUE document supplemented the GLUP and provided the goals for the development of the Comprehensive Plan that was adopted in 1992 by the Board of Supervisors. It was not, strictly speaking, a regional planning effort but a document that provided the framework for development in unincorporated areas of one jurisdiction, namely Pima County.

Defining Good Growth

The concepts of regional planning and growth management have evolved over time. The first wave of growth management programs addressed the concern of how much growth would be allowed. The second wave shifted to where and when growth should be permitted, and who would pay for it. The third and current trend is to emphasize the type of growth, with an increasing emphasis on quality development and livable neighborhoods and communities.

It is noteworthy that on June 15, 2009, a technical paper prepared as part of a City/County Water and Wastewater Study included recommendations that were not significantly different from those contained in Segoe’s Comprehensive Plan from the 1940s or the Urban Land Institute Report of 1983.

The 2009 study stated that, “Encouraging good design is the beginning of good urban form, and so suggested options that should be considered during future growth and development discussions organized by the following [partial list of] design issues: designate target growth areas, encourage residential uses within the urban core, concentrate development in regional and town centers, plus transit corridors and station areas.

Those findings are essentially a condensation of the series of both sweeping and highly detailed reports issued as part of Segoe’s Comprehensive Plan, developed approximately seventy years ago. One of its recommendations, however, was remarkably different from anything suggested in the Segoe report. The Water/Wastewater study suggested that, ultimately, the only way to make sure that lands are not developed is for the government to purchase them. In effect, the study suggests that purchasing lands for conservation represents a responsible form of regional planning.

Pima County’s Conceptual Land Use Element of 1989 represented the beginning of what evolved into the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1992. A Comprehensive Plan, however, is a blueprint for one entity, a town, city or county and is not regional in its scope or implementation. Indeed, the only successful regional planning effort in recent years has been the creation of the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA), a 20 year plan for transportation improvements financed by a 1/2

cent sales tax. After a series of failed attempts to create a regional transportation plan, voters approved the RTA and sales tax in 2006. After its approval, there was a sense of optimism in regard to the future of regional planning and partnerships.

Current Efforts

Today, there is another effort underway - Imagine Greater Tucson. The difference between this effort and other past efforts is that this is a community driven effort. This effort grew out of the Tucson Regional Town Hall held in May 2007, which saw the participation of over 150 community leaders. Discussions centered on the major challenges facing our region and possible opportunities that this community can develop. The Town Hall was then followed by the Urban Land Institute's Crafting Tomorrow's Built Environment forum held in December 2008, in which the major topic was the need for local jurisdictions to

think regionally regarding water and growth. This event was attended by more than 350 community participants, including leaders from the local jurisdictions. Imagine Greater Tucson (IGT) began to organize in early 2009 and took many of the past efforts' key information and methods to develop a community-driven effort. Organizers examined a myriad of regional visioning exercises in the United States and Canada to examine what worked and what didn't and why. With a broad array of support, and a mixture of public, private and non-profit funding, IGT will incorporate a 3-phased approach, beginning with identifying the public's shared values, followed by developing a vision for our region's future based on our community's shared values, and moving into the implementation phase and what is needed to achieve true regional planning. A major difference in this effort is that the implementation phase is being thought through from the beginning. At this writing, the project is in the first of the three planned phases. Time will tell if this approach will prove effective.

