



General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

Minutes

Location: City of Mesa Lower Level Council Chambers
57 E. 1st Street

Date: July 24th, 2023 Time: 4:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ron Williams, Chair
Scott Thomas, Vice-Chair
Sarah Frechette
Megan Neal
Ivonne Garcia Rodriguez
Jocelyn Skogebo

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jessica Sarkissian

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeff Robbins
Rachel Nettles
Kellie Rorex
Brett Hanlon

GUESTS:

Terri Hogan, Logan Simpson
Megan Moore, Logan Simpson

1. Call meeting to order.

Chairperson Williams called the meeting to order at 4:30 pm.

2. Approval of the minutes from the May 8, 2023, General Plan Advisory Committee meeting.

Chairperson Williams called for the approval of minutes from the May 8, 2023, meeting. Committee Member Frechette motioned, and Committee Member Neal seconded the motion. Upon tabulation of the votes, it showed:

AYES: Williams, Frechette, Neal, Skogebo

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Thomas, Garcia Rodriguez, Sarkissian

3. Hear a presentation and discuss preliminary public engagement results from the Mesa Urban Labs.

Chairperson Williams welcomed everyone, and stated Mr. Robbins and Ms. Nettles would provide information on what they been doing and talk about the engagement to date.

Mr. Robbins introduced himself and the Planning assistant director, Rachel Nettles. Ms. Nettles described the meeting agenda which included engagement to date, urban labs interim results, and next steps.

Mr. Robbins explained that the city is in the Choices and Priorities phase of the project. There is a City Council presentation coming up in August. In addition, the City is engaging with the youth and through a youth art contest. The contest asks youth what they want Mesa to become in the future. This is great way to participate with the youth and have them engage with the General Plan. The City been reaching out to schools art clubs and student councils to engage with them and ask for participation. Mr. Robbins recognized Senior Planner, Kellie Rorex for her work with this youth engagement project. Mr. Robbins mentioned that there is another youth engagement partnership that will be coming soon with Mesa Public Schools and Arizona State University and he would send an email to the Advisory Committee members at a future date.

The City has completed five Urban Lab Workshops and the final Urban Lab Workshop is coming up on Wednesday, July 26th at Dobson Ranch. The total attendance from all five workshops have been one hundred and thirty-six people. Mr. Robbins recognized that the numbers are a fraction of Mesa's population and said that we would love to have more people participate; however, it is summertime and extremely hot outside. For all Tomorrow's Mesa events, including Transportation and Transit Master Plans, there has been over 15,000 engagements from citizens. There is also a survey going out soon either by the end of this week or next week. Mr. Robbins told the Committee he would love to hear their feedback on the survey. Finally, there has been ten committee meetings in the community.

4. Hear a presentation and discuss the draft Future Land Use Map.

Ms. Nettles described the Future Land Use Map and Designations and background on the strategies that are being used. She also mentioned that a land use map is required in the 2050 General Plan by state statute. The City's approach to evaluating appropriate land uses is a little different than the 2040 General Plan. There are two maps that work in concert. The first the Future Land Use Map which dictates future land use locations and has character areas with zoning as well. The second is the growth strategy map that works with the Land Use Strategy Map. The Land Use Strategy Map has four strategies: grow conserve, sustain (areas to remain the same), and areas to enhance over time see them improve. Green areas on the map are conserve and the City plans to protect and reserve areas. Yellow is tied sustain and City plans to the keep those areas stable. Red, or grow, is mostly over areas that could benefit from redevelopment in the City. Finally, purple is the enhance strategy and these areas are generally in good condition but are encouraged to reuse or develop more.

The use of both maps, Land Use Strategy Map and Future Land Use Designation Map, will help staff determine if a proposed development complies with the General Plan. Ms. Nettles stated

Mr. Robbins will be asking for feedback with the future land use designations, and it will be consistent with zoning. It will also consider what needs to be in the future as well, not just what exists today. The future land use designations must remain compatible to existing zoning. There can be a minor general plan amendment to change the zoning, but we want to build in flexibility so City staff can adapt to unforeseen needs over the next 10 years.

Committee member Garcia Rodriguez asked if the mall next to Mesa Community College (Fiesta Mall) would be redevelopment and wanted to know if it would be a regional center? If so, would the City have to change the map? Staff said they would ask Economic Development what the intent is because we are not familiar with the property owners intent for that land. Staff would use the growth strategy map to ensure that whatever is proposed is consistent. Staff also said the mall would have to be consistent with other policies as well.

Mr. Robbins stated that the City can't foresee everything, and this plan allows for flexibility.

Chair Williams asked Staff if they have experienced a minor general amendment and what was the duration of it? Staff stated it takes about 4 to 6 months and major amendments are processed only once per year and the process is longer.

Committee member Neal asked what is an example of a regional center? Staff responded that Fiesta and Riverview would be examples a regional center.

Committee member Garcia Rodriguez asked about growth in east Mesa. She mentioned that she was worried about tall buildings being placed next to shorter buildings. Staff responded and told her that growth is incremental and that there may be circumstances where one area grows denser before its neighboring area grows. Ms. Nettles mentioned that land uses intentionally step down gradually in intensity and GPAC should look at this when reviewing how the City develops the map and there should generally be separation between more intense uses and less intense uses.

Ms. Nettles walked through the Future Land Use Designations and gave the description of each and what residents have said thus far. Ms. Nettles spoke about Rural Residential which is rural area with a large lot and single-family resident with livestock. A good example of this would be Lehi. Mr. Robbins stated he asked a few rural neighborhoods about their opinion and the residents want to keep the land spread out and have rural street network. For example, sidewalks should be gravel only with ample right-of-way so residents can ride their horses.

Staff moved on to speak about the Traditional Residential Land Use which has small to medium lots with detached single-family lot and residential and commercial would generally be located on the outside of the neighborhoods.

Ms. Nettles spoke about Mixed Residential Land Use which integrates housing with schools, office, and green spaces. Mr. Robbins stated residents want the ability to walk to other neighborhoods and business with shaded walkways.

Ms. Nettles discussed that Neighborhood Center is small scale commercial and close to home and would be low intensity, everyday use commercial. Mr. Robbins stated residents want these commercial areas to be closer to home and are intended to be within walking distance when possible, but also accessible by car.

Urban Residential is the next land use. This land use is the highest scale and is higher density like downtown with multiple housing types and there is usually access to transportation options. Mr. Robbins stated this is a mixed-use center where someone can grab dry cleaning and then walk home. This is a land use designed to be walkable.

Ms. Nettles spoke about the Regional Center Land Use which is a regional draw and the old Fiesta Mall site could become this one day. This land use is a very high density. Mr. Robbins stated that residents have expressed their desire for more name-brand stores and restaurant options in Mesa.

Ms. Nettles spoke about the Regional Employment Center which is high scale business and offices. This land use would have buffers to create separation from residential neighborhoods.

Ms. Nettles and Mr. Robbins mentioned that several land uses weren't presented. These include Industrial and Urban Center and those two land uses are a mix between the Regional Center and the Neighborhood Center. Urban center has local employment and small parks that are nearby.

Committee member Frechette said that property owners have power over business and sometimes the owners make the rent too expensive. Then Committee member Frechette asked if the City has power to control who owns the land and can we control who is allowed to own the space once it is built?

Staff responded by saying it's beyond the control of the City who owns the land and has no power over the business rents. The City also has no power over the leasing agreements, but the zoning code does impact what is constructed where in the City.

Committee member Garcia Rodriguez said that the Economic Development Department should be involved. She also stated she wants to support small businesses but does not how to support small businesses and corporations who are harassing small businesses and said she wished that we don't know the answers.

Staff responded that small business must follow the zoning and regulation code. The City doesn't have authority to control business and the private land. Staff also mentioned that the City has

several programs to assist small businesses and we could possibly have a meeting with economic development to explain their role. However, the General Plan is managed by Development Services and not Economic Development.

Committee member Skogebo asked for a description of Urban Center. Staff responded that it is a mid-scale that is has commercial and medium high-density housing. Downtown Mesa would be a good example of this type of land use and staff expressed hope that over time downtown Mesa will continue to become and urban center. Mr. Robbins told the committee that he will send them digital copies of the land use descriptions so they can take their time and review the map as they go through it.

Committee member Neal asked about trails since the City doesn't have master trail plan. Staff responded that we currently do have plans for trails within the City's Bike and Pedestrian Program and the 2050 General Plan will discuss the 2050 plan, but not in as much detail. A stand-alone path plan may be a good idea for an action within the 2050 General Plan.

Committee member Neal stated that there is a need for connectivity between plans and asked if the master plans from other departments are synced with the general plan update. Staff responded and said yes, we are communicating with other city departments and plans. There is also public feedback that we are sharing with other departments too.

Committee member Garcia Rodriguez says there are extra services that she doesn't see people using. For example she doesn't see people using the bus station where she lives. She is worried about bus stops being in places that are residential areas where the citizens don't need them. Staff responded and said that they will get her connected to the Transit Department. Additionally, Staff mentioned that they can get different departments to come speak to them if they would like.

Staff concluded by showing pictures of what has been happening at the Urban Labs and general public engagement from the Mesa residents that have participated. Mr. Robbins stated this is the final week for the Urban Lab. Staffers still working on the Vision Statement and will go back to City Council in August, the next GPAC meeting is about strategies, and the next survey will be released soon. Chair Williams said email him about any questions and thanks to the staff for their presentation today.

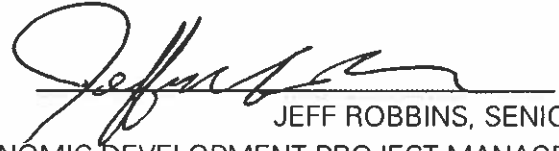
5. Items from citizens present.

Marilyn Crosby, President of Lehi Community Association, said she approved of the public outreach efforts of staff. She expressed that she feels her community voice is heard.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the General Plan Advisory Committee adjourned at 5:40 pm.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the General Plan Advisory Committee meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 24th day of July 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Robbins", is written over a horizontal line.

JEFF ROBBINS, SENIOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGER