



DATE: May 20, 2024
TO: Mesa City Council
THROUGH: Nana Appiah, Development Services Director
Mary Kopaskie-Brown, Planning Director
Rachel Nettles, Assistant Planning Director
FROM: Jeffrey Robbins, Senior Economic Development Project Manager
SUBJECT: Moving Forward Together: Tomorrow’s Mesa 2050 General Plan

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommend that the Mesa City Council approve the resolution adopting the Moving Forward Together: Tomorrow’s Mesa 2050 General Plan (2050 General Plan), subject to ratification by the voters at the November 5, 2024 general election.

In addition, the General Plan Advisory Committee and Planning and Zoning Board recommend adoption of the 2050 General Plan:

- **April 15, 2024** - General Plan Citizen Advisory Committee unanimous recommendation for adoption (5-0).
- **April 24, 2024** - Planning and Zoning Board unanimous recommendation for adoption (7-0).

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:

Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) 9-461.05 requires that each municipality adopt a comprehensive, long-range general plan for the development of the municipality. A.R.S. 9-461.06 further requires that a municipality re-adopt or adopt a new general plan every 10 years. The 2050 General Plan fulfills this requirement as Mesa’s current general plan, This is My Mesa: Mesa 2040 General Plan (Mesa 2040 General Plan), was adopted by the Mesa City Council on June 16, 2014 and ratified by voters November 4, 2014.

The 2050 General Plan is a ten-year plan with a twenty-five-year outlook. The 2050 General Plan is an expression of the community’s values and aspirations and the official policy guide for the desired physical development of the City. The 2050 General Plan guides future programs, investments, and other government activities and provides continuity for decision making throughout the next decade.

If adopted by City Council, the 2050 General Plan will appear on the November 5, 2024 General Election ballot for ratification by Mesa voters.

SUMMARY OF THE 2050 GENERAL PLAN AND EXPLANATION:

The 2050 General Plan builds on the 2040 General Plan while incorporating the City Council's Strategic Priorities, community input, and national best practices. The Plan addresses all of the elements required by state statute including, but not limited to land use, circulation and transportation, aggregate management, environmental planning, conservation, public buildings and services, open space, growth areas, water resources, energy resources, recreation, housing, and public safety.

The 2050 General Plan preparation was coordinated with several ongoing and adopted City plans and the goals and strategies of these specific plans integrate and align with the 2050 General Plan.

The 2050 General Plan includes several updates. Substantive changes from the 2040 General Plan include:

- A new organizational structure that includes: an updated Vision Statement; three Core Values: The People, The Land, The Economy; 11 Guiding Principles; and 49 Strategies.
- An updated Land Use Plan including new Placetype descriptions (called Character Areas in the 2040 General Plan), Placetype Map, Growth Strategy descriptions, and Growth Strategy Map.
 - Placetype Map and Placetype descriptions – establish 11 new Placeypes within the City. Placetype descriptions include the intent of a Placetype, permissible zoning districts, typical land uses, density thresholds, intensities thresholds, urban design characteristics, and relationships to growth strategies.
 - Growth Strategy Map and strategy descriptions expand the City's growth strategy beyond the four growth areas identified in the 2040 General Plan by applying a growth strategy to each parcel and providing guidance for their development.
- New or expanded strategies addressing emerging issues including early childhood education, preventative public safety education, attainable and high-end housing, transportation technology, placemaking, redevelopment, and leveraging technology to improve municipal operations.

The 2050 General Plan will be supported by a separate and implementable Action Plan. The Action Plan will be developed during the 2024-2025 budget process and then updated in coordination with the annual budget process as needed. The Action Plan will align with department workplans to further support the implementation of the 2050 General Plan.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public engagement was guided by a seven-member citizen committee (General Plan Advisory Committee) appointed by the City Council on October 20, 2022 and by the 2050 General Plan's Public Participation Plan adopted by City Council on January 23, 2023. Staff engaged the public through three phases of public engagement in 2023, each with its own unique online survey and in-person public outreach.

The 2050 General Plan partnered with ASU's MIX Center to develop the first public engagement strategy in the United States that incorporated immersive technology in the development of a general plan. This partnership engaged approximately 500 Mesa high school students.

Staff released the first draft of the 2050 General Plan for public review and comment on January 4, 2024 and the 2050 General Plan was available until early March 2024. The public provided input through online surveys, email, traditional mail, a digital review platform and an interactive online map.

In accordance with State law, all neighboring jurisdictions and other intergovernmental stakeholders received notice to review and comment.

In total, the project engaged residents over 14,000 times; received over 4,200 comments or input; generated 1.5 million impressions through social media; and hosted 99 meetings, events, and presentations, including two public meetings in each City Council District.

Both the General Plan Advisory Committee and Planning and Zoning Board unanimously recommended adoption of the 2050 General Plan to City Council. Staff received input from the General Plan Advisory Committee on March 25, 2024 and revised the 2050 General Plan before their final recommendation on April 15, 2024. The Planning and Zoning Board received a presentation on the Plan on January 10th, February 14th, February 28th, March 27th. The Planning and Zoning Board held two public hearings on April 22nd and April 24th. At the April 24th meeting, the Planning and Zoning Board made their final recommendation.