



General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

Minutes

Location: The Studios at Mesa City Center
59 E. 1st Street

Date: April 15th, 2024 Time: 4:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Scott Thomas, Vice-Chair
Megan Neal
Ivonne Garcia Rodriguez
Jessica Sarkissian
Jocelyn Skogebo

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Jeff Robbins
Rachel Nettles
Ashley Scott

GUESTS:

None

1. Call meeting to order.

Vice Chair Thomas called the meeting to order at 4:31 pm.

2. Approval of minutes from the March 25th, 2024 General Plan Advisory Committee meeting.

Vice Chair Thomas called for a motion to approve the minutes from April 15, 2024, meeting. Committee member Neal motioned to approve, and Committee member Skogebo seconded the motion. Upon tabulation of the votes, it showed:

AYES: Thomas, Sarkissian, Garcia Rodriguez, Skogebo, Neal

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

3. Approve granting Vice Chair Thomas the authority to review and approve the minutes from today's meeting and forward to the City Council for acknowledgment.

Vice Chair Thomas explained that this agenda item, if approved by the Committee, would give him the authority to review and approve the final minutes of the April 15th, 2024 meeting since the Committee will dissolve after adjournment. Vice Chair Thomas asked Jeff Robbins if this was an accurate description of the agenda item and Jeff Robbins said that the Vice Chair's interpretation

was accurate. Committee member Neal motioned to approve, and Committee member Garcia Rodriguez seconded the motion. Upon tabulation of the votes, it showed:

AYES: Thomas, Sarkissian, Garcia Rodriguez, Skogebo, Neal

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

4. Hear a presentation summarizing the final draft of the 2050 General Plan.

Mr. Robbins welcomed the committee to the meeting and introduced himself and the Assistant Planning Director, Rachel Nettles. He said that it is exciting to be attending their final meeting and a lot of the information in the PowerPoint presentation was information the Committee has seen before, and the presentation would move quickly. Mr. Robbins said the layout for the presentation would begin with the background of the project, then community engagement, the plan content, and conclude with the next steps and schedule for the plan for the City Council and the Planning and Zoning Board.

The General Plan is required by state statute and must be adopted every ten years. This is the official guiding policy of the City and it contains our values, vision for the City, and the Council and departments can use it as a reference as they are making decisions for the next ten years. At the beginning of the process, the Council and the Committee created several goals that they wanted the plan to achieve. The plan needed to create a vision and it had to be user-friendly. The General Plan should be easy to pick up to read and the plan should be simple enough that someone wouldn't need a degree to understand it. Also, the General Plan needed to be visually appealing, fun to read, and not read as a report. Technology, specifically in public engagement, needed to play a part. The plan also needed to be closely coordinated with the other plans because it contains other elements of many departments. For this reason, the City purposely had the other plans running at the same time as the General Plan and ensured the public feedback directly impacted the text of the General Plan. The last goal was that it needed to comply with state statutes.

Mr. Robbins said the Committee was organized back in the Fall of 2022 and started by asking the community what they thought about the City of Mesa right now. The staff came back in March and April asked what residents thought Mesa should be like in the future. The staff took all the ideas and brought them back to the community in the Choices and Priorities phase of public outreach and asked residents to choose which actions and issues were of highest priority. Mr. Robbins stated that at this point staff started to write the General Plan based on topics that had the most support. In early 2024, staff presented the draft plan back to the public and now the City is at the final phase of the project which is board and council review and approval.

Mr. Robbins said the final public engagement numbers were 14,000 engagements which include interactions with residents at public meetings, events, presentations, community meetings, etc. There were 28,000 visits to the General Plan website. There were 4,000 public feedback comments. The social media numbers were impressive with over 1.5 million impressions. Mr. Robbins explained that this is the number of times that individuals saw an ad. The ads were run in Spanish and English. In total, for both the English and Spanish ads, there were 17,000 clicks which means the individual clicked on the page and engaged with the content. The objective was to engage with as many residents as possible and the General Plan achieved that.

Ms. Nettles stated that in the first phase of the plan which was called community context, staff heard a lot of key themes of what the public wants Mesa to be and this led to the creation of the draft vision General Plan. The 2050 General Plan Vision Statement is that Mesa is a safe, desirable, family-centered community that celebrates our heritage and innovative spirit seeks economic prosperity for all prioritizes quality places and offers choices where we live, work, play, and learn. The vision statement guides the General Plan.

Ms. Nettles explained that the General Plan consists of five chapters and that it is organized around the core values which are the people, the land, and the economy. Each chapter contains a chapter introduction and has section elements, and each section has a guiding principle and strategies. Chapter one is an introduction to what the General Plan is, a summary of the community engagement, Mesa's history (where we have been and where we are now), key statistics with demographics and population, and layout of the plan structure and what to expect. Chapter Two is The People it has four sections which contains Great Neighborhoods, Arts and Cultural Resources, Human Services, and Public Safety. The Land Chapter has four sections and covers the topics of Housing, Circulation and Mobility, Parks and Open Space, and Land Use and Urban Design. The Land Plan goes into detail about the Future Land Use Plan which describes how Mesa will manage the use of its land. Also, the Placetype Map and Growth Strategy Map are within the Land Use Plan. Also, this chapter has consistency criteria which the City uses to determine if the development is consistent with the General Plan.

The Growth Strategy Map was edited by staff and now there are only three growth strategies since there was ambiguity between a couple of the strategies. The three growth strategies are conserve, sustain, and evolve.

The fourth chapter of the Plan is The Economy. This chapter only has 3 sections: Economic Development, Environment Conservation Energy and Water, and Public Facilities and Services.

The final chapter describes the implementation of the plan. The plan can be implemented through the zoning code, design guidelines, and various City plans. The Action Plan will act as a companion document that is a separate document from the General Plan. Ms. Nettles said staff is currently working on this document so that it aligns with the Capital Improvements Plan and Budget

Process. The Implementation chapter also contains the General Plan Amendment process. If someone wants to change the placetype designations this section states what the process needs to be, and if it is a major or minor amendment.

Ms. Nettles stated the next steps after getting the committee's recommendation today. Staff will be going to the Planning and Zoning Board and by state statute, the City has to do public hearings and they have to be at different locations. The first meeting is on April 22nd and then the second meeting is at the Planning and Zoning meeting on April 24th. After presenting to Council on April 25th, staff will be going to City Council on May 20th for their action. On November 4th the General Plan goes to the ballot for the residents to vote on it. Ms. Nettles asked if the Committee had any questions.

Vice Chair Thomas asked what happens if the General Plan does not pass. Mr. Robbins said if the General Plan doesn't pass then the City has to continue to work on it until it does pass by going back to the public. Staff would go back to the public and ask them for feedback about what residents did not like about the General Plan. Then the staff would take feedback and revise the General Plan based on the feedback and then on the next scheduled election the City has to put it on the ballot. The existing 2040 General Plan would remain in effect until and continue to be used until the 2050 General Plan passes.

Ms. Nettles said that this scenario happened in Scottsdale with their General Plan. Committee Garica Rodriguez asked once the General Plan goes to the ballot and passes how much money would be allocated to this? Vice Chair Thomas said this is not a bond and the General Plan gives the vision that helps staff and other developers plan for what Mesa becomes such as what growth looks like and other regions. There is no money attached to this when it goes to the ballot.

Mr. Robbins stated that the Vice Chair is correct and the General Plan helps guide future bond packages for the City. Committee member Neal asked if placetype designation is the same as the land use destinations. Ms. Nettles said future land designation is called placetypes in the General Plan. Committee member Neal asked if there were any edits in the Land Use Map. Ms. Nettles said staff went to the public and got 115 comments back on the map and people requested changes on the designations. The staff went back and made the proper changes to the map. They also, added urban design characteristics to each place type and that placemaking is a top priority for the Council and we want to make sure staff have the proper tools to do this.

Committee Garica Rodriguez asked if there would be any more additions to this plan. Mr. Robbins stated that there could be if Planning and Zoning give recommendations and the City Council could say they aren't ready to vote yes first because an issue hasn't been fixed or the Council could want an additional item in the General Plan. Committee Garica Rodriguez asked if locations for educational institutions would be shown on the General Plan. Ms. Nettles said the City does not have jurisdiction over the public school system. The Mesa Public School can place schools

where they like and doesn't have to come through the City for approval since Mesa Public School is a government entity itself. However, Mesa Public Schools can use the Future Land Use map to see where growth is occurring and to prepare for it. Mr. Robbins said that staff shared the Future Land Use map with the school district.

5. **Discuss and make a recommendation to the City Council on the update to the City's General Plan, Moving Forward Together: Tomorrow's Mesa 2050 General Plan.**

Vice Chair Thomas opened the discussion and asked the Committee if anyone wanted to discuss any final items for the General Plan.

Committee member Neal asked about the Master Plans such as Transportation and Housing and whether the plans would come after the General Plan. Mr. Nettles said we have been coordinating with other departments, to make sure the goals and strategies reflect each other, however, the plans are behind schedule. Committee member Sarkissian asked when the Housing Plan is supposed to be done. Mr. Robbins said staff taking the Housing Plan to Council for its first introduction to Council on May 9th and then will come back to Council in June. This gives citizens time to see the plan and for the City Council to have 6-8 weeks to review the plan. There is not an official date set for the June meeting to officially adopt the Balanced Housing Plan yet.

Committee member Skogebo asked if when this goes to the public to review and vote will the verbiage on the ballot state do you vote to adopt the General Plan. Mr. Robbins said yes, that is the case. Committee Sarkissian asked what the last day for advertisement the General Plan is.

Mr. Robbins said it was a great question and our attorneys have advised not to advertise the General Plan after May. The word advertise is very specific word and staff can go out and use loose language up until May. Once June comes staff must be very careful and can only offer information about where to find information on the General Plan, however, we can't promote or state whether the General Plan is good or bad.

Committee member Sarkissian asked if there could be a City of Mesa booth that has information about the General Plan. Ms. Nettles stated there can be information about the General Plan, but staff can't promote it. Mr. Robbins said this is where it gets risky having a staff member there since a citizen might have questions about it. The staff can accidentally promote the General Plan in this conversation.

Committee member Sarkissian said the election pamphlet is going to be very vague and asked if the staff is thinking about putting the website on the brochure, so citizens can access it. Mr. Robbins said yes staff are going through the City Clerk's Office to make sure the website is on the

ballot book. Also, staff is making a video about the General Plan that must go through the City Attorney's Office. It is a short two-minute video that tells the viewers what the General Plan is.

Vice Chair Thomas asked if staff knew what percentage of the General Plan passed in the last election. Mr. Robbins, that is a great question, and the staff can find out.

Committee Sarkissian asked what election year the General Plan was on and if was it an election year. Mr. Robbins said 2014 was the year and no it was not an election year.

Committee member Garcia Rodriguez asked if each person on the committee represents a district in Mesa. Mr. Robbins said each person on the Committee is from a different district however it's not about the representing your district it is more about you knowing what is going on in your district. The purpose of the people selected on the Committee was to have a diverse knowledge of the City to be represented.

Vice Chair Thomas called for recommendation to City Council Moving Forward Together: Tomorrow's Mesa 2050 General Plan. Committee member Sarkissian motioned for approval and it was seconded by Committee member Skogebo. Upon tabulation of votes, it showed:

AYES: Thomas, Sarkissian, Garcia Rodriguez, Skogebo, Neal

NAYES: None

ABSENT: None

6. **Items from citizens present.**

No citizens present

7. **Adjournment.**

Without objection, the General Plan Advisory Committee adjourned at 5:02 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 15th day of April 2024. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.


JEFF ROBBINS, SENIOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGER