

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)



Minutes

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

Date: March 27, 2023 Time: 4:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF PRESENT:

Rachel Nettles
Jeff Robbins
Kellie Rorex

GUESTS:

Terri Hogan, Logan Simpson

1. Call meeting to order.

Chair Williams called the meeting to order at 4:32 pm.

2. Approval of the minutes from the January 09, 2023 General Plan Advisory Committee meeting.

Chair Williams called for the approval of minutes from the January 09, 2023 meeting. Committee Member Sarkissian motioned, and Committee Member Skogebo seconded the motion.

Upon tabulation of the votes, it showed:

AYES: Williams, Neal, Sarkissian, Skogebo, Garcia Rodriguez, Frechette

NAYES: None

ABSENT: Thomas

3. Hear a presentation, discuss, and provide feedback on the 2050 General Plan process, including an update on past, current, and upcoming public engagement, plan audit results, and Existing Conditions Report.

Terri Hogan introduced herself and described the process for the 2050 General Plan Update. She explained that for public engagement we are halfway through the vision setting stage which will

run through end of April. Most of the drafting of the actual plan will happen in the third phase of engagement which starts in May. Terri reminded the committee that there is a public participation plan on the website which lists the phases and stages of the project.

Terri explained the results of the of the phase 1 Community Context interim public engagement results. Terri invited the GPAC to let City staff know if there are others members of the public that would like to be interviewed.

Committee member Garcia Rodriguez asked how we can engage more people and she commented that the number of responses is low compared to the size of Mesa. She said we can hold booths at the farmers' market and engage more visitors in this area. Committee member Garcia Rodriguez also asked what is the intended outcome from the public input and how does it impact the project?

Terri explained that she was excited with 1,300 questionnaire responses and said we would love to hear more. There are folks that we are not hearing from and we want to hear from them too. All of the results will go into the general plan. All public engagement data will be analyzed and then we will bring it back through the GPAC and Mesa City Council.

Vice Chair Thomas arrived at 4:37 pm

Garcia Rodriguez said that we only have five months and the most important thing is to hear from the residents. We have one of the biggest colleges here and maybe people could be there and other places where people congregate.

Jeff Robbins responded and said that we are doing paid social media engagement and that we would like contact with Mesa Community College (MCC). There have been past successful public partnerships with Mesa community College. Chair Williams said we should engage MCC and that he would share information with Jeff on MCC

Committee member Garcia Rodriguez said we need to reach out to minorities. Jeff Robbins said that we agree and Staff are proactively targeting outreach to the Washington Escobedo Neighborhood the first week in April and we are exploring how to engage the primarily Latino communities south of downtown.

Terri explained the engagement heat map which shows where people are engaging around the City. There are areas where we are not hearing from folks but other areas where there are hot spots around where we had events. Some people opted not to tell us where they lived. Jeff pointed out that there are distortions in how the data is displayed because they identified their location with cross streets.

Committee member Frechette asked what we need to set up booths. Are you allowed to do it at schools? What are the requirements? Terri said that we are looking for large groups and we need

permission and we need to staff it and we need to get materials. We typically have at least one worker from Logan Simpson and one from the City and we have had great volunteers so far.

Terri explained our demographics to the responses. We would like to see more people over the age of 60 and school age. Jeff mentioned that we are exploring a partnership with the City's Arts and Culture department to engage youth through art.

Committee member Skogebo asked what is our social media effort like? Terri explained that we have a schedule of social and it is through the city, promotion of the interviews. We are in a regular cycle. Chair Williams said he has been seeing the posts. Committee member Skogebo said she has not seen them. Chair Williams recommended following the City social. Committee Member Skogebo asked about a hashtag and several other Committee members concurred. Terri said we can check in on the hashtag and get back with you. Jeff said we can give the Committee the social package or just repost a city post. He said he did not think we are using a hashtag. Committee member Skogebo said hashtags are very useful.

Committee member Garcia Romero recommended we try to reach a younger demographic through social media.

Committee member Sarkissian said the City could put the hashtags where people are sitting. Inside schools, it's hard to get the teachers to agree to it but when they do the responses from the kids are great because they really care about their community. It's also a good way to then educate their parents because they will tell their parents what they did in school. It can also help with language barriers because sometimes youth can translate what is happening to their parents who may not speak English.

Vice Chair Thomas said that Mesa has many parks. There are soccer fields that the city could put QR codes up on. There is an easy way to do that. Parents are often sitting and they need something to do.

Terri explained the top three reasons people choose Mesa and said that survey #1 is open until April 3. Survey #2 goes live on April 3. Committee member Frechette asked what are the differences? Terri said that the second questionnaire is much more vision setting. Jeff said that we are collecting emails so we can reengage with folks that have already shown interest in questionnaire #1.

Terri explained the top 3 issues facing mesa. Chair Williams asked if we have access to the other top 10 responses. Terri said yes and explained the responses.

Committee member Frechette asked if there has been a dramatic increase in responses that water is a top issue since Buckeye said they could not build over half a million homes. Terri said it is hard to say if there has been a major increase in people marking water as a top priority. Chair Williams said it has been a hot subject for a while and there needs to be a plan. Terri said that it was not clear that there had been a change.

Terri explained that staff sent out invites to community partners for interviews and we had conducted 33 interviews so far. Committee member Garcia Rodriguez said it would be great to get SRP to participate. We said we have a lot of water because of the flood irrigation in mesa and senior water rights. Terri reviewed the event photos.

Committee member Frechette had concerns about the 50% of people that took the first survey coming back for the second survey and said she was worried that we were reinforcing biases from a small number of the population. Jeff said that we do want engagement from people throughout the process, but he was not sure how to control for people who really want to be engaged. Commission member Sarkissian said that we can manipulate the data by district and we can try and extract data from certain area to isolate interests from a very small area

Chair Williams asked if we will have booth engagement in every district? Jeff said yes, we will get to each district.

Terri said that we are working on guiding principles next and we will come back to the GPAC. Committee member Sarkissian asked what is the goal for the vision statement? Will it be brief or a monologue of pages? Assistant City Planning Director Rachel Nettles said that we would keep the vision and policies brief and the content clear.

Terri explained that staff are presenting to boards. Terri explained phase 3 engagement is where the bulk of plan writing will happen, the bulk of technology will be displayed, and vision statement will come out at this time. Terri explained the upcoming TED Talks like event for the general plan and said that topics and speakers are being vetted.

Terri explained the plan audit. Jeff mentioned that just because staff may have marked a 2040 General Plan policy as “keep” does not mean we are not just keeping that policy verbatim. We are keeping the essence and then simplifying, especially the number of policies, and then we are making the policy statements measurable.

Terri explained Logan Simpson is 80% of the way through the existing conditions report. The report shows where the city has grown since the original plan. That document will come to this body. It will look highly infographic in style, will be usable, and an appendix to the general plan. It will also include socioeconomic and demographic information.

Commission member Sarkissian said that we will get the most public participation when there is a map. When there is something to draw on it feels real to participants.

Commission member Frechette said that she likes the three dots on posters and three choices in the questionnaire because we can't have everything so we need to prioritize.

4. Items from citizens present.

There were three comments from citizens present. Kim Van Riper and her spouse Keo Van Riper said that they would like to know how to become involved in the Transportation and Water plans. Jacob Cluff said that it was important to remove the silos from certain areas of the City.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the General Plan Advisory Committee adjourned at 5:46 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 9th day of January 2023. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.



JEFF ROBBINS, SENIOR
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGER