BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

PROPOSED 2020 MAJOR COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AMENDMENTS

11/18/2020

Community Development Department

2020 Proposed Major Comprehensive Plan Amendments

PINAL COUNTY
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1. **PZ-PA-004-20 –** Text Amendment to Chapter 7: Environmental Stewardship, Water Resource Element of 2019 Pinal County Comprehensive Plan (County Initiated).

2. **PZ-PA-005-20 –** Text Amendment to Chapters 3,6,&7 of Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail of the (County Initiated).

3. **PZ-PA-006-20** - Re- designation of 1,642 acres from Medium Low Density Residential (MLDR) to Green Energy Production for a photovoltaic Solar Power Plant in Coolidge and Eloy area, Pinal County.

SCHEDULE – 2020 MCPA

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- September 3: Citizen Advisory Committee
- September 17: Planning and Zoning
- November 18: Board of Supervisors

Item #1: **PZ-PA-004-20** Water Element (County Initiated)

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- Proposal:

Request to add goals, objectives, and policies relating to:

- Obsolete language
- Additional verbiage to address water issues and challenges that are forced upon the County by current development.

Item #1 PZ-PA-004-20 Water Element

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Chapter 7: Environmental Stewardship

Item #1 PZ-PA-004-20 Water Element

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- P&Z Commission & BOS Input:
- There were some questions on the need for the change and overall impact.

- Public Participation Process:
  - On-going, no input yet.

Introduction

The Water Resources element of the Comprehensive Plan includes an inventory of water supplies in Pinal County, which includes surface water, groundwater, CAP water, ~~reusable effluent~~ reclaimed water and precipitation. Since the previous Comprehensive Plan, there have been no new added water supplies with the exception of some increased reclaimed ~~waste~~water supplies.

This section includes estimates of potential future water demand associated with existing and projected development. Issues relevant to water use and available supplies for future growth in the County are also included as are sections describing practices for managing future water supplies with goals and policies relevant to water resources.

Pinal County encompasses six groundwater basins. Three of the major basins are designated as Active Management Areas (AMAs). The AMAs have specific groundwater management objectives that are administered by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). Distinguishing between AMAs and the non-AMA basins is important in that there are different regulatory schemes that affect the management of water resources, most specifically groundwater. Between the three AMAs, the regulatory framework of the Phoenix and Tucson AMAs are virtually identical, while the regulatory framework of the Pinal AMA is unique among the three. The Phoenix and Tucson AMAs, have water management goals of Safe Yield. Safe Yield means that groundwater withdrawals are not to exceed the amount of water that is naturally and artificially recharged by the year 2025. In the Pinal AMA, the management goal is "to allow development of non-irrigation uses and to preserve existing agricultural economies in the AMA for as long as feasible, consistent with the necessity to preserve future water supplies for non-irrigation uses".

In 2015-2018, approximately 80% of non-tribal water use in the Pinal AMA was by agriculture and 5% was municipal-industrial use. In that same year, the AMA's water supply portfolio was made up of 45% CAP water, 8% surface water, less than 1% of reclaimed waste water, and 47% groundwater. The opportunity for agriculture to use CAP water is diminishing and will go away in 2030. The Arizona Water Company (serves water to all or portions of Apache Junction, Superior, Casa Grande, and Coolidge) and the towns of Eloy and Florence hold CAP water contracts totaling 21,118 acre-feet/year (enough to supply 125,000 people at a combined use of 150 gallons per person per day).

Residential development within all AMAs are required to demonstrate to ADWR an adequate, assured, and physically available 100-year supply of water for residents. Commercial developments are not required to demonstrate an assured water supply unless they fall within the state's definition of a "subdivision." In the Pinal AMA, groundwater supplies to a depth of 1,100 feet below ground surface may be used to prove a 100-year supply.

The Pinal AMA includes the largest overall special area in the County and includes the communities of Casa Grande, Coolidge, Florence, Eloy, and Maricopa, all of the Ak-Chin Indian Community, and parts of the Gila River Indian Community and Tohono O'odham Nation. The portion of the County that is included within the Phoenix AMA includes Apache Junction, Superior, and Queen Creek, and part of the Gila River Indian Community. The south-central part of the County is included in the Tucson AMA, while the eastern portion of the county includes three groundwater basins that are not part of an AMA. These basins are the Connelly Wash Basin, parts of Lower San Pedro Basin (including the communities of Kearny and Mammoth), as well as parts of the Dripping Spring Wash Basin.

Purpose The Growing Smarter Plus Act requires that Pinal County include a water resources section in its Comprehensive Plan. The Water Resources element ~~inventories,~~ describes currently available water supplies and ~~an analysis of how future growth will be adequately served with these water supplies. Where growth projections appear to exceed current water supplies, the element~~ attempts to ~~address how~~ illustrate the need for additional ~~future~~ water supplies ~~could be obtained~~ to meet the projected growth, and techniques that may extend the use of existing water supplies.

Water providers are primarily responsible for meeting regulatory requirements associated with municipal and private water company systems and therefore typically plan, manage, and develop their water resources to serve their customers/constituents. Independent industrial water users, and agricultural users and irrigation districts are primarily responsible for meeting their respective regulatory requirements. Almost all of these requirements are imposed by State Law and most are enforced by the ADWR.

The County does not hold an "ownership interest" or "right" to water resources or provide water supply delivery services. State statutes identify ADWR as the primary agency responsible for the management of Arizona's water resources. The primary role of the County is one of supporting or affirming policy, encouraging wise water use, providing education regarding the County's water supplies, and serving as an advocate to protect the County's water interests in the region.

~~Recently, however, new statutes do provide an opportunity for the County to impose limited restrictions on the development of new subdivisions located in the three basins located outside of the three AMAs. These new statutes, and the County's new ability, can provide a level of protection for new home buyers in these locations by requiring that the development of these areas demonstrate that there are adequate water supplies available to these proposed subdivisions.~~

~~Pinal County is currently in the midst of its "second generation" water supply issue that was initiated with the conception of the CAP in the 1940s. It took nearly 50 years for the CAP to mature and deliver water to central Arizona, including Pinal County. However,~~ The demographics and economics of Arizona and Pinal County have evolved and are continuing to do so at a phenomenal rate. While desiring a link to its agricultural heritage, Pinal County is on the brink of

being the central element of the Sun Corridor Megapolitan. ~~The County is witnessing the birth of its "third generation" water supply issues.~~

The water resources challenges facing Pinal County are linked to the rest of Arizona. The Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council is studying ways to augment and better use existing water supplies in the State. There are no local fixes – Pinal County has reached the point where future planning is going to require importation of water and greater efforts to ensure wise water use. The current supplies located in local aquifers still are not reliably quantified, however, it is obvious that the groundwater supplies cannot continue to be indefinitely mined. While there are tremendous amounts of groundwater located at significant depths in portions of the County, much of the deeper water is poor quality and not economically or environmentally feasible to be used.

The Ak-Chin Indian Community, the Gila River Indian Community, and the Tohono O'odham Nation have diverse water portfolios to support their agricultural and municipal plans. Native American Tribes may lease their Central Arizona Project (Colorado River) water. To date, Native American Tribes have participated in leasing unused water to entities outside of their Community (e.g. Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District, City of Chandler, Apache Junction Water Utilities District, and others).

Relationship to Pinal County's Vision the Vision assumes that Pinal County will grow and water is the basic element that will allow this to occur. The question on most people's minds is twofold: is there enough water to satisfy the long-term needs of the current population and; is there enough water to allow for continued growth? The answer to the first part of the question is yes. There is adequate water to serve the current population. The answer to the second part is more complicated. Depending on the amount of growth, at some point new resources will be needed that are not currently available in the County. This means new sources will need to be sought and the infrastructure to move the water to the area will need to be developed. This will be costly. If prospective developers choose to make the financial commitment to bring water to the area to serve their projects, the infrastructure will be developed and the people and water will come. If the costs to bring these new sources are greater than the market will bear, growth will not occur.

The population projections for Pinal County indicate that a population at buildout could reach 6 million people. This represents between 840,000 to 1,700,000 annual acre-feet of new water demand. For comparison, the CAP Canal has a capacity of approximately 1,500,000 acre-feet per year. In other words, a project the scope of the CAP will be needed just to satisfy the growth demands in Pinal County, not to mention additional growth that will occur throughout the Sun Corridor Megapolitan. Arizona as a whole must find new sources of water to be able to continue to grow. The key to Pinal County's future is to be certain that it has a significant voice in the development of Arizona's next new water supplies.

There are a number of different estimates as to how much water is available to Pinal County, but there is not one definitive reference to obtain a quantification of that water. ~~Studies currently are focused on specific subdivisions or water provider service areas, however, the ADWR is~~

~~refining its groundwater model that will impact the parts of the County within the three AMAs.~~ In October 2019, ADWR released its Pinal AMA groundwater simulation model and associated 100-year assured water supply projections. This model takes into account current demands, applications from residential developments that have submitted information to ADWR for the process of proving assured water supplies, and agricultural demands. Model results show a cumulative shortage of about 8 million acre-feet between now and 2115.

Water supply estimates are further complicated by the introduction of the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGRD) whose role is to replace the amount of groundwater pumped by member entities from the Phoenix, Pinal, and Tucson AMAs, thereby extending the supply of groundwater. And lastly, the role of reclaimed water for direct use on landscaping and for underground storage and recovery is just emerging as a major water resources management component in Pinal County.

Goals, Objectives and Policies

In order to make it easier for property owners to use the Goals, Objectives and Policies in the Plan and then incorporate them into their development proposals or amendments, the Policies have been placed into two separate categories. The two categories are:

- Public Responsibilities
- Private and Public Shared Responsibilities

Private development applicants should be aware of Public and Private Shared Responsibilities throughout the development process and should focus their Comprehensive Plan applications as specified in the implementation section of the Comprehensive Plan, or other relevant documents that set criteria for other applications.

Public Responsibilities are primarily incumbent on the County to implement through its policy development and planning.

Private and Public Shared Responsibilities, all entities, private and public, share the responsibilities of implementing these Policies.

7.2 Goal: To protect the long-term water supply for Pinal County

7.2.1 Objective: Protect future homebuyers in new subdivisions located in areas located outside an AMA.

Under state law, new subdivisions in areas outside of AMAs must either prove that an adequate water supply exists to satisfy the needs of the development for 100 years, or simply publish that there is no demonstration that an adequate supply of water exists. While this may be adequate notice for a first time home buyer, there are concerns as to whether a subsequent buyer of the property will have appropriate notice of a lack of an adequate water supply.

Policy:

7.2.1.1 As provided under specific provisions of Title 11 of the Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S. § 11-806.01.F), the Pinal County Board of Supervisors shall, by the end of ~~2012~~ 2020, consider adoption of a provision (requiring a unanimous vote), that requires a new subdivision, located outside an AMA, to have an adequate water supply as defined by A.R.S. § 45-108.I in order for the subdivision final plat to be approved by the County. This policy was endorsed by the 2009 Water Element Citizen Task Force.

7.2.2 Objective: Encourage the maximum conservation of water resources currently available within Pinal County.

The County can encourage the conservation and efficient use of water supplies. In addition, the County government can play a significant role in encouraging the reuse and underground storage of reclaimed wastewater.

Policies:
7.2.2.1 Consider researching and applying for ~~the development of a~~ federal, state, or municipal grants ~~mechanism~~ to support quality water conservation programs to be implemented within the County.

7.2.2.2 Consider requiring as a condition of its approval for new wastewater treatment facilities located within Pinal County that the applicant also be required to demonstrate and implement a program for the direct reuse ~~by turf~~ for landscaping, industry, and agriculture and/or underground storage (either direct or indirect recharge) of reclaimed water within Pinal County. In the event of extraordinary climatological conditions, some relief from these measures may be considered on a temporary basis.

7.2.2.3 ~~Encourage single family residences, multi family residences, commercial and industrial development to utilize rainwater harvesting techniques.~~ Consider creation and adoption of a water conservation ordinance for new residential and non-residential development.

Objective: Provide a focused venue for the development of unified water resources policy and development for the interests located within Pinal County.

Pinal County encompasses six different groundwater basins having some unique water supply issues, however, in order to preserve the future of Pinal County and realize the Vision contained within this plan, a unified voice needs to be developed for participation in discussions regarding future water development projects and legislation that may affect available water resources for Pinal County at the local, state, and federal level.

Policy:
7.2.3.1 Consider ~~the adoption of a resolution stating that there should be a~~ continued support of County-wide organizations with a goal to provide advocacy for Pinal County's water resources interests. Further, the County should be a strong contributor to all discussions concerning those water resources.

7.2.4 Objective: Explore and encourage legislative change to ~~allow the provision of dedicated resources for evaluation and monitoring of groundwater conditions~~ provide opportunities for innovative and wise water management within Pinal County.

~~There have been many studies performed over portions of Pinal County to provide only a partial understanding of the hydrology within all six basins contained within Pinal County. Having a good baseline to work from enhances the opportunities for efficient and effective management of the groundwater supplies – as well as effective planning for drought – within these areas. The ADWR depends upon agency funding at the state level for its operations, and is frequently understaffed and underfunded to meet its obligations. Therefore, an increase in dedicated funding to secure additional dedicated staffing resources at ADWR for the purpose of undertaking a county-wide effort to analyze the available groundwater supplies is an alternative which should be explored.~~

Policy:
7.2.4.1 The County shall consider ~~adopting a resolution to be transmitted to the Office of the Governor and both houses of the State Legislature to provide ADWR with funds to hire at least one hydrologist dedicated to providing analyses~~ continued support of the Pinal County Water Augmentation Authority and Stakeholder Groups specifically ~~focusing~~ focused on ~~the groundwater basins located~~ solving water issues within Pinal County.

7.2.5 Objective: In order for the County to have information about water supplies needed to satisfy future development, the County shall consider requiring zoning applicants to provide information about water demand and potential supplies for their projects. Implementing the following policies will give the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Board of Supervisor better information to use in their decision making, and will allow the county to develop a groundwater database. The following three policies were based on the recommendations of the Water Element Citizen Task Force

Policy:
7.2.5.1 Consider requiring that, with the filing of the zoning application, the applicant shall:

- *Identify the water service provider*
- *Identify the irrigation district the proposed development is in (if applicable)*
- *Provide an estimated range of water demand and include an explanation of the method used to obtain the estimate*
- *Provide information about water supply and source, including renewable and non-groundwater supplies*

Policy:
7.2.5.2 If the water supply is groundwater, consider requiring that the zoning applicant provide the following information that is publicly available from the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and/or Arizona Geological Survey, or otherwise available to the land owner:

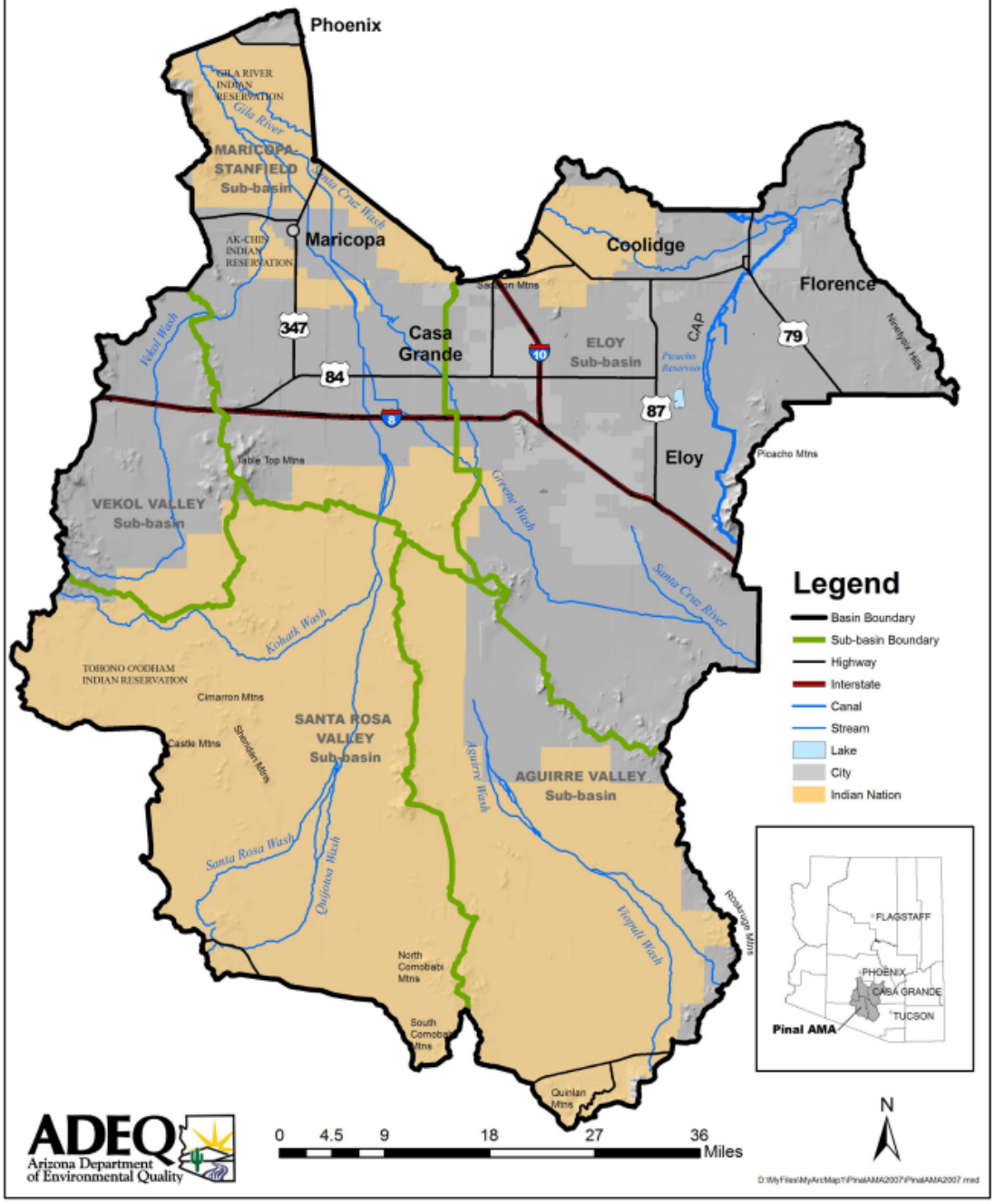
- *Depth to bedrock*
- *Depth to groundwater*

- *Known fissures or land subsidence in the area*
- *Known wells in the area, available information on status, water levels, etc*
- *Summary of data-gathering efforts and sources of information*

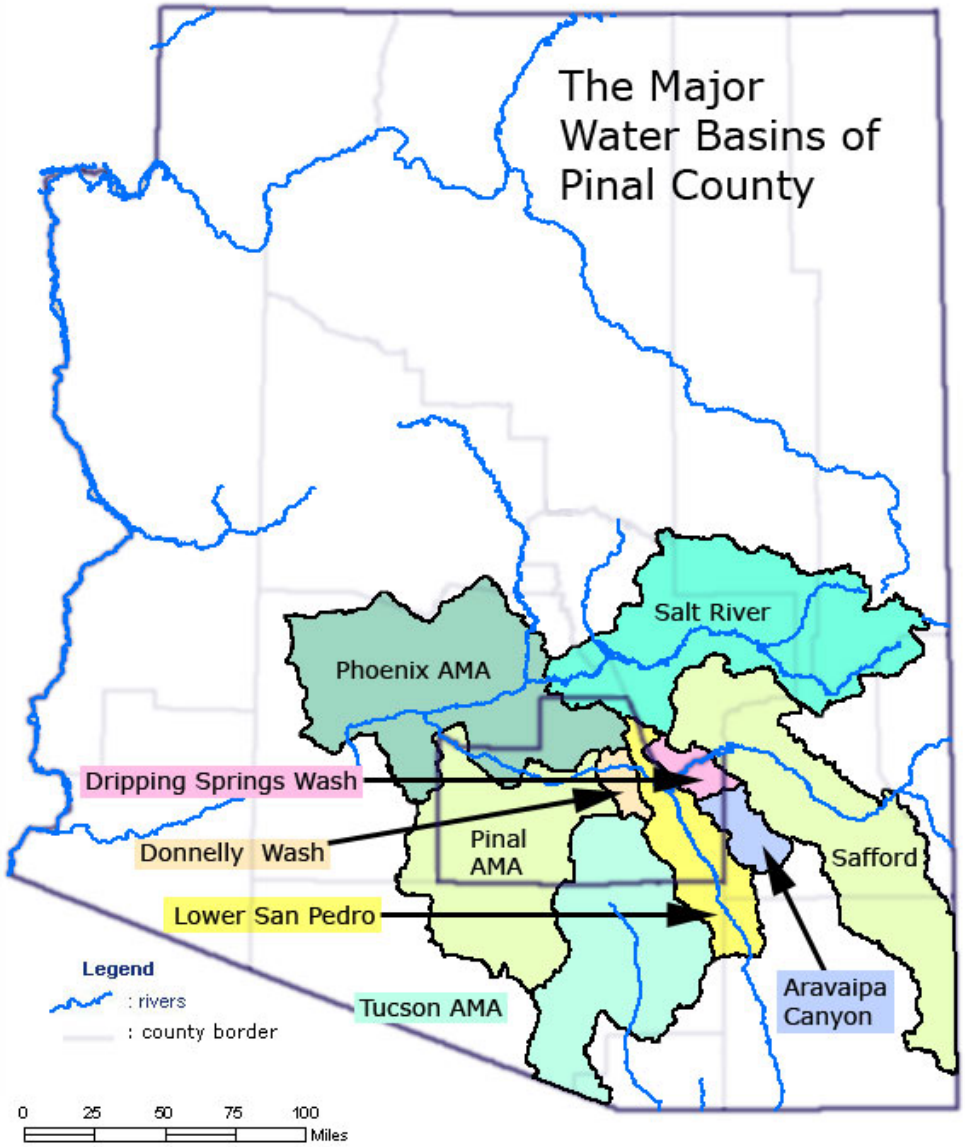
Policy:

7.2.5.3 Consider adding the following language to zoning cases if the County requires zoning applicants to provide water information at time zoning: Approval of this zoning case is not an approval of water adequacy or water quality. This zoning is being granted in general support of the Comprehensive Plan's goals and objectives, but the applicant's ability to develop this property rest upon a demonstration to ADWR that there is sufficient water to serve the proposed development at the time of final platting.

Map 1 - Pinal AMA



Pinal's Water Basins | Interactive Maps | Water Resource Info | LIVE! Online Reports | County Contact Info



Responses to questions raised by the Citizen's Advisory Board at their meeting on September 3, 2020.

1. Is the San Pedro River considered a water source within an AMA? If not, why not.
   The San Pedro River is considered a water source. Its water supply is currently being adjudicated with sub-flows being withdrawn by close proximity wells being counted as surface-water (not groundwater). It is anticipated that 100% of San Pedro River water will be allocated to existing users as part of the adjudication process.

2. Does the Pinal County have a list or a way to track water wells? Would this information be available to the Public?
   The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) permits and tracks water wells. Information on wells can be found on the ADWR web site at https://new.azwater.gov/permitting-wells/well-record-search.

3. Do all new wells for residential use trigger a County permit?
   No – see answer to question 2.

4. Is there one representative (voice) for all the AMA's within Pinal County?
   No. There are several water use categories within each AMA (e.g. agriculture, industrial, municipal, mining, etc.) and each has their own rules and requirements in accordance with the AMA where it is located.

5. The sentiments from the Board was to continue water conservation, with the mentioned goal to provide direction through an Ordinance.
   Agree. A water conservation ordinance is already being drafted.

6. Has the County identified any new water sources?
   No. This has been tasked to the Governor's Water Augmentation, Innovation and Conservation Council since there is a State wide need. Supervisor Steve Miller represents the County on this Council.

7. The Board/Commission has some concerns with removing the phrase in regards to Conservation. Further explain.
   The original version of 7.2.2.3 was deleted because it was too restrictive in that it only considered "rainwater harvesting." The new language talks about creating a new water conservation ordinance that can include many things including rainwater harvesting.

8. What system is utilized to keep track of water supplies within the County?
   ADWR tracks water supplies as part of the annual AMA reporting process.

9. What role does the State provide in regards to water supply, uses and allocation?
   ADWR's mission states that it is "the steward of Arizona's water future and ensures long-term, reliable water supplies to support the continued economic prosperity of the State." They are involved in Colorado River water supply issues, water rights adjudications, Native American water supplies, groundwater hydrology and management – particularly in the AMAs, water conservation mandates – particularly with interior water use appliances, and water related education. See https://new.azwater.gov for more information.

Lonnie Frost
September 9, 2020

Item #2: **PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail** (County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- **Proposal:**

Request to amend 3 chapters of the 2019 Pinal County Comprehensive Plan by adding goals, objectives, and policies relating to:

- Riparian areas, Wildlife corridors
- The Pinal County Birding Trail.

Item #2: **PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail** (County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- The following 3 chapters of the 2019 Pinal County Comprehensive Plan will be affected:
  - Chapter 3 - Land Use,
  - Chapter 6 - Open Spaces and Places, and
  - Chapter 7 - Environmental Stewardship

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- Public Participation:
  - Web posting and 60 day review: 6/12/2020
  - P&Z Work Session: 7/16/2020
  - BOS Work Session: 8/12/2020
  - Citizen Advisory Committee: 9/03/2020 Approve
  - Pinal Open Space and Trails Committee: Approve

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- Pinal County Birding Trail:
  - Officially recognize the AZ Birding Trail as an important Bio-tourism component to the eastern side of Pinal County:

    7.1.7.5 Encourage and promote The Pinal County Birding Trail, The Arizona Birding Trail, and other watchable wildlife opportunities in Pinal County.

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

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Sign In

PINAL COUNTY

What is the ERT?

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- Mapping Tool, database that supplies information on riparian areas and habitat in the County.

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- **The main goal is to guide, so we as a county:**
  - Address issues early enough in the development of the County.
  - Promote a County-level overview of biological resources in relation to development.
  - Use guidance tools to help both the development community and Pinal County identify areas of concern.

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- All changes relate to providing '**direction and guidance** to potential landowners or developers, staff and elected or appointed officials in developing or reviewing the Natural Infrastructure as part of a project.' **Example:**

3.1.4.5 Encourage development that sensitively integrates natural environment and maintains healthy ecosystems, including the consideration of adjacent parcels, connectivity and wildlife linkages.

3.1.4.6 Encourage new development projects to preserve significant desert habitats, riparian areas, wildlife corridors, natural resources, landscapes and cultural resources where feasible.

3.1.5 Objective: Coordinate and cooperate with the ASLD planning of state trust lands within Pinal County.

Policies:
3.1.5.1 Encourage an inclusive planning process to ensure the best possible projects on state trust lands in Pinal County.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's on-line Environmental Review Tool (ERT) is a project evaluation tool specifically designed for Pinal County. The ERT can help identify opportunities to protect riparian areas, open spaces, and other natural resources throughout the county.
http://azhgis2.esri.com/content/map

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PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- The changes also aim at the official adoption of the Environmental Review Tool (ERT) as the official tool to be used by both Pinal County and project proponents.

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

- What is the Environmental Review Tool – E.R.T. ?
  - Allows the mapping of riparian areas, open spaces, sensitive areas, and other natural resources.
  - The amendment will allow <u>any</u> interested party to identify riparian areas, open spaces, other natural resources, and sensitive areas based on project type and location.
  - The ERT Report can be used to guide preliminary decisions and assessments of proposed land and water development, management, locations and conservation projects.
  - The ERT Tool is already in use by Game and Fish.

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
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Webpage:

ARIZONA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT
MANAGING TODAY FOR WILDLIFE TOMORROW
www.azgfd.gov

Home | Map | Terms & Conditions | Contact Us | Help

Arizona's Online Environmental Review Tool

Administered by Arizona Game and Fish Department's Heritage Data Management System (HDMS) and Project Evaluation Program (PEP)

Please note our site URL has been updated to https://ert.azgfd.gov. This change may impact bookmarks or previous emails from the site.

For optimal function, please use the latest versions of Google Chrome, IE, Firefox, or Safari.
The AZ Environmental Review Tool is not available as a mobile app and may not function optimally in a mobile environment.

It is good practice to occassionally clear your cache - especially after a new version is released.
Shift+ctrl+delete while in your browser

User login

E-mail or username *

Password *

- Create new account
- Request new password

Log in

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
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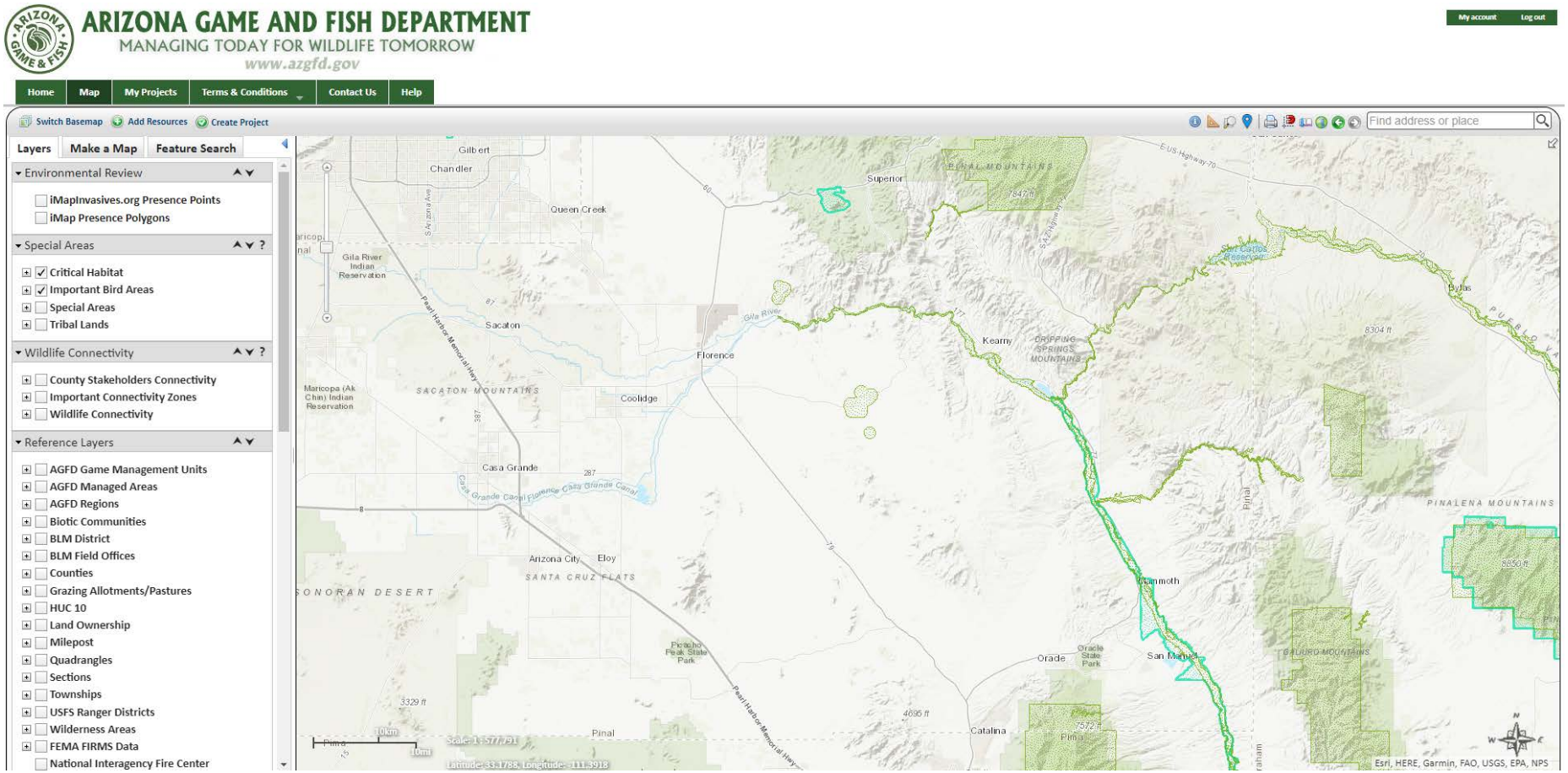
Online ERT Tool, Map with Layers:



PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
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PINAL COUNTY
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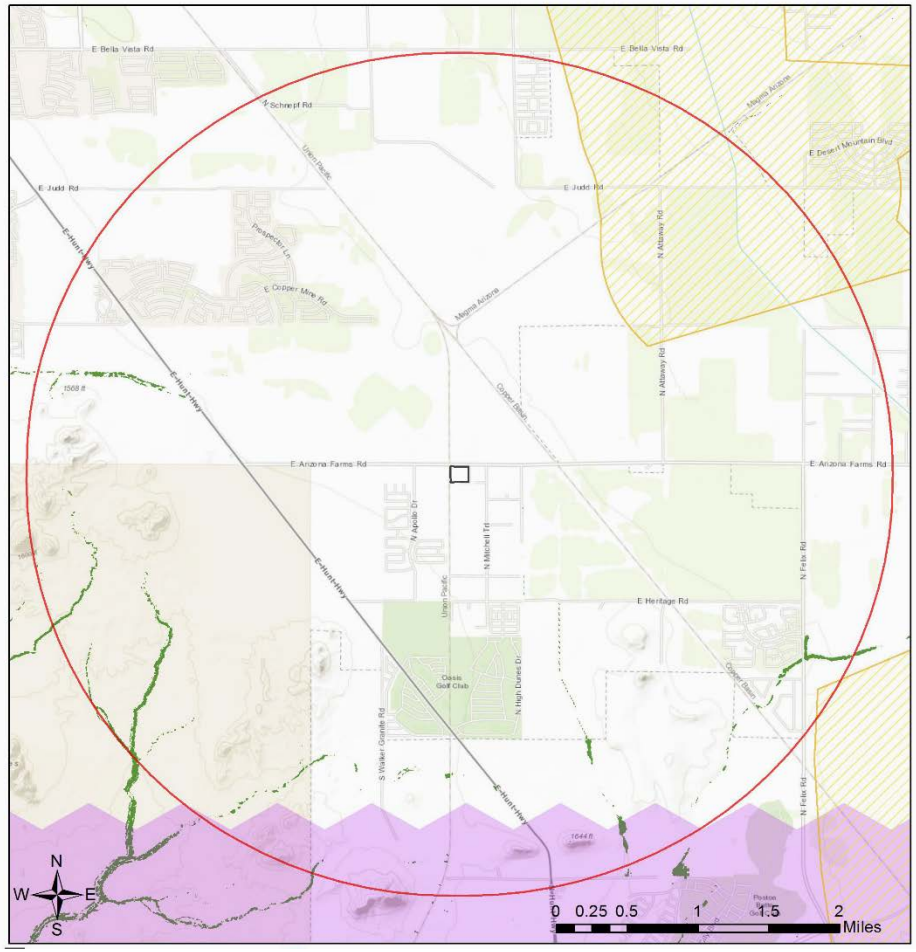
Example
(ERT-produced map:

Arizona Game and Fish Department
Project ID: HGIS-11615

project_report_bone_yards_az_pz_pd_005_20_37827_39043.pdf
Review Date: 7/14/2020 02:14:25 PM

Bone Yards of AZ (PZ-PD-005-20)

Important Areas



PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

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Example (Map Legend):

- Project Boundary
- Buffered Project Boundary
- Critical Habitat

County Stakeholder Assessment

- Wildlife Crossing Area
- Wildlife Movement Area - Diffuse
- Wildlife Movement Area - Landscape
- Wildlife Movement Area - Riparian/Wash
- Important Connectivity Zones
- Wildlife Connectivity
- Pinal County Riparian

Trails

- Existing/Planned Multi-Use Trail Corr
- Proposed Multi-Use Trail Corridor
- Adopted County Trail Corridor
- Planned/Existing OHV Trail
- Proposed OHV Trail

Project Size (acres): 9.15

Lat/Long (DD): 33.1173 / -111.4984

County(s): Pinal

AGFD Region(s): Mesa

Township/Range(s): T4S, R8E

USGS Quad(s): FLORENCE

Why Use the ERT?

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- No reliable, comprehensive, science based dataset
- Data when available was difficult to communicate in real time real world situations
- No one on your staff has the qualifications to adequately communicate constraints and remedies, best practices in the absence of a picture

PZ-PA-005-20 – Riparian Corridors and Pinal County Birding Trail
(County-initiated)

PINAL COUNTY
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- **History of the Guiding Effort:**
  - Initiated during the Superstition Vistas project.
  - That effort lead to the creation of a mapping tool to easily identify natural areas of concern.
  - 2015 white paper by Pinal Partnership

Public Participation

PINAL COUNTY
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- Staff: recommends Approval
- CAC: recommends Approval
- OS&T: recommends Approval
- SALT: recommends Approval

- Pinal Partnership: Concerns
- AZ State Land Department: Concerns
- Planning and Zoning Commission recommend denial (7-1)

Public Participation

PINAL COUNTY
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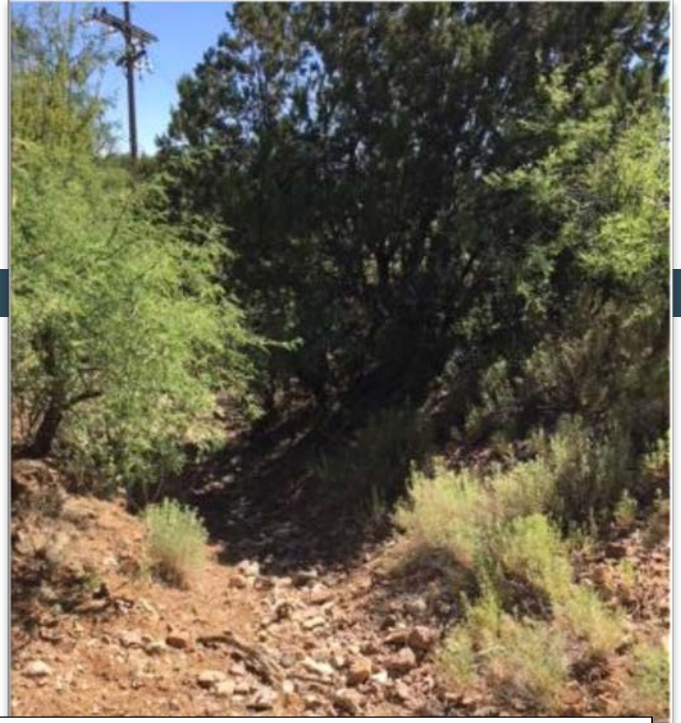
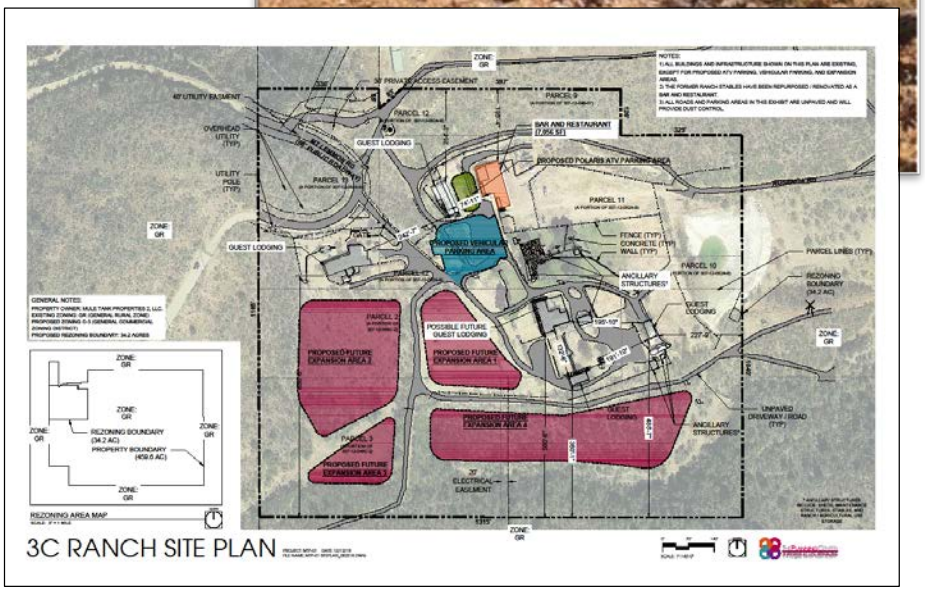
- Pinal Partnership: two letters
- AZ State Land Department: 9 Issues, in four broad categories.
- P&Z Commission:

- Example 1:
- 3C Ranch near Oracle, AZ
- Rezoning application
- Site visit showed significant riparian areas





Public Participation

PINAL COUNTY
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- Pinal Partnership:
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Public Participation

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- "This is an attempt by the AZ Game and Fish Department to plan Pinal County"
  - <u>AZ game and fish has no zoning authority</u>

- "This is government over reach sets the stage for new regulation"
  - <u>Proposed amendment has no policy direction to create new regulation, the amendment in itself is not regulatory</u>

Public Participation

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- "If ERT is publicly available no need memorialize it in our Comp Plan."
  - <u>Formally recognizing the ERT creates the baseline for discussion and is a user friendly way to "visualize" complex data</u>

The ERT Does Not

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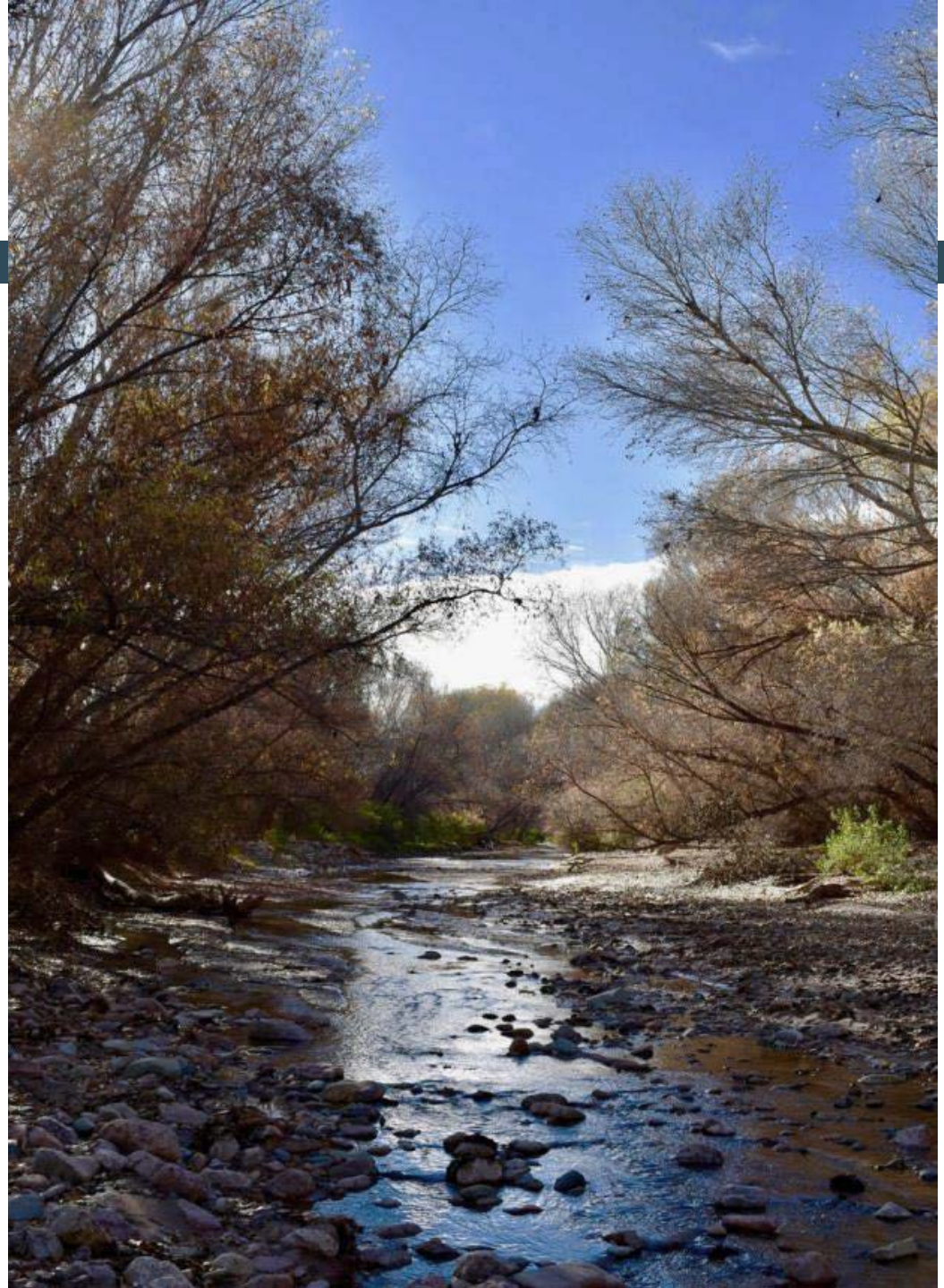
- Compromise the Board's ability to make legislative land use decisions.
- Plan new open spaces
- Mandate one size fits all solutions: It's data is science based, and subject to scientific scrutiny



PINAL COUNTY

WIDE OPEN OPPORTUNITY

Item #4: Sundog Energy Center (**PZ-PA-006-20**)

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- Proposal:
  - Change in the Comprehensive Plan designation from Moderate Low Density Residential (1-3.5 du/ac) to **Green Energy Production.**
  - 1624± acres

- Location: Along Hwy 287 in Coolidge and Eloy area, Pinal County.

- Applicant: Lonesome Valley Farms Ltd

- Agent: Susan Innis (Invenergy)

County Map

PINAL COUNTY
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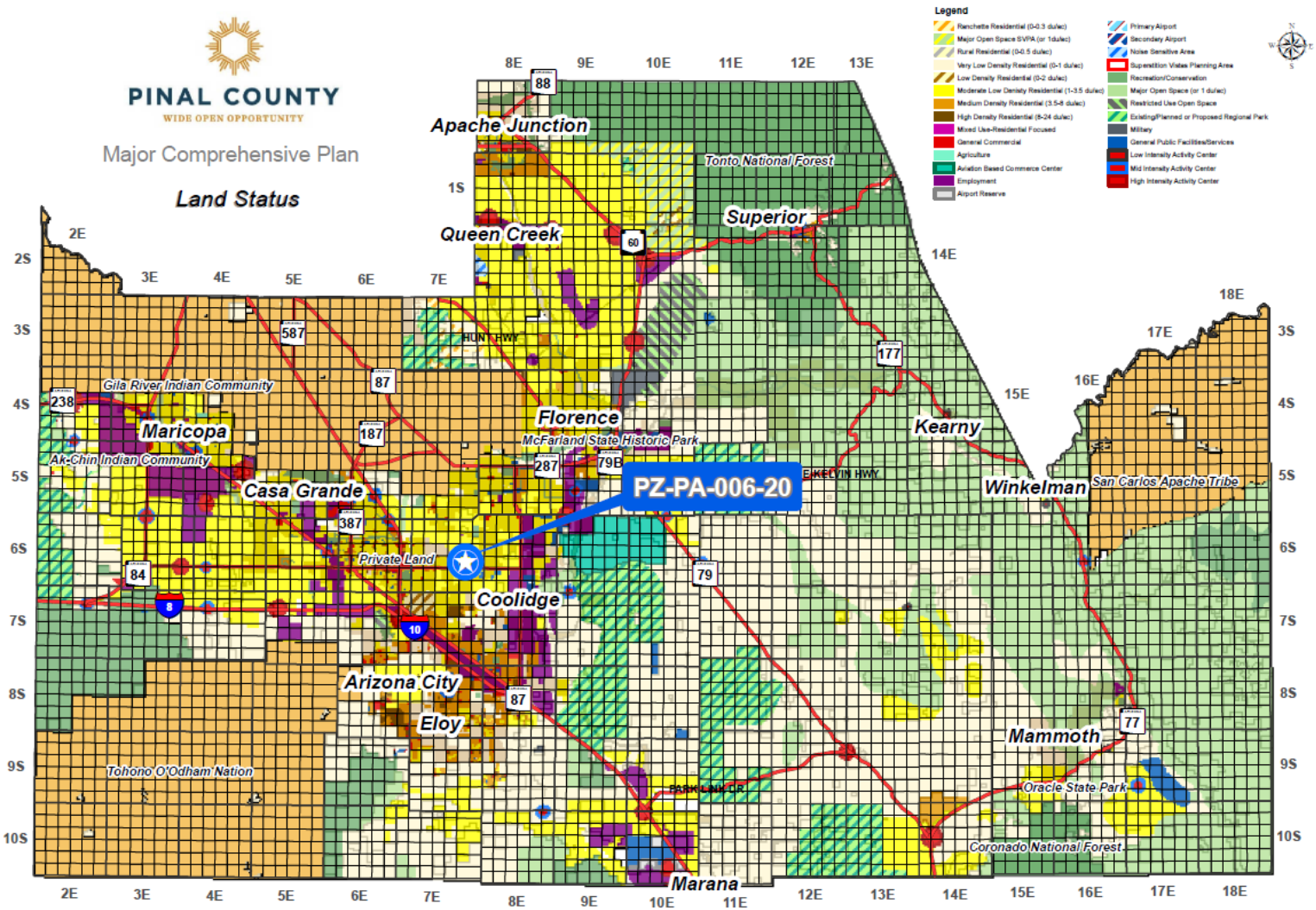

Project Location & Vicinity Map

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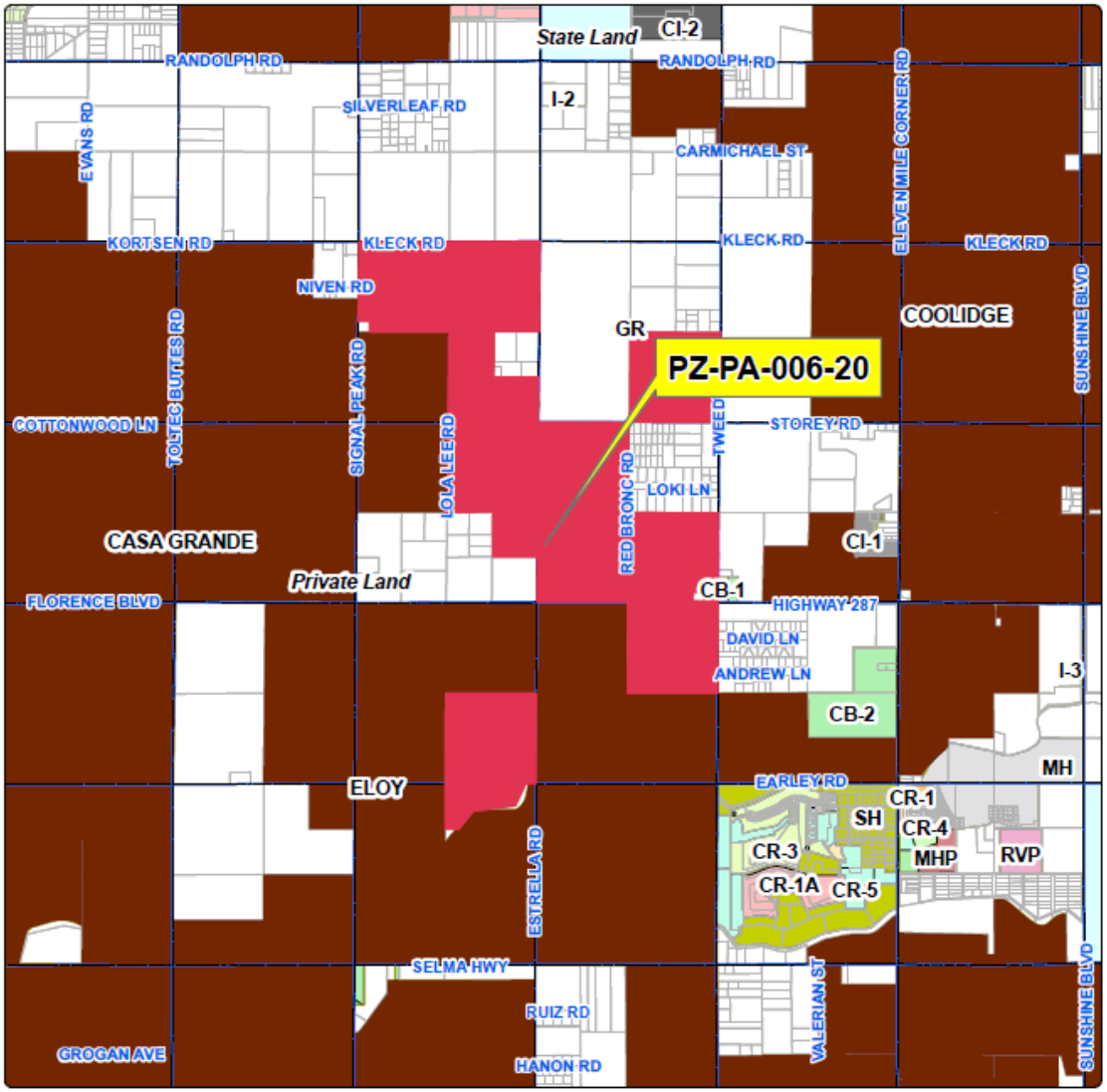
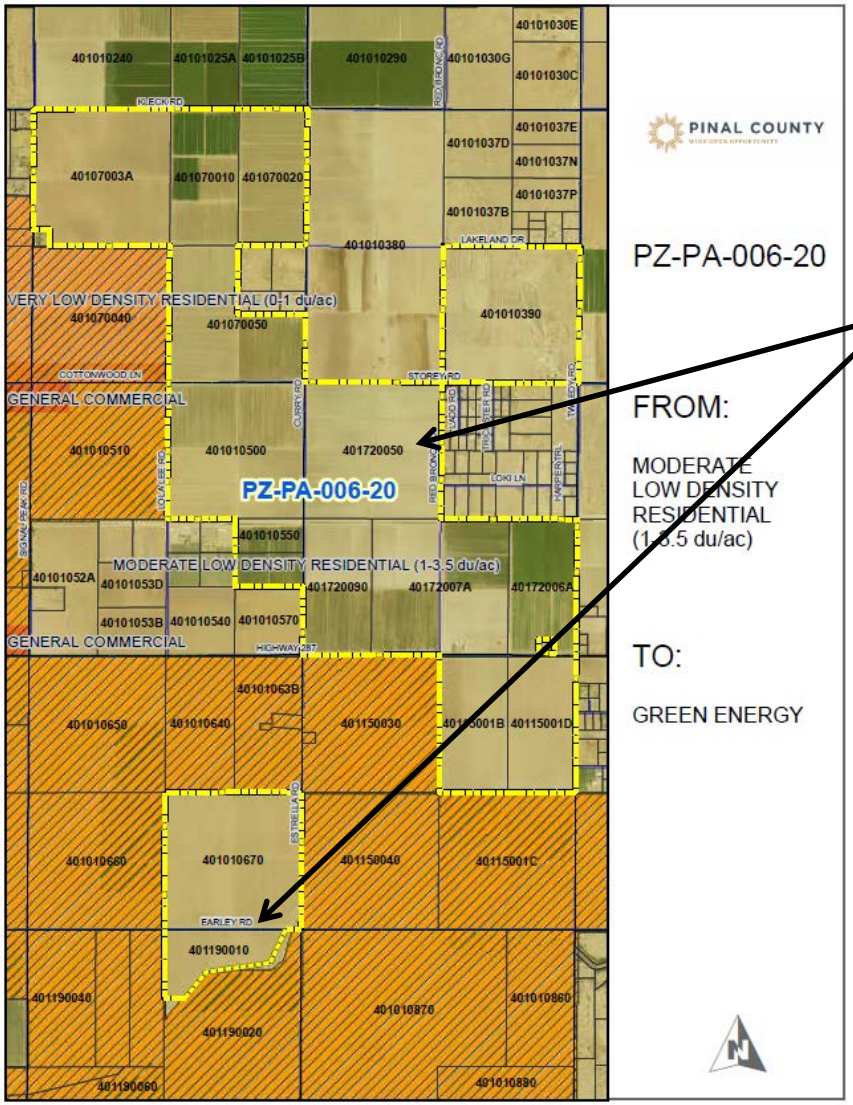


Comprehensive Plan



Comprehensive Plan: MLDR (Moderate Low Density Residential): 1-3.5 du/ac

Aerial Photo

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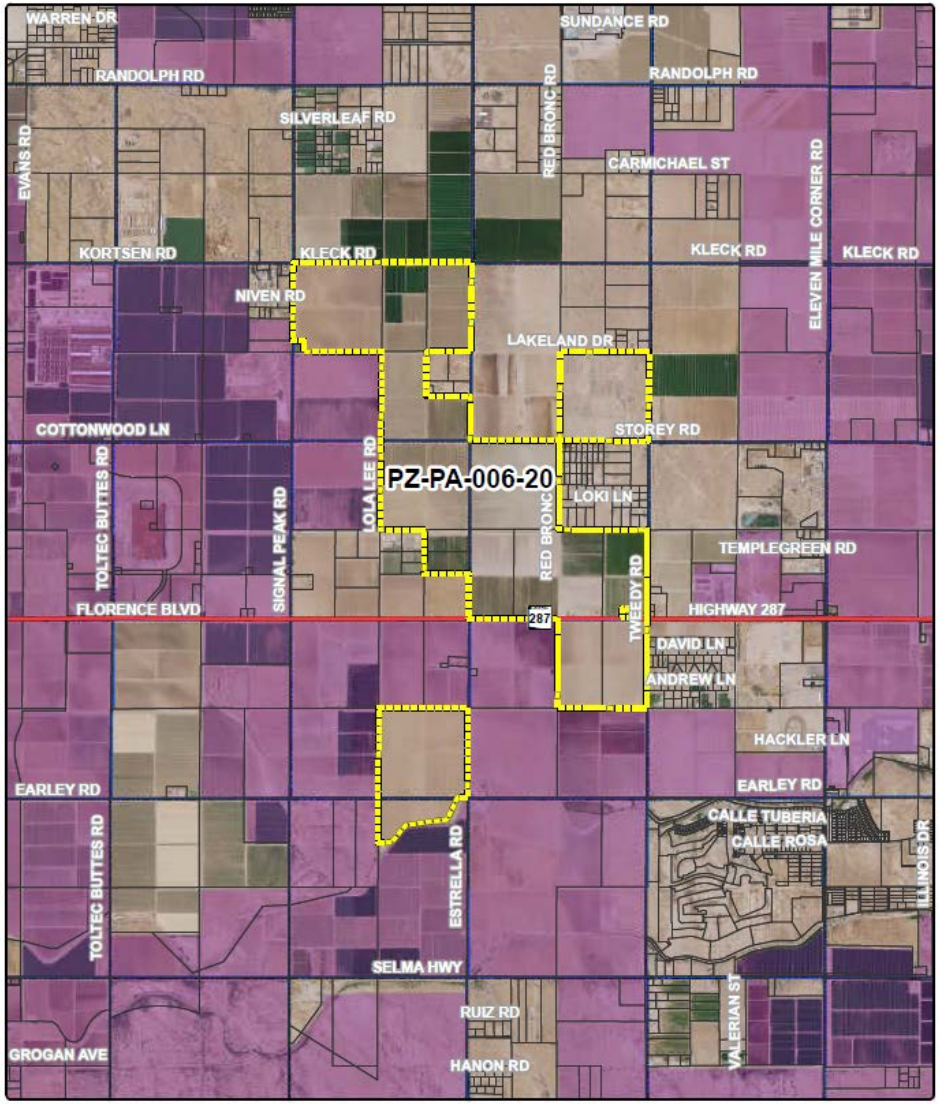

Applicant Proposal

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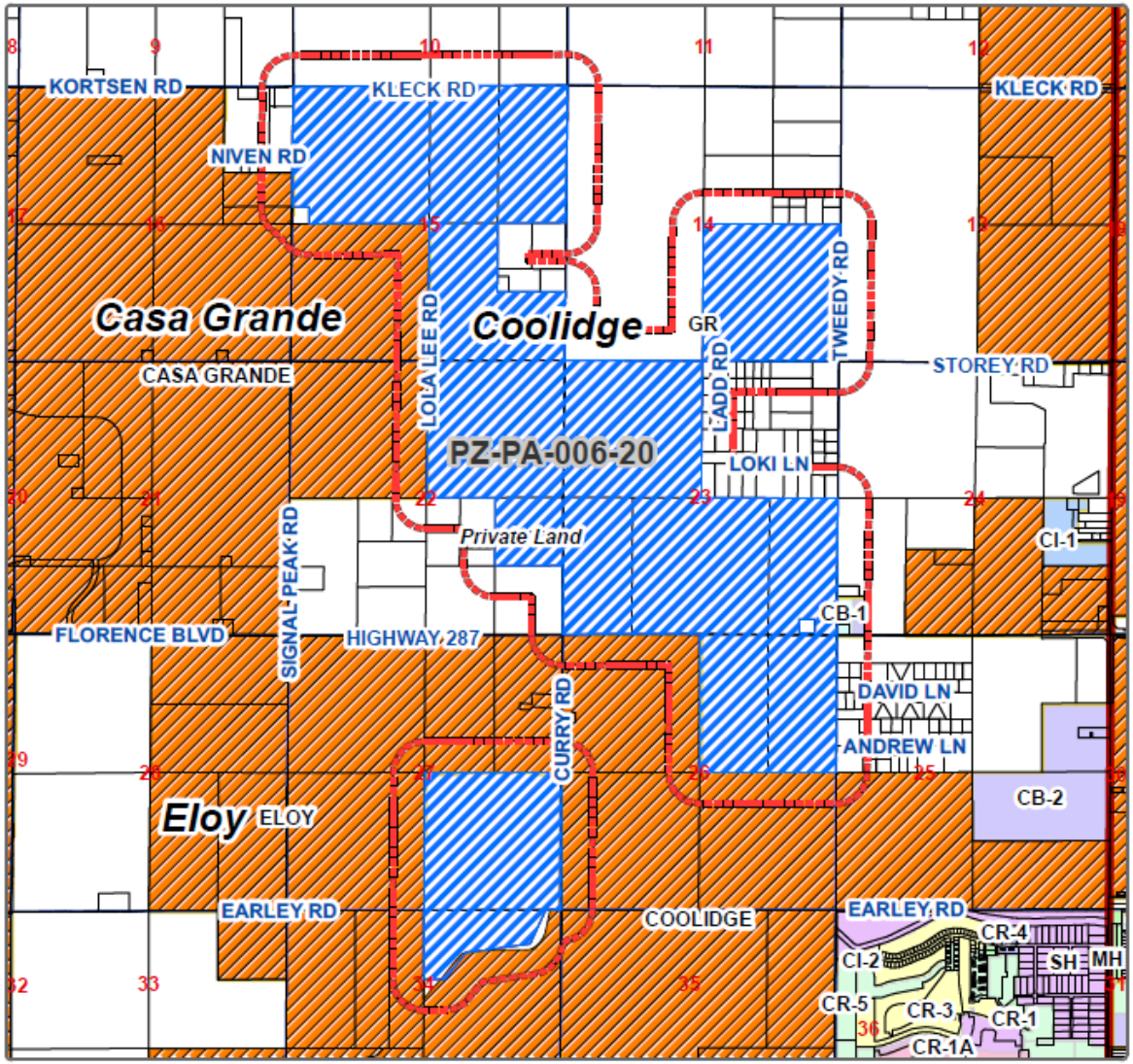
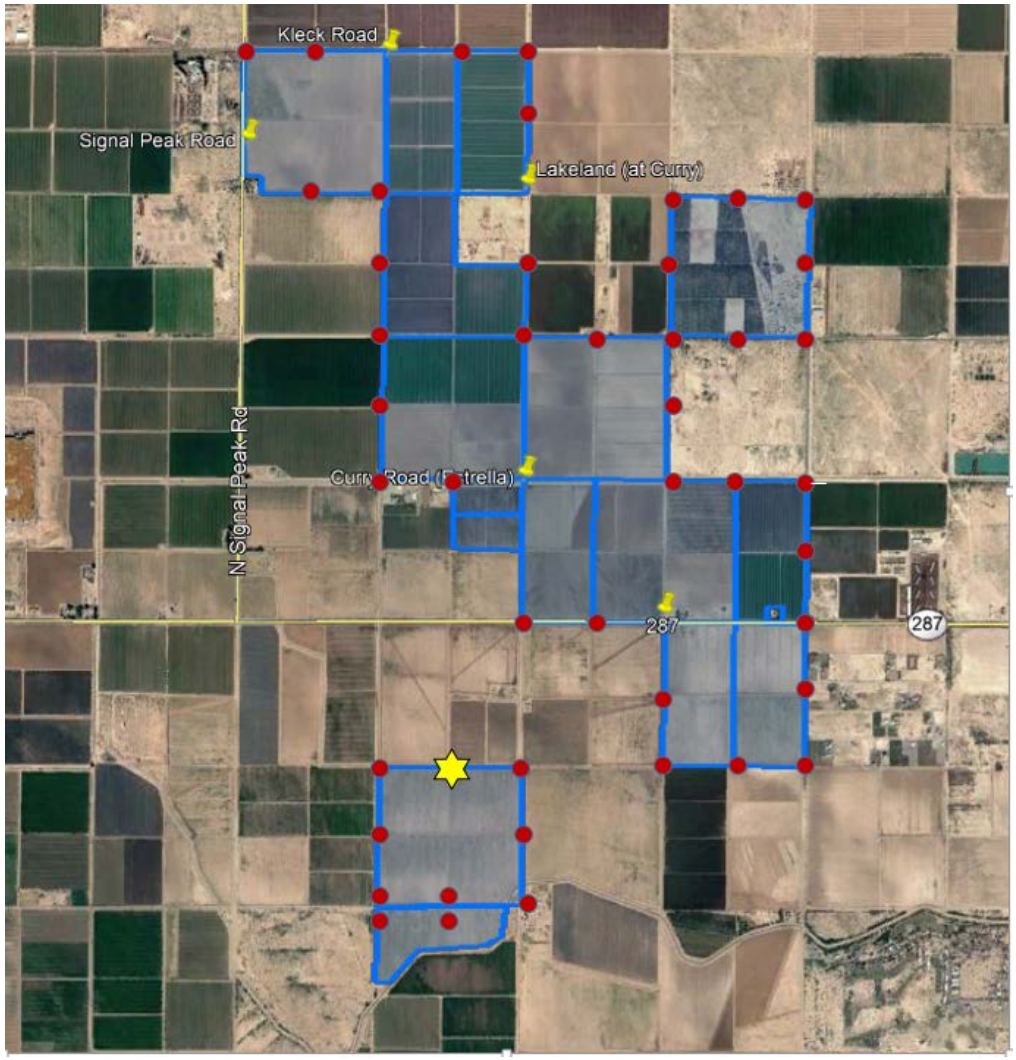


Site Posting Locations



45 – Smaller Signs – Red Dots
6 – Larger Sign Boards -Yellow

Site Posting (photos)

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Concerns: Proposed N-S -Open Space corridor

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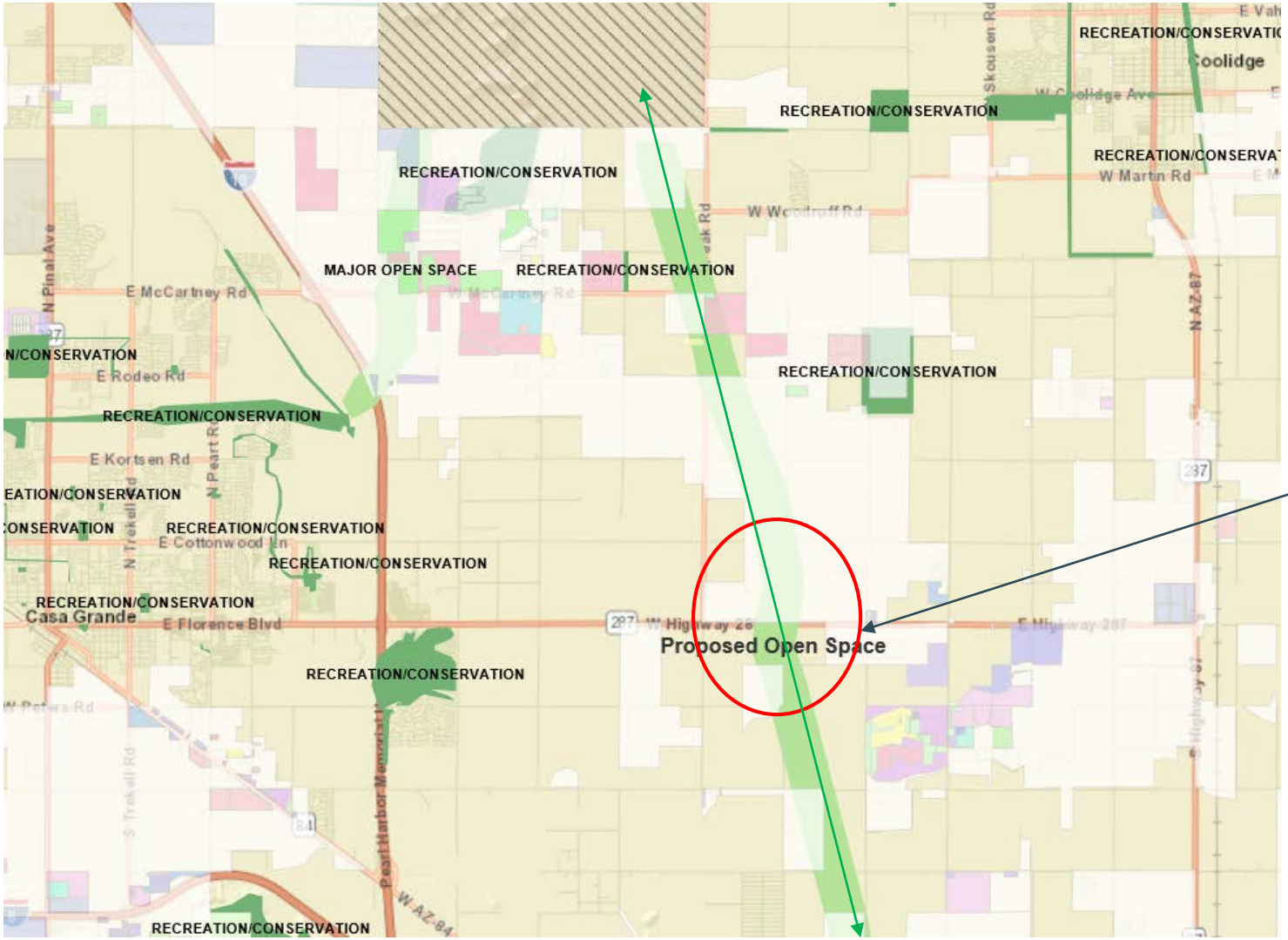

Proposed Site-
SUNDOG
ENERGY CENTER

Concerns: Open Space corridor – Trail Map

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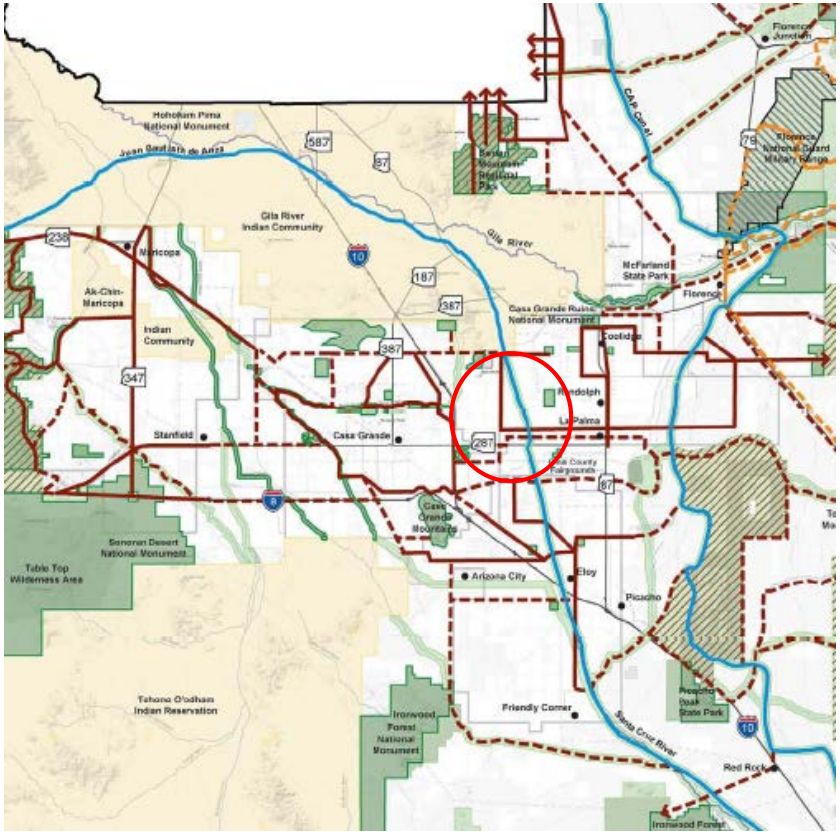
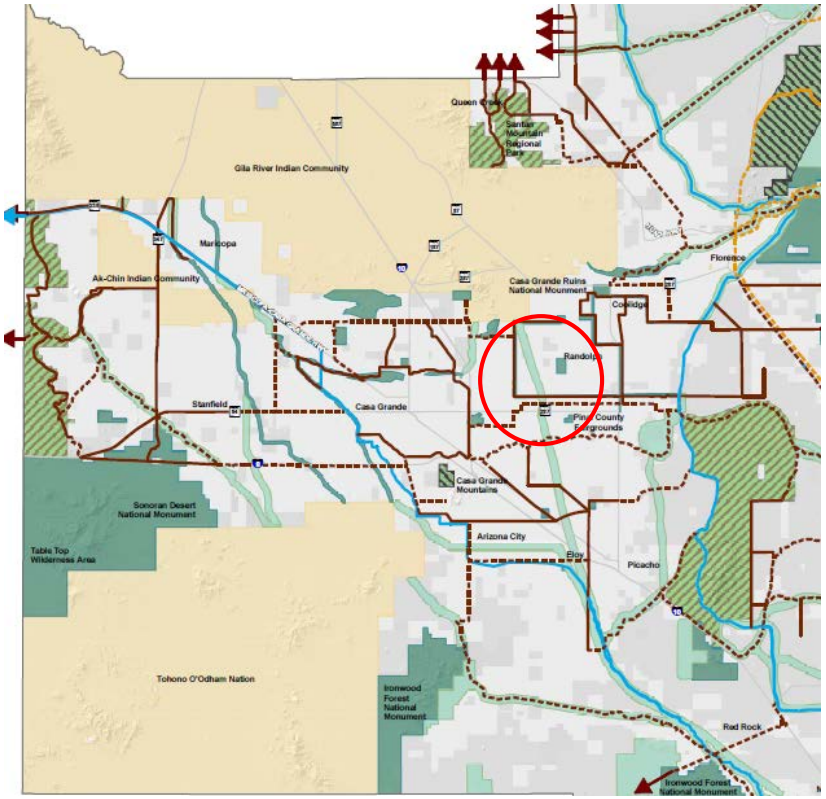
Original Trail (Historic Anza Corridor)



Adopted Trail (Disconnects original Anza Open Space Corridor)



Concerns: SUNDOG ENERGY CENTER

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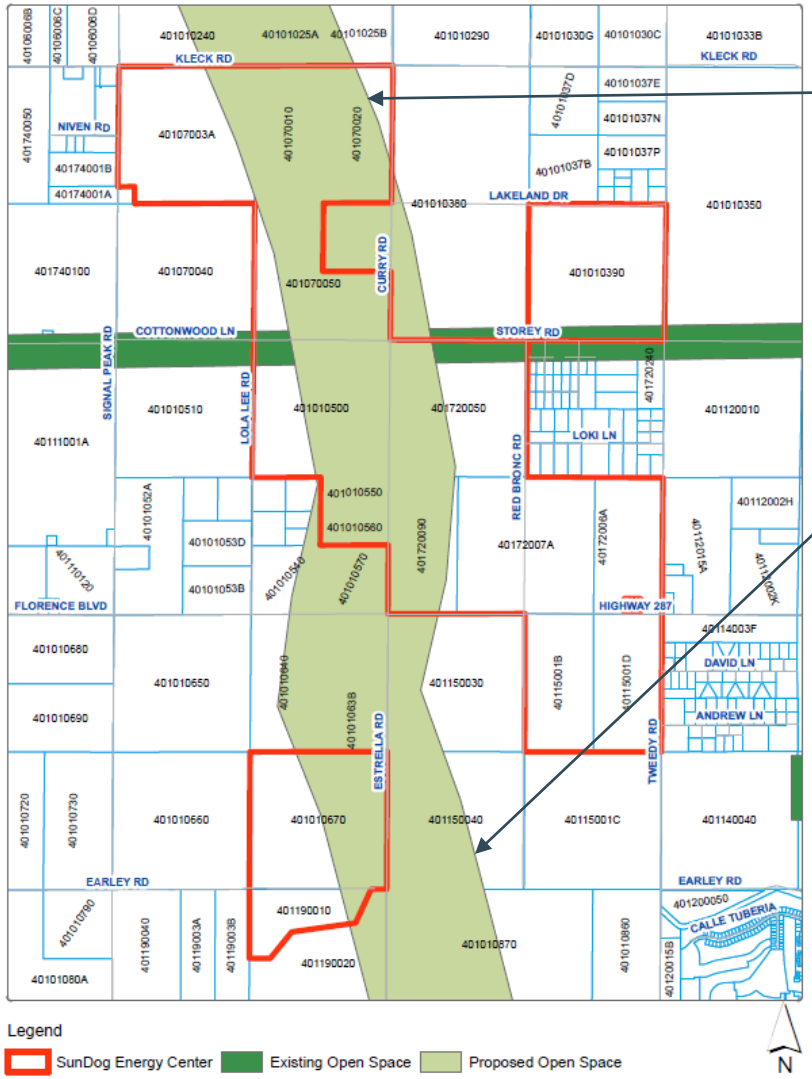

Proposed Open Space corridor shown in green from north – south covering over more than half of the parcels of the proposed SUNDOG ENERGY CENTER

Concerns: SUNDOG ENERGY CENTER

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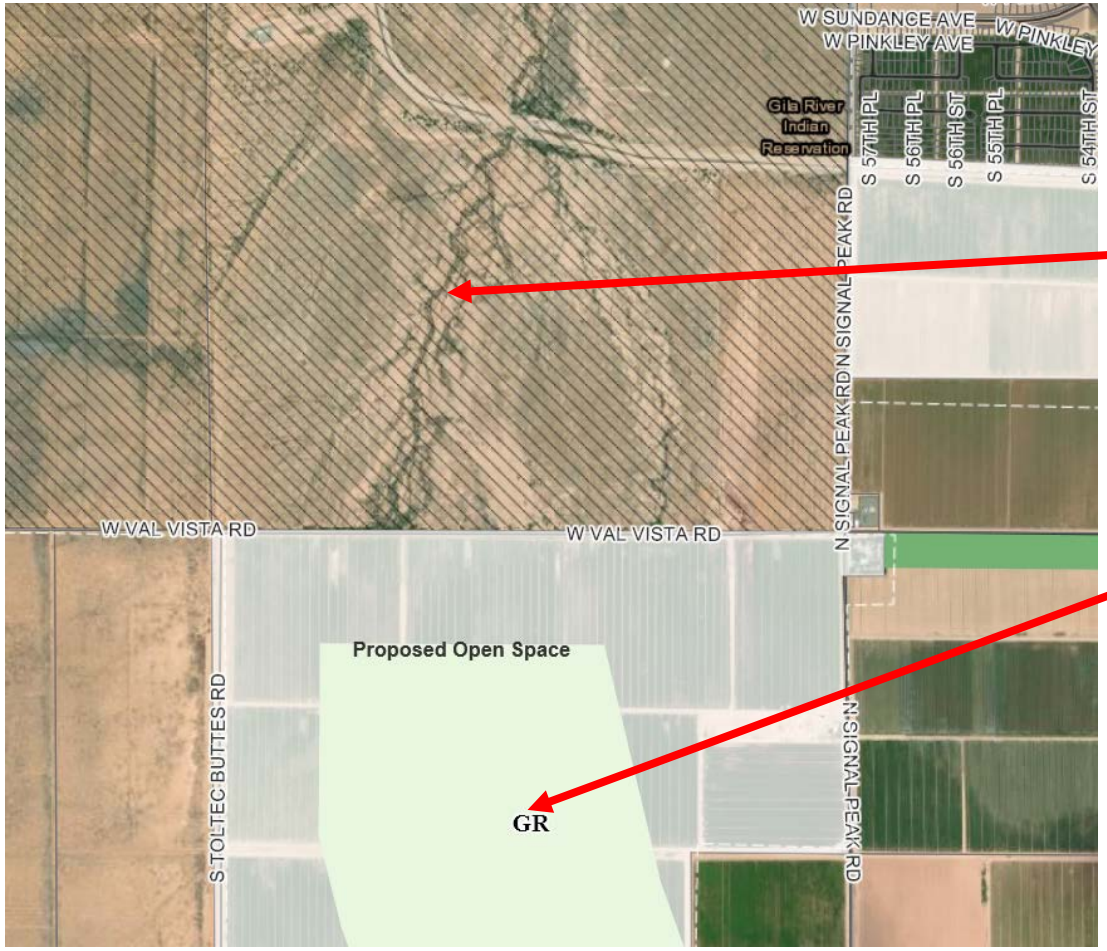

Existing Santa Cruz River/watershed to the north

Proposed Open Space corridor Per Pinal County Land Use 2019

Project Overview:

Site Conditions:

- Agriculture land-all parcels irrigated farmland
- Flat Topography
- No native habitats supported
- AZ G&F department report shows no wildlife area or habitats for over 5 miles

Project Overview:

Proposed project:

- Area: 1642 Acres
- Capacity: 200 MV photovoltaic (PV) solar project with battery energy storage
- Location: near existing Pinal Central Substation
- Project: Solar field –PV modules, Electrical collection systems, Site substation, Battery Storage system, Operation and Maintenance Building, associated civil infrastructure.

Findings-Comments

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- Staff findings/concerns:
  - Location of the proposal – part of a proposed Pinal County Open Space Plan
- Letters
  - Emails with concerns received – 3 letters
  - Reduced property values
  - Increase Heat island effect
- Agencies Comments:
  - No comments/concerns received
- CAC comments:
  - To preserve the historic corridor with a reasonable width as recommended by the County

Recommendation

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- Staff recommended approval

  Open space corridor 300'-wide

- Planning and Zoning Commission recommended approval (7-1)