

STAFF REPORT

TEMPE TOMORROW - GENERAL PLAN 2050

COMMENTS

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) 9-461.06 requires that a municipality's plan be readopted or a new or updated General Plan be adopted and voter-approved every ten years. The Tempe General Plan 2040 was adopted by the City Council on 12 December 2013 and was ratified by the voters in May 2014. Accordingly, the General Plan 2050 will need to be adopted by the City Council before 12 December 2023, and put to the voters before 20 May 2024.

According to the latest projections (June 2023) by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), Tempe is expected to see its population grow from 181,600 in 2020 to 253,500 in 2050; that will be an increase of about 72,000 residents. Similarly, employment in Tempe is projected to grow from 192,400 jobs in 2020 to 264,409 in 2050, that is an increase of 72,000 jobs. MAG projects that, in tandem with population growth, Tempe will see the number of housing units grow from 82,626 units (US Census) in 2020 to 110,655 in 2050, which is a growth of 28,029 units. The General Plan 2050 provides a vision and policies to properly plan for, and manage, this expected growth, while maintaining the high quality of life and neighborhood character that current residents enjoy.

Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 builds on the General Plan 2040 while weaving in the Council's Strategic Priorities, community input, and emerging trends in sustainability, resilience, land use management, public health, accessibility, inclusiveness, equity, technology, and mobility. Substantive changes to the GP 2040 included in the proposed 2050 General Plan are:

- Six guiding principles to form the vision and purpose of the document: a balanced land use, enhanced quality of life, stable neighborhoods, increased economic vitality, sustained mobility/greater accessibility, sustainability/climate friendliness and environmental stewardship, and housing affordability/access/diversity of types.
- A new element "Climate Change and Extreme Heat" has been added to the Plan.
- The Land Use and the Residential Density maps have been synthesized into one single Land Use and Density map, and are updated to reflect new vision and growth projections.
- Updates to all elements to reflect the current situation in the City, local, regional, and national planning trends, and to address public comments and inputs.
- Sustainability, green infrastructure, green building, water harvesting, and similar concepts have been embedded throughout the document as important themes.

The first draft of Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 was released to the public on May 5, 2023. Through May and June 2023, public comments were collected through online surveys, email correspondences, five public meetings, and two meetings of the Community Working Group. These comments were used to revise and refine the draft General Plan 2050 which was presented to the Development Review Commission first hearing on July 27, 2023. Based on additional public comments and the DRC guidance, a revised draft was released to the public and presented to the DRC for its second hearing on July 25, 2023. The attached Tempe Tomorrow-General Plan 2050 dated August 2023- is the version approved by the DRC on July 25, 2023.

GENERAL PLAN 2050 CONTENTS:

The General Plan 2050 outlines goals, objectives, and strategies for the future of the City, and provides the projected land use and density map. The General Plan does not change existing zoning, and entitlements on properties.

The General Plan 2050 (dated August, 2023) includes the following chapters.

Introduction

- Introduces Council’s Strategic Priorities into the General Plan. Each chapter in the document references which Priorities that chapter pertains to and helps to further.

Land Use and Development Chapter - Land Use, Community Design, Historic Preservation, Neighborhood Preservation & Revitalization, Redevelopment and Housing Elements and General Plan Amendment Procedure:

- Land Use Hubs are expanded on from General Plan 2040. Land Use Hubs are areas identified to supply local services nearby to residential areas to support the 20-minute city concept. Hubs are conceptually identified as local and regional to differentiate scale and reach for areas where transit options create larger capture regions for a 20-minute journey.
- Projected Land Use and Projected Residential Density maps have been combined into a single Land Use and Density Map. New categories of land use densities are created to reflect the merger of these maps, and to address community input.
- Areas near Tempe’s transit corridors are identified as opportunities for higher density growth and additional mixed-use designations.
- Sites under Cultural Resource Area designation are expanded from General Plan 2040 to include several new areas that meet the criteria to be designated as such, further protecting single-family areas, and promoting stability. This was done after residents in those areas sought the CRA designation.
- Community Design objectives and strategies are provided to promote universal design and accessibility to help Tempe neighborhoods remain inclusive.
- There are added strategies and objectives to the Historic Preservation element to coincide with the City’s recently adopted Historic Preservation Plan, with focus on recognition of the link between preservation and sustainability and the value that historic character adds to the City.
- A concept of Downtown Historic Core has been introduced in the Plan.
- Housing element has been revised to include strategies to encourage housing affordability and diversity and incorporate the City’s new affordable housing and homelessness efforts, and new data.
- Criteria for major amendment clarified for the new Land Use and Density designations proposed in the plan.

Economic Development Chapter – Economic Development, Growth Areas, and Cost of Development Elements:

- Growth Areas element includes the City’s five Innovation Hubs. Two growth areas from General Plan 2040 have been removed: Baseline & Rural, and ASU. 101/202 Interchange Growth Area has been modified to become the Smith Innovation Hub. The Rail Corridor Growth Area is expanded to include areas in the vicinity of the Tempe Streetcar as well as the Valley Metro Light Rail.

Circulation Chapter – Pedestrian & Bikeways Network, Transit, Travelways, Parking & Access Management and Aviation Elements:

- The plan provides updates, and additional emphasis on the 20-minute city concept compared to the 2040 plan.
- New language has been added about educational efforts relating to transit, biking, and walking.
- New strategies have been added for increasing walkability through shaded sidewalks and pedestrian level built environments to enhance the walking experience.
- New updates are included to Maricopa Association of Governments’ Regional Transportation Plan which identifies corridors for high-capacity transit routes through Tempe, including Bus Rapid Transit.
- New concepts related to micro mobility and drone technology have been added.

Sustainability & Resilience Chapter - Conservation, Diversion & Remediation, Environmental Planning, Water Resources and Climate Change & Extreme Heat Elements

- The chapter is renamed to better encompass emerging trends and concepts in the realm of environmental stewardship.
- New emphasis on supporting sustainability measures has been integrated into the urban fabric, such as green stormwater infrastructure, electric vehicle chargers and adopting and implementing the International Green Construction Code (IgCC).
- Land element is renamed to Diversion & Remediation to reflect its purpose in providing guides for reducing waste output and redevelopment of brownfield and superfund sites in the City.
- A new element has been added; Climate Change & Extreme Heat, to provide goals and objectives relating to extreme heat mitigation and resilience programming and infrastructure.
- Stronger sustainability language is included that is more action oriented and forward looking.

Open Space, Recreation and Cultural Amenities Chapter – Open Space, Recreation and Public Arts & Cultural Amenities Elements:

- The chapter integration with goals and objectives from Tempe’s updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- The chapter provides updated principles and metrics on Tempe’s Parks and Open Spaces inventory and open space ratio per capita.
- The chapter includes new map to depict the City’s public and private trails for equestrian use.

- O’idbad Original People’s Design Principles referenced to promote consultation and expressing of indigenous traditions, events, and landscapes.
- New language is added to encourage artists’ and working spaces and venues in Tempe.
- Natural preserve areas are defined and are added in the park categories.

Public Facilities and Services Chapter – Public Buildings and Facilities, Public Services, Municipal Court, and Public Safety Elements:

- Green building practices are encouraged in buildings and facilities development.
- New emphasis provided for public health, safety, and emergency preparedness.
- Language has been added to support and encourage exploration of new technologies as they related to public buildings, services, and facilities.
- New policies related to planning for police sub-stations, and crime mitigation have been added to reflect public input.

PUBLIC OUTREACH AND INPUT:

With the adoption of the Public Involvement Plan for Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 in March 2022, City staff initiated the public process for an update to the General Plan 2050.

Preparation of the draft general plan has immensely benefitted from the feedback of an extensive public input program including four rounds of public input including a dedicated project page and email address, meeting, and survey invitations to 42,000 households, utility bill newsletter announcements, extensive social media and e-news promotion, in-person and online meetings, interactive and hands-on feedback tabling at multiple community events and focus group meetings with a variety of stakeholders. In the eighteen months of the plan preparation process, staff conducted six surveys, 111 meetings, sent out 407,000 mailings, and received 118,000 online impressions. Staff received over 1,200 comments and more than 300 pages of feedback.

Five community-wide meetings were held, and outreach events were conducted at dozens of locations to seek input and gather ideas for the general plan, (including Tempe High School, Corona del Sol High School, Tempe Accelerated High School, Legoland Discovery Center, Neighborhood Celebration Awards, Tour de Tempe, Tempe History Museum, Arts in the Parks, FanCon, Unity Walk, Movies in the Park, G.A.I.N. events and more.) More than 3,500 individuals have participated in the outreach activities, meetings, and surveys to solicit public input. The input and comments were continuously considered in the development of the draft General Plan 2050.

To advise staff during development of the General Plan, in June 2022, the Mayor and Council appointed a 26-person Community Working Group (CWG) (which later stabilized with 17 members) to meet monthly from July 2022 through June 2023. The CWG remains in place until December 31, 2023. Three extra CWG meetings, beyond the regular monthly meetings, were held to cover the topics and further discuss the draft plan and gather citizen input. The City also created a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to help in crafting the concepts and details of the draft plan. The TAG consists of 70 members representing Tempe’s boards and commissions, partner organizations, school boards, ASU, and City-interdepartmental subject matter experts. The TAG met twice each month from July 2022 to June 2023.

The public involvement process has been organized to ensure that public concerns are continuously understood and considered, and addressed in the plan. While traditional methods (meetings, presentations, and hearings etc.) play an important role in public engagement, online tools and social media are used extensively to disseminate information, broaden outreach, and solicit input. Community members are provided continuous opportunities to comment on the draft General Plan until it is adopted.

Staff recommends approval of the Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW COMMISSION REVIEW (DRC) AND RECOMMENDATION

The Development Review Commission (DRC) held its first and introductory hearing on the draft General Plan 2050 on June 27, 2023. More than 100 members of the public attended the meeting, and 28 spoke providing their comments. The DRC provided some guidance to the staff for clarifying some parts of the plan and revise parts of the plan to reflect the balance of public comments. Staff revised the draft plan accordingly and provided a revised plan for the Development Review Commission and the public.

The Development Review Commission held its second hearing on Tuesday, July 25, 2023 to take an action on the draft plan. The following is a summary of the DRC and public comments made during the hearing.

A Synopsis of the public comments made at the meeting:

Twenty-seven individuals spoke at the meeting. Several others had submitted comment cards to the DRC prior to the meeting. The public concerns and opinions included the following.

- There is too much density in Tempe. Population projections by the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) may be actually the developers' plans.
- There are many good elements in the draft General Plan. However, reduce densities in some locations.
- The plan is good for circulation and biking, and also for sustainability. However, balance growth and cultural and archeological resources.
- Reduce the density in Danelle Plaza to 25 du/ac.
- Higher density does not mean affordable housing.
- Seek a middle ground between high rises, and single-family homes. Look for the “missing middle” housing.
- Emphasize desert preserve, like what is provided in the plan.
- The mixed-use area near Indian Bend Wash and McClintock Dr. should be designated for even more density of 65 du/ac as the area is detached from neighborhoods.
- Take guidance from Character Area plans to understand public preferences in density and land use.
- Higher density can create traffic congestion, and service issues, and also may cause gentrification.
- The bike-friendly policies, active transportation policies, and sustainability elements in the plan are good for people and businesses.
- The Cultural Resource Areas (CRA) in the plan are good. Heritage protection, and historic preservation should be balanced with development.
- Higher density along transit, light rail is good.
- The draft general plan is good as it creates opportunities for more new housing to keep up with the demand, possibly at lower costs, and providing options for young people to become homeowners and Tempe residents.

- Tempe needs more affordable housing and parks.
- Tempe has changed a lot for the long-time residents.
- Keep the land use and density changes proposed along arterial road intersections on Broadway/Rural, Southern/Rural, Baseline/Rural etc.
- Young professionals like higher densities and mixed use, allowing for housing opportunities and diversity. Mixed use reduces vehicle trips.
- The entire city should be a Cultural Resource Area.
- Delete Blue Zones and remove 20-minute city concepts (describe at hearing as “15-minute city”).
- Do not listen to the NIMBY (Not in my Backyard) folks. Provide higher densities for the possibilities to build lower cost dwelling units.

Comments and questions made by Commissioners:

The DRC appreciated the members of the public who came to the meeting and stated their opinions on the plan. They also appreciated the work by the staff. The Commission asked for a couple of questions to the staff for clarification, and understanding of the plan. Questions about a trailer park neighborhood along Kyrene Road, north of Baseline Road and South of the US 60 Freeway, and whether that area could be an opportunity for growth. Possible consideration for higher density along the McClintock Drive, north of the 202 Freeway as suggested by a resident. Confirmed with staff that the 20-Minute City concepts are described throughout the General Plan 2050. One Commissioner suggested she would like to see the original June draft with the higher land use density projections but would not reject this plan to move forward. The staff responded to the DRC clarified any questions. The Commission has the ability to make further recommendations or changes to the land use maps if the Commission thought it was appropriate at this time.

Motion:

The DRC recommend approval of the **Tempe Tomorrow - General Plan 2050** dated August 2023 to Tempe City Council, with the draft plan as presented by staff without any further stipulations. The motion to approve passed with a 7-0 vote.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS POST DRC RECOMMENDATION:

Upon the vote for the Development Review Commission’s recommendation to approve the General Plan 2050, we anticipate some more on-going public requests for changes to the plans that were either never considered in the draft General Plan, comments resulting from changes in prior drafts, or represented varying viewpoints that did not warrant further changes to the plan at this time. Below is a general list of anticipated topics based on public comments received that the City Council can either consider with the General Plan updates, or the city can evaluate when future plans for development projects come forward:

1. Some residents desire to have the Danelle Plaza site’s Projected Land Use & Density Map changed from “Mixed-Use Moderate” (up to 45 du/ac) to the new category “Mixed-Use Low-Moderate” (up to 25 du/ac)
2. Some residents would like to see a portion of Maple-Ash from University to 10th Street, Projected Land Use & Density Map changed from “Cultural Resource Area” to a “Mixed-Use Urban” (more than 65 du/ac).

3. A request to remove the proposed Cultural Resource Area on a block of properties (three which were specifically called out) on the north side of 9th street between Mitchell Dr. and McKenny St. and designate as "Mixed-Use Low-Moderate" (up to 25 du/ac).
4. A request for a Projected Land Use & Density Map change for a block of property on the south side of 1st Street, from Wilson Street to Roosevelt Street, from "Mixed-Use Moderate" and "Multi-Family Low-Moderate" to "Mixed-Use Urban" (more than 65 du/ac).
5. A request to change some or all areas along Broadway Road and Southern Avenue, where changed from Mixed-Use (up to 45 du/ac), to "Commercial", then to Mixed-Use (up to 25 du/ac) and are now wanting back to "Commercial" land use category (resulting in less density).
6. Possible increase in density for the large site at the northwest corner of Kyrene Road and Baseline Road east of Western canal and ADOT retention area, and south of US 60.
7. Other various requests for Mixed-Use density changes based on personal interest for a designated area on the Projected Land Use & Density Map.

FIRST COUNCIL HEARING ON AUGUST 10, 2024:

The first hearing towards the adoption of Tempe Tomorrow - General Plan 2050 took place on August 10, 2023 at the City Council Chambers. Thirty-nine (39) individuals spoke on the General Plan agenda item at the meeting. Their comments (sometimes consisting of conflicting opinions) included the following general themes.

1. Provide more residential density than is shown in the General Plan 2050 document dated August 2023. That will help in increasing the supply of housing units and also provide efficiency for infrastructure services.
2. Keep the high residential densities as proposed in the May 5 version of the General Plan document.
3. Providing more residential density than currently proposed can also improve the urban culture, where residents can interact with more people. It will also help small local businesses to find more local customers.
4. The proposed residential densities are already too high and will strain city's infrastructure, and service capacity. It will also compromise quality of life for the single family homeowners. Some do not like high rises next to single-family homes.
5. Bring back the density levels shown in the general Plan 2040.
6. Remove CRA designations for some individual properties north of the 9th Street (east of Maple St. in Gage Addition), and also on the 700 block (between McKemy St., and Mitchell Dr.).
7. Increase density in the mixed use industrial area generally bounded by the Bend Wash, McKellips Rd., McClintock Dr., and Loop 202 to Mixed-Use High (up to 65 du/ac). The area is currently proposed as Mixed-Use Industrial Moderate (up to 45 du/ac).
8. TBAG (Tempe Bicycle Action Group) supports the plan as it provides bike lanes, walking trails, and sustainability elements.
9. The proposed density at Danelle Plaza should be reduced to 25 du/ac.
10. The proposed density at Danelle Plaza should be increased to facilitate increased supply of housing units.
11. Study demographics in more detail e. g.; age, professions, sex etc.
12. Provide new open spaces.
13. Adopt International Green Construction Code (IgCC) soon, and make it mandatory.
14. Prioritize the conservation of desert preserves.

15. Remove mixed-use, and high density at the Discovery Business Center. (Elliot/101/Shutterfly Way)
16. Provide “missing middle” housing types in appropriate locations.
17. There is too much Cultural Resource Area being proposed in Tempe which restricts development.
18. Carefully analyze heat island effects caused by more construction and paving.
19. City emphasizes the preference of developers.
20. Transit and density go together.
21. Build more density into the plan, attract tech workers, and remove the Cultural Resource Area (CRA) designations.
22. The dark sky provisions included in the Plan are excellent.
23. The Plan has many good elements, and staff has listened to the people.

The Council supported the following recommendations from staff for change in the draft General Plan 2050 document dated August as submitted to the Council.

- Request for the portion of Discovery Business Center (Elliot/Shutterfly Way) shown with Mixed-Use High up to 65 du/ac designation to change back to Industrial land use (with no residential density) as shown in GP 2040.
- Request for removal of CRA designation shown on properties at the 700 block of W. 9th Street between Mitchell Dr. and McKemy St. in the GP 2050 draft. These properties were designated as Mixed-Use in GP 2040, and maintaining mixed use there is mostly a technical correction.
- Request to change the area generally between McClintock, McKellips, Indian Bend Wash & Loop 202 from the proposed Mixed-Use Industrial Moderate (up to 45 du/ac) to Mixed-Use High (up to 65 du/ac).
- In Addition, staff also added GP 2050 arts-related edits suggested by Robert Moore (See pages 76, 262, 264, 265, 266, 267)

Staff has edited and expanded the Character Area Planning text on p 62 to clarify that the City uses the Character Area Plans regularly for design review and while assessing investments in infrastructure and public realm when appropriate.

The Council also asked staff to review the following item.

- Assessment of the appropriateness of removing the Cultural Resource Areas (CRA) designation on the property at 821 S. Maple Avenue. (Gage Addition).
- After analyzing the blocks of properties south of University Drive to 9th Street and 10th Street, staff does not recommend any further reductions of CRA designated area on sites that are not already designated mixed-use. The recommendation is based on the potential impact on the many historic or historic eligible properties in the vicinity of 821 S. Maple Avenue, and the neighborhood character. This property and the area is currently designated CRA in the General Plan 2040 and we have not removed any CRA designations within this area in the proposed GP 2050.

HISTORY & FACTS:

March 3, 2022 City Council adopted the Public Involvement Plan for Tempe Tomorrow –

General Plan 2050.

- May 10, 2022 Presentation to Development Review Commission (DRC) at Study Session.
- August 2, 2022 General Plan Community Working Group (CWG) first meeting.
- September 6, 2022 General Plan CWG second meeting.
- September 19, 2022 Presentation to Tempe Sustainability Commission.
- October 4, 2022 General Plan CWG third meeting.
- Oct 21 – Nov 9, 2022 Second Online Survey open on Tempe Forum to receive citizen input.
- October 26, 2022 General Plan workshop held at the Legoland Discovery Center at Arizona Mills Mall.
- November 1, 2022 General Plan CWG fourth meeting.
- November 8, 2022 Presentation to DRC at Study Session.
- November 15, 2023 General Plan CWG fifth meeting.
- December 6, 2022 General Plan CWG sixth meeting.
- January 3, 2023 General Plan CWG seventh meeting.
- January 17, 2023 General Plan CWG eighth meeting.
- January 19, 2023 General Plan open house public meeting held at the Tempe History Museum.
- Jan 19 – Feb 5, 2023 Third Online Survey open on Tempe Forum to receive citizen input.
- January 24, 2023 Presentation to DRC at Study Session.
- February 7, 2023 General Plan CWG ninth meeting.
- March 7, 2023 General Plan CWG tenth meeting.
- Mar 23 – Apr 9, 2023 Fourth Online Survey on Tempe Forum to receive citizen input.
- March 27, 2023 General Plan virtual meetings held.
- April 4, 2023 General Plan CWG eleventh meeting.
- April 11, 2023 Presentation to Tempe Transportation Commission.
- April 27, 2023 Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 Draft presented to City Council at

	Work Study Session.
May 2, 2023	General Plan CWG twelfth meeting.
May 3, 2023	Presentation to Tempe Neighborhood Advisory Commission.
May 3, 2023	Presentation to Tempe Joint Review Commission.
May 5, 2023	Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 Draft released to the public.
May 17, 2023	General Plan draft review meeting held virtually and at the Tempe History Museum.
May 23, 2023	Presentation to DRC at Study Session.
May 26, 2023	Meeting with Tempe Neighbors Helping Neighbors.
June 3, 2023	Public Meeting with Broadmor and Brentwood-Cavalier area neighbors at Tempe Public Library.
June 5, 2023	Public Meeting with Baseline area neighbors at Kiwanis Recreation Center.
June 6, 2023	General Plan CWG thirteenth meeting.
June 12, 2023	Public Meeting with Apache area neighbors at Escalante Community Center and Public Meetings with North Tempe area neighbors at North Tempe Multi-Generational Center
June 13, 2023	Public Meeting with Northwest & Downtown area neighbors at Westside Multi-Generational Center.
June 14, 2023	Public Meeting with neighbors from south and central Tempe neighbors at the Tempe Public Library.
June 15, 2023	General Plan CWG fourteenth meeting and recommendation vote to advance the General Plan draft to the DRC.
July 2022-June 2023	Bi-monthly Technical Advisory group meetings top to discuss General Plan elements and provide input to the drafting process, and content.
June 20, 2023	Revised drat Tempe Tomorrow - General Plan 2050 (dated June 20, 2023) sent to the DRC, and released to the public.
June 27, 2023	Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 introduction and first hearing at DRC.
July 14, 2023	Updated draft Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 (dated July 14, 2023), sent to DRC and released to the public.
July 18, 2023	Presented at the Tempe Roadshow, Downtown Tempe Authority

July 18, 2023	Presented at the Victory acres neighborhood meeting
July 25, 2023	Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 second hearing and recommendation from DRC. The DRC recommended approval of the Plan by a vote of 7-0.
August 10, 2023	Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 introduction and first hearing at City Council.
August 24, 2023	Tempe Tomorrow – General Plan 2050 second and final hearing at City Council, planned date. (potential adoption date)
<i>March 12, 2024</i>	<i>Scheduled date of voter ratification of General Plan 2050</i>