

CHAPTER 1 **INTRODUCTION**

When describing their town, Camp Verdeans use terms like western, rural, friendly, and historic. The community's biggest assets are listed as the western/rural lifestyle, Verde River, friendly people, and open space with mountain scenery. When asked about the future of their community, residents overwhelmingly stated a desire for shopping opportunities, and maintaining the western/rural character of the town and its visual attractiveness. More employment opportunities and reasonably priced housing are also recognized, as needs to be fulfilled.

While Camp Verdeans look to the future, they have expressed concerns for water quality and quantity, an increase in traffic, and a lack of medium priced homes. At the same time, residents list job opportunities, neighborhood upkeep, and preservation of ample open space as the community's greatest needs.

VISION STATEMENT

Camp Verde will maintain its western, rural, friendly, and historic atmosphere with scenic beauty while meeting the needs of its citizens by providing shopping and employment opportunities along with reasonably priced housing. Natural resources such as water and open space will be a priority for concern. Commercial and residential areas will be neat and appealing in appearance so as not to distract from the natural beauty and mountain vistas of the Town.

HISTORY OF STUDY AREA

Located in Yavapai County near the geographical center of Arizona, Camp Verde is the oldest community in the Verde Valley. The Camp Verde area was utilized and inhabited by Native Americans long before Euro-Americans arrived, probably from 8000 B.C. to A.D. 1. It was about A.D. 700 that agriculture appeared. Large, level fields near pueblos were used to cultivate corn, beans, squash, and cotton by irrigation. Native Americans used salt, mined from the area, for medicinal purposes and as a trade commodity.

Over 800 years later, Euro-Americans first entered this area. A period of exploration followed. In 1865, the Army established Camp Lincoln, a military encampment, to protect the farms overlooking Clear Creek. The historic life of Camp Verde (the name was changed in 1868) had begun. In 1879, Camp Verde was renamed Fort Verde to denote permanence.

In the 1950s, when the historic salt mine closed, the next generation of Camp Verdeans sought employment in the construction industry. During the mid to late 1950s, construction of Interstate 17 was in full swing. Because of Camp Verde's central location, and upon completion of the highway, construction workers could easily access jobs to the north and south. The demographics of the community changed to include not only farmers and ranchers but also out-of-town workers who returned home to Camp Verde on the weekends. Today, many residents commute to the metro Phoenix area, Prescott, and Flagstaff for jobs in various construction trades and professional services.

Population demographics have also changed in Camp Verde. According to the 2000 Census figures, at 41 percent, of the population is between the ages of 20 and 55 years. That is an increase from the 1990 Census of 38.4 percent. Between 1990 and 2000, the fastest growing segment of the community was the population between five and 19 years of age, from 6.8% percent in 1990 to 20.7% in 2000. The population over 62 years of age has experienced a slight decrease from 26% of the population in 1990 to 23.5 percent of the population in 2000.

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TOPOGRAPHY AND CURRENT LIFESTYLE

At an elevation of 3,160 feet, Camp Verde is classified as Lower Sonoran Desert. The climate is arid and characterized by hot summers and mild winters. Yearly temperatures average a minimum of 42 degrees F and a maximum of 80 degrees F. Precipitation averages approximately 13 inches per year. Of that precipitation, just over 2 inches is in snowfall.

If its water supply were limited only to precipitation, then the desert aspect would be more apparent. However, because it is situated on the Verde River, Camp Verde occupies a rare and enviable position among Arizona cities and towns: It is a desert community having a permanent river. The river supports lush riparian vegetation, giving Camp Verde the appearance of an emerald-green jewel within an arid desert environment.

The Town and study area consist of fields of flat river-plain, traversed by the Verde River (18 miles of river lies within Town limits) and its tributaries, with desert hills and mesas rising in the forefront of the distant mountains. Beyond the Town limits, the land is public, mostly administered by the U.S. Forest Service as permitted rangeland. Residents and visitors alike pursue recreational activities such as walking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, bird watching, picnicking, fishing and hunting, riding All Terrain Vehicles, and off-road motorcycling on the National Forest lands.

The settled land has historically been worked in some type of agricultural use, with water from several historic irrigation ditches or from private wells. Today, many residents actively pursue agricultural activities on their individual lots, made possible by the historic irrigation ditches.

Camp Verde has experienced a population growth of 3,824 residents from 1980 to just below 10,000 residents in 2000, yet has maintained its rural culture and atmosphere. It is the perception of openness created by large tracts of National Forest and State Trust lands that bring new residents to the area. When questioned about the Town's future, residents list maintaining that rural atmosphere and having a visually attractive community as important. Citizens cite upkeep of neighborhoods as a way to have an attractive community.

Increased traffic and maintaining safety is a concern to the citizenry. Townspeople of all ages who walk with their dogs, bike, and ride their horses have expressed a desire to continue to be able to enjoy multi-modal transportation routes between neighborhoods and from neighborhoods to recreational areas. A local Girl Scout Troop listed the ability to ride horses from neighborhood to neighborhood as a priority.

Since incorporation in 1986, the Town has slowly begun to arrive at an understanding of the nature of its needs and desires. During this time, the influx of population has escalated, increasing the need for services and infrastructure. Comments from hundreds of citizens reveal concern for protecting the rural lifestyle yet indicate a desire for sustainable jobs and a diverse mix of growth that will provide economic stability while preserving the perception of openness.

STATE REQUIREMENTS

A general plan serves as the primary tool and blueprint for guiding the Town's future growth and development. It integrates the ideas and desires of the Town's residents,

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businesses, and elected officials into a strategy for managing the Town's future. Arizona Statute requires that every municipality have a General Plan and each county have a Comprehensive Plan.

In 1998 and 2000, the State Legislature passed the Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus Legislation that mandates what elements are to be included in the General Plan. For communities the size of Camp Verde, seven (7) elements are required for the General Plan. These elements will provide the framework and policies to achieve long-term goals and make day-to-day decisions in just about every area in which town government is involved. The required elements are: land use, circulation, growth area, environmental planning, cost of development, open space and water resources.

The other change with the Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus Legislation is that voters must now ratify the General Plan. Once approved by voters, the General Plan becomes a tool by which townspeople, policy makers and outside development interests can plan for issues such as appropriate land uses, locations, densities, intensities and circulation.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions should be used when interpreting the General Plan:

**Encourage/
Promote/Suggest:**

When used in the context of an implementation strategy, these terms reflect the community's preference for actions that involve voluntary solutions, but do not rule out regulatory solutions.

**Ensure/Require/
Implement/
Establish:**

When used in the context of an implementation strategy, these terms reflect the community's preference for regulatory solutions.

Goal:

Statements describing a desired condition to be planned for and achieved.

**Implementation
Strategy:**

A means for bringing goals into reality.

**Research/
Develop/Adopt:**

Process by which ordinances/regulations become effective.

Vision:

A statement of values describing the Town's desired image into the future.

ORGANIZATION OF THE GENERAL PLAN DOCUMENT

The General Plan document is organized to include the various elements that are required by Arizona Revised Statutes through the Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus Legislation and three other elements. Each element has a chapter devoted to it. They are: History and Culture, Land Use, Economic Development, Growth Area, Cost of Development, Housing, Transportation and Circulation, Open Space and Recreation, Environmental Planning, and Water Resources. Each element of the general plan provides a vision and a series of goals describing the desires of the townspeople. The implementation

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strategies will guide policy makers and private sector entities in reaching tangible decisions.

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

Arizona Statutes governing municipalities state that a community’s general plan must be updated every 10 years and readopted by the Town Council and ratified by voters. State law does allow amendments to the general plan prior to the 10-year re-adoption date. Arizona Revised Statute outlines how amendments can be made to the general plan.

State Law Requirements for Changing Land Use and Zoning Designations.

State Law Requirement	Major Amendment	Minor Amendment	Zoning Change
Public Notice in Newspaper	Yes	Yes	Yes
Letter to Property Owners w/in 300’	Yes	Yes	Yes
Property is Posted	Yes	Yes	Yes
P&Z Commission Public Hearing	Yes	Yes	Yes
Council Public Hearing	Yes	Yes	Yes
2/3 Council Vote Required	Yes	No	No
Simple Majority Council Vote	No	Yes	Yes
Town Council Resolution Needed	Yes	Yes	Yes
Scheduled Once A Year for All	Yes	No	No
Scheduled Throughout the Year	No	Yes	Yes
Subject to Referendum	Yes	Yes	Yes

The Community Development Director shall make the determination as to whether a proposed amendment constitutes a major or minor amendment. Appeals of such determinations shall be made to the Council. Major amendments cannot be enacted through emergency measures and could be subject to further public referendum.

Because Major amendments are considered once a year during the month of September, applications for major amendments should be submitted no later than May 31st. Fees for general plan amendments shall be set by council resolution.

MAJOR AMENDMENTS

ARS defines major amendment as “a substantial alteration of the municipality’s land use mixture or balance as established in the municipality’s existing general plan land use element.” The Community Development Director will use this checklist to determine if a

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Land Use Map change is a major or minor amendment. A Major Amendment is any proposal that meets any one of these criteria:

CRITERIA	MAJOR AMENDMENT
Significant change to the Circulation Element such as but not limited to: A change in the functional classification of existing or planned public roadways. The relocation or displacement of existing or planned public roadways.	X
Proposed development uses more than 15 acre-feet* of potable water** per year***	X
Any land use amendment contiguous to property previously amended through the minor amendment process.	X
Contiguous to a growth area and 100 acres or greater in size	X
Not contiguous to a growth area and 25 acres or greater in size	X
Text change in conflict with approved General Plan	X

*Acre-foot – 325,851 gallons, enough water to cover an acre to a depth of one foot.

** Potable water – water that is safe for human consumption and many other uses such as washing and cooking.

*** 15 acre-feet of potable water are enough for approximately 48 single-family residential units or approximately 44 multi-family residential units. The amount of commercial development that 15 acre-feet of potable water can sustain depends on the type of commercial use.

- Changes to implementation strategies that alter the timing, cost and type of programs or activities shall **not** be considered a major amendment.
- Request for Land Use Map changes for parcels located within designated growth areas shall **not** be considered a major amendment.
- Density transfers within a designated growth area shall not be considered a major amendment.

The benchmark of 15 acre-feet of potable water per year represents approximately 1.2% of the 2001-projected potable water use for Camp Verde – from *Water Use Projections, Verde Valley, Arizona* prepared in cooperation with the Yavapai County Water Advisory Committee and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Actual build-out for 15 acre-feet of water, based on single-family residential unit population of 2.47 people and multi-family residential unit population of 2.74 people is approximately 48 single-family residential units or approximately 44 multi-family residential units. The amount of commercial development that 15 acre-feet of potable water can sustain depends on the type of commercial use and can be figured using an assured water supply demand calculator such as provided by the Arizona Department of Water Resources.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES

The Town of Camp Verde shall provide opportunities for the involvement of Camp Verde citizens, neighboring governments, schools, utility companies, civic and other community groups, and all economic segments within Camp Verde through public hearings and other means as the Town Council deems appropriate. Camp Verde believes that early public

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involvement and effective participation are the cornerstones of good planning. The Camp Verde Town Council is committed to ensuring that public input is used effectively in Town decision making, particularly as it relates to land use and development issues.

Camp Verde wants both developers and citizens to have an adequate opportunity at the beginning of the process to identify, discuss, and resolve issues related to proposed development projects and land uses. Effective public participation in the planning process can result in enhanced quality of development and uses throughout Camp Verde.

The purpose of the public participation process is to:

1. Ensure that applicants pursue early and effective public participation in conjunction with their application, providing the applicant with an opportunity to understand and address any real or perceived impacts their development or land use request may have on the neighborhood or town;
2. Ensure that citizens, property owners and neighbors have an adequate opportunity to learn about applications that may affect them and to work with applicants to resolve potential concerns at an early stage of the process; and
3. Facilitate ongoing communication between the applicant, interested citizens, property owners, and town staff, throughout the application review process.

The Public Participation Plan is not intended to produce consensus on all applications, it is intended to encourage applicants to be good neighbors and to allow for informed decision-making.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION RESULTS

A series of open houses and presentations were conducted from May 2001 through July 2002 to gather public input for the general plan amendment process. During that time, 23 presentations were given.

Listed below are the main concerns voiced by members of the public who attended the 2001 and 2002 presentations and provided input:

Top Assets/characteristics for the Future

- #1 – More business
- #2 – Job opportunities
- #3 – Affordable housing
- #4 Tie - Verde River access
- Parks/Ball Fields

Three Biggest Future Concerns

- #1 – Water quality/quantity
- #2 – Increase in traffic
- #3 – Lack of medium priced homes

Top Five Attributes Want Camp Verde Recognized for in 2020

- #1 – Western/rural character
- #2 – Shopping Opportunities
- #3 – Friendliness
- #4 – Visually attractive

Three Greatest Needs

- #1 – Job opportunities
- #2 – Neighborhood upkeep
- #3 – Preserving open space

Three Strongest Assets

- #1 – Western/rural lifestyle
- #2 – Verde /River
- #3 – Open space/scenery

Top Qualities to Preserve

- #1– Western/rural Character
- #2 – Small-town
- #3 – Friendliness
- #4 – Historic

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#5 Tie – Employment opportunities
_ Affordable Housing

#5 – Maintained roads

After the 2003 Camp Verde General Plan was rejected by voters in May 2004, staff conducted five public meetings to determine why voters rejected the plan. During those meetings, citizens expressed concern for preserving the rural character of the community by maintaining large lot land uses. Most agreed that the central portion of the Town along Finnie Flat Road should be marked as high density because of the availability of water and sewer. Most also, agreed that Hwy. 260 between I-17 and the Town's northwest border should be marked as the existing and future commercial corridor for the Town. A majority of those expressing their opinion agreed that National Forest Lands within that corridor and fronting Hwy. 260 should be designated as commercial or mixed use, with the remainder of the National Forest in that area designated as National Forest or Open Space.

All citizens attending the open houses agreed that the views east of I-17 along General Crook Trail should be protected and preserved.

The Camp Verde Fire Department hosted staff for a general plan question and answer session on July 14, 2004. At that time, firefighters were unanimous in their concern for a vibrant economy for the Town. Firefighters expressed that the Hwy. 260 corridor and the I-17 corridor between General Crook Trail and Hwy. 260 should be designated for commercial land use.