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# MEMORANDUM

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Date: June 12, 2013

To: The Honorable Chairman and Members  
Pima County Board of Supervisors

From: C.H. Huckelberry  
County Administrator

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "CHH", is written over the printed name "C.H. Huckelberry".

Re: **Pima County Comprehensive Plan Update**

Every 10 years, state law requires counties to revisit comprehensive plans and cities to update their general plans that provide a strategic blueprint guiding future policy actions on land use, conservation, public facilities, water, energy, and other state requirements and priorities. Although not specifically called out in state statute as an element, protecting and enhancing the economic base is the underpinning to a thriving community.

Pima County is beginning its process of updating its 2001 Comprehensive Plan for the July 2015 adoption deadline. Known as Pima Prospers, the new document is intended to go far beyond just land use planning. Ultimately, the plan will identify ways to enhance Pima County's quality of life over the next decade. Along with considering land use, it will also explore a range of critical issues; from demographic changes to water resources, energy, recreation needs, economic development opportunities, conservation, public safety and healthy communities.

At its June 18, 2013 meeting, the Board of Supervisors will consider a public participation plan that will identify how Pima County will engage a diverse group of residents; from business owners to landowners, neighborhood organizations and other interested groups, over the next 18 months.

The City of Tucson, likewise, is in the final stages of adopting its update of its 2001 General Plan. The City is farther along in its process, which began earlier to meet a state requirement on cities, but not on counties, for voter ratification of their plan once adopted by the elected officials. A final draft of the General Plan was circulated for review, and the Mayor and City Council will be considering community comments and feedback this month. They have until July 9, 2013 to decide whether to submit the plan to the public for a vote this fall.

Some business leaders have criticized Plan Tucson for lacking a focus on economic development and have asked that the City place a greater emphasis on the economic environment. It is worthwhile, then, to provide some context on where Pima County is in

The Honorable Chairman and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors  
Re: **Pima County Comprehensive Plan Update**  
June 12, 2013  
Page 2

the process and to clarify some of the foundations of our planning process moving forward.

Pima County is just launching its effort and will not have a written first draft plan until Spring 2014 at the earliest. However, based on an approved scope of work, it is Pima County's intent that Pima Prospers will incorporate the Economic Development Action Plan adopted by the Board of Supervisors in November 2012. This action plan outlines Pima County's many strengths and how to build on them through the creation of:

- an aerospace/defense research and industry park;
- stronger connections between our existing employment centers, including Raytheon Missile Systems, Tucson International Airport, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base and The University of Arizona;
- expanded tourism opportunities;
- support for high-wage regional employment centers across the community; and
- a sharper focus on leveraging the strength of The University of Arizona.

In addition to the existing Economic Development Action Plan, Pima Prospers will include two additional chapters: the Cost of Development and Fiscal Impact Analysis and Economic Development and Fiscal Viability. Only a Cost of Development Element is required by the state for both cities and counties.

One of the additional intentions of the Cost of Development chapter is to identify mechanisms that ensure the development community can partner with the County to offset any additional public facility needs generated by new development. It is also intended to include a high-level fiscal impact assessment of current and proposed growth patterns to ensure the County's long-term fiscal solvency and, if necessary, evaluate opportunities for a more efficient growth pattern.

The chapter on Economic Development and Fiscal Viability will describe opportunities that exist not only in the major economic development corridors and employment centers, but elsewhere in the County to secure our community's continuing viability. Among the goals: defining a fiscally appropriate land use strategy that supports and takes competitive advantage of those aforementioned assets, as well as bi-national economic opportunities, industry clusters, clean energy, new technology and public/private partnerships.

We expect that tourism will be prominently featured among the fiscal drivers, with opportunities to explore and expand ecotourism, heritage tourism, holistic health tourism, aerospace tourism, sports tourism and other niche markets Pima County may attract.

Pima County will begin with our existing plan and evolve it. Aside from the state mandate to revisit the plan, it is appropriate to recognize that Pima County is in a different place than it was 10 years ago when our primary focus was on preserving, through the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan, the quality of life that attracts talented workers, creative business opportunities and tourists. In the last decade, we have seen a shift in our economic patterns and in our residential patterns. Major economic development corridors have emerged, and we are watching the birth of new transportation modes and circulations being forged by The Loop and the City's Modern Streetcar.

We believe the foundation for moving forward lies in refining the conservation ethic we have already established, while expanding upon other trends and patterns that have emerged in the ensuing decade; from the emergence of clean energy to strengthened economic development strategies and ongoing social needs.

In the past, Pima County's approach has always been centered on a land use map. The proposed plan will place a heavier emphasis on policy, financing strategies and implementation actions. Now that the County has made great strides in preserving agreed upon priority lands for future generations, our attention can turn both to the urban footprint and established rural communities, including identifying those areas with the greatest potential to serve as economic development corridors, while addressing questions about where additional urban density may make sense and what kinds of uses are most appropriate and where. In the rural areas, emphasis will be on how to conserve the rural character and protect against suburbanization. The resulting map will provide certainty and clarity for our stakeholders and residents in the community.

Pima County will have an aggressive outreach plan to engage residents and other stakeholders early in the process, including meetings, open houses and social media tools.

Given that staff positions in the County's Development Services Department have been cut by two thirds since the start of the Great Recession, the County will partner with a team of experts who are skilled in urban planning, economics and engineering to provide support and perspective through this process. The County will also rely heavily on department teams to contribute to the process, plan including the Health Department; Transportation; Regional Wastewater Reclamation; Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation; Community Services, Employment and Training; Economic Development and Tourism; Community Development and Neighborhood Conservation; and the Conservation and Sustainability Office; and Pima Animal Care Center.

The Board of Supervisors adopted the vision for a Greater Tucson Region as identified through the Imagine Greater Tucson process, which was the culmination of two years of work and the participation of more than 10,000 people. The process resulted in 60 shared

**The Honorable Chairman and Members, Pima County Board of Supervisors**  
**Re: Pima County Comprehensive Plan Update**  
June 12, 2013  
Page 4

regional values, categorized into nine principles, including Accessibility, Good Governance, Prosperity and Environmental Integrity, among others. It is the County's intent that the vision and values that resulted from the community's work will be incorporated into Pima Prospers. Building upon this vision, some refinements will be made to incorporate the needs of our rural communities as well.

As both planning efforts proceed, it is important to note that economic corridors connect multiple jurisdictions. Visions and goals should align where possible to best channel the promise of the region. Ultimately, above and beyond our individual plans, all local jurisdictions must work together for the common benefit of the region for economic development and wise use of scarce resources for infrastructure development and maintenance, conservation, and social services.

CHH/mjk

c: Martin Willett, Chief Deputy County Administrator  
Hank Atha, Deputy County Administrator for Community and Economic Development  
John Bernal, Deputy County Administrator for Public Works  
Jan Leshner, Deputy County Administrator for Medical and Health Services  
Nanette Slusser, Assistant County Administrator for Public Works Policy  
Carmine DeBonis, Jr., Director, Development Services  
Arlan Colton, Planning Director, Development Services