

# PINETOP-LAKESIDE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE KEY ISSUES SUMMARY

Phase I of the Pinetop-Lakeside General Plan Update is being completed. Review of background information together with listening to community concerns and preferences for the future provided direction for the Update's next tasks.

Based on meetings with the General Plan Advisory Committee, community leadership, stakeholders and staff, numerous issue priorities have been identified. There is consensus that the new Plan should integrate Town policy concepts that have gained popular support in recent years as well as current research studies that are investigating existing regional conditions.

Most important, participants in this planning process have stressed the need for consistency with citizens' expectations. Topics singled-out for particular attention are not so much indicating changes in course, rather, they are calling for ways in which Pinetop-Lakeside might modify the planning approach to fit new circumstances as they evolve.

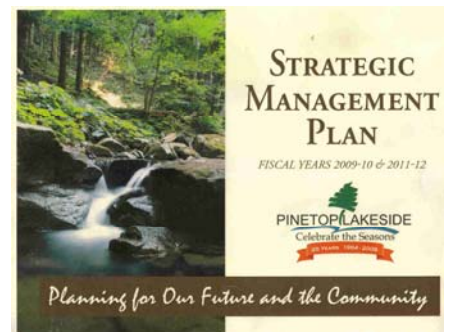
## INTEGRATING PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Pinetop-Lakeside's community planning principles have received on-going attention. Over the Twenty-first Century's initial decade, numerous adjustments to development or preservation policies have been made.

Six key, issue-addressing documents are cited here, but there are others. These are statements regarding future direction from the Town's perspective. State and regional plans and policy for State, County, Native American lands and the White Mountains region must also be considered in evaluating the Town's challenges and opportunities.

### ❑ Strategic Management Plan

Addressing Fiscal Years 2009-10 and 2011-12, the "*Strategic Management Plan*" establishes implementation action priorities that help to direct the General Plan Update. Its nine stated goals mesh with citizens' preferences for attention to economic vitality, Woodland Lake Park, multi-modal transportation, housing diversity and higher education/cultural opportunities. Other Strategic emphases include: active youth involvement, annexation and Town Center consideration.

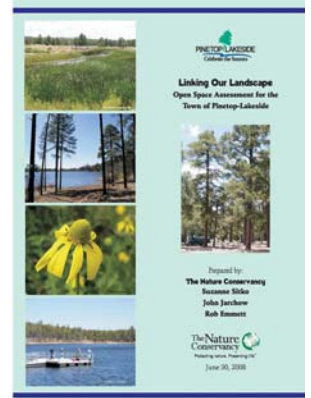


During the General Plan process, progress toward strategic achievements should be measured, perhaps revisited and coordinated with Goals and Objectives among the Plan's Elements. The "*Strategic Management Plan*" can be incorporated into the General Plan's short- and mid-range implementation program.

## ❑ Linking Our Landscape

Sponsored by the Nature Conservancy, this 2008 concept for improved connectivity builds creatively on the earlier *Town Plan* (see below). The White Mountains' natural assets, capitalizing the scenic outdoor enjoyment that sets Pinetop-Lakeside apart, constitute the central theme for "*Linking*".

*Linking Our Landscape* provides detailed analysis of key open spaces identified by the Town as part of a comprehensive action plan and conservation strategy. It describes the vision of an interconnected system of open spaces and trails for bicycling and walking that is an integral part of community character. The document also provides recommendations for policy, planning, Open Space Committee actions, further research and information needed, conservation funding and a list of immediate actions needed.



*Linking* builds on the concepts presented in the 2006 *Town Plan* emphasizing protection of natural areas and character while directing growth into specified "nodes". Both documents' advocacy for gently accommodating man-made functions in the forest context responds to the concern for protecting against overdevelopment.

## ❑ Vision

The 2020 Vision Committee's 2007 Town Hall Report has relevance to GPAC's proposed, new Vision Statement as well as to common threads among General Plan Elements. There is consensus, then and now, pertaining to Pinetop-Lakeside's desired image.

An updated Vision must accurately respond to citizens' current needs without jeopardizing historical living quality values. Arguably, an action-oriented planning prospectus -- driven largely by the private sector, supported by Town residents -- could be the Town's most effective approach.

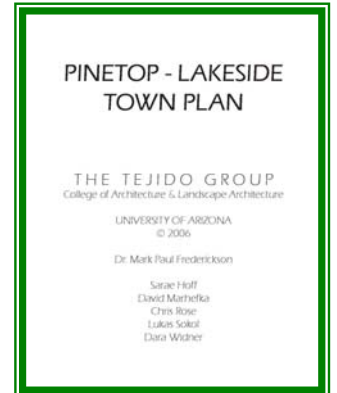
### **Proposed Vision Statement (Dec. 2009)**

*The General Plan will guide future decisions on planning, land development and strategic policy to encourage sustainable and balanced economic development. An overall objective is to stimulate a growing, diverse economy with meaningful employment opportunities while providing an exceptional quality of life for our residents and visitors.*

*We are committed to preserving the Town's mountain heritage, friendly small town character and our environmental attributes for future generations to share and enjoy - including opportunities for outdoor activities, interacting with wildlife, and enjoying the natural beauty of our lakes, creeks, meadows and forests.*

## □ Pinetop-Lakeside Town Plan

The "*Pinetop-Lakeside Town Plan*" was prepared by The Tejido Group from the University of Arizona. Completed in 2006, this document has been widely accepted by the community and its leadership.



The *Town Plan* presents a set of recommendations for future growth, respecting the following three key concepts:

- (1) The preservation of meadow, spring and stream areas emerged as paramount. These areas could become wonderful pedestrian and bike greenways interconnecting the entire community.

The Billy Creek and Walnut Creek riparian corridors approximately parallel SR260 and extend much of the length of the Town. These could form the basis for a useful system of off-road trails for recreation and transportation to many of Pinetop-Lakeside's major destinations such as schools, shopping, employment and parks.

- (2) More intense future development would be permitted within nodes located along SR260. This effort would be paralleled by the acquisition and preservation of natural areas along 260 as well.

The *Town Plan* includes four development nodes:

*Maverick Commerce Village* -- at the north entry into Town, including a high-end resort and a mix of retail, research/development and employment uses.

*Old Town Extension* -- marked by expression of the Town's historic character, this node is a concentration of civic activities, schools, parks and commercial uses, with opportunities for learning about Town history (museum, historic trail).

*Walnut Creek Village* -- The Tejido Town Plan, page 74, describes Walnut Creek Village as a small town "main street" featuring a variety of retail shops and services for the local community and tourist market. It starts from Billy Creek at the Safeway node and terminates at a new town square which celebrates Walnut Creek and Woodland Lake Park.

*Penrod Square* -- the south gateway to the Town, this node has a focus on providing access to trails and outdoor recreation, in addition to a concentration of residential and related commercial uses.

- (3) The development of dense, mixed-use "main street" areas perpendicular to SR260 and located at the fore-mentioned nodes of development became a key strategy to developing within existing infrastructure while preserving outlying natural areas.

Surveys conducted as part of the *Town Plan* process identified the following issue areas as responses from the different groups:

#### Business Owners

- Parks and green open space integrated within the community would benefit businesses.
- Enhancing the Town's identity and image would benefit businesses
- Businesses overlooking lakes and streams attract more customers to businesses
- A downtown core not located directly on SR260 would be good for businesses

#### Residents

- Access between residential areas and green open space would increase property values
- The current condition of SR260 is not a pleasing sight for residents and visitors
- There are strong issues relating to circulation through and around the Town
- Residents highly favor the development of a 'downtown' apart from Highway 260

#### Youth

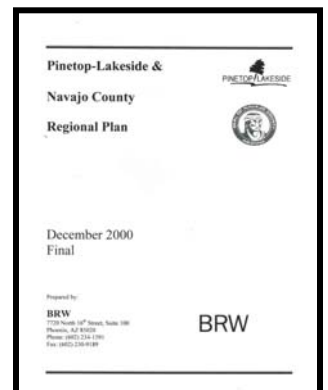
- The youth feel that Pinetop-Lakeside needs more jobs and educational opportunities
- The youth enjoy spending time at the lakes and creeks of Pinetop-Lakeside
- Only 20% of youth have definite plans to remain in Pinetop-Lakeside after High School

Designated node locations offer mixed-use development potential and can be incorporated into multiple General Plan Elements ranging from Growth Areas to Open Space/Recreation. The proposed node areas allow for economic growth, while maintaining the majority of lands in low-density development or open space and strengthening Pinetop-Lakeside's small town character.

#### □ General Plan

Since its 2001 adoption, the Town's "official" General Plan (BRW, consultants) has served the community and its region well. The current challenge is to translate a decade of growth guidance into more flexible, creativity-inspiring approaches that operate as incentives for economic investment in Pinetop-Lakeside.

Educating the public and facilitating their active participation are essential factors in obtaining support for the updated General Plan. The overriding issue in terms of planning process is assuring that the resulting document is citizen-driven and citizen-responsive.



#### □ Southern Navajo County Subregional Transportation Plan

The *Southern Navajo County Subregional Transportation Plan* was prepared for Navajo County, Apache County, the City of Show Low and the Towns of Pinetop-Lakeside, Taylor and Snowflake in 2007. It provides a long-range assessment of future highway

improvement needs in response to projected traffic and population growth. Tables below summarize recommendations specifically related to Pinetop-Lakeside.

**TABLE 5-4**  
**TRAFFIC CONTROL AT STUDY AREA INTERSECTIONS: EXISTING, 2015, & 2030**

No.	Intersection	Existing	2015	2030
<b>Pinetop-Lakeside</b>				
29	Penrod Rd/Porter Mountain Rd	Stop	Signal	Signal
30	White Mountain Rd (SR 260)/Show Low Lakes Rd	Stop	Stop	Signal
31	White Mountain Rd (SR 260)/Porter Mountain Rd	Signal	Signal	Signal
32	White Mountain Rd (SR 260)/Woodland Rd	Signal	Signal	Signal
33	White Mountain Rd (SR 260)/Buck Springs Rd	Signal	Signal	Signal
34	White Mountain Rd (SR 260)/Rim Rd	Stop	Stop	Signal

Source: Wilson & Company, May 2006.

Notes:

Shading indicates change from the previous period.

\* Intersection solution not resolved in time to be included in this study.

**Southern Navajo/Apache County**  
**Sub-Regional Transportation Plan**



Navajo/Apache County Study Area Overview

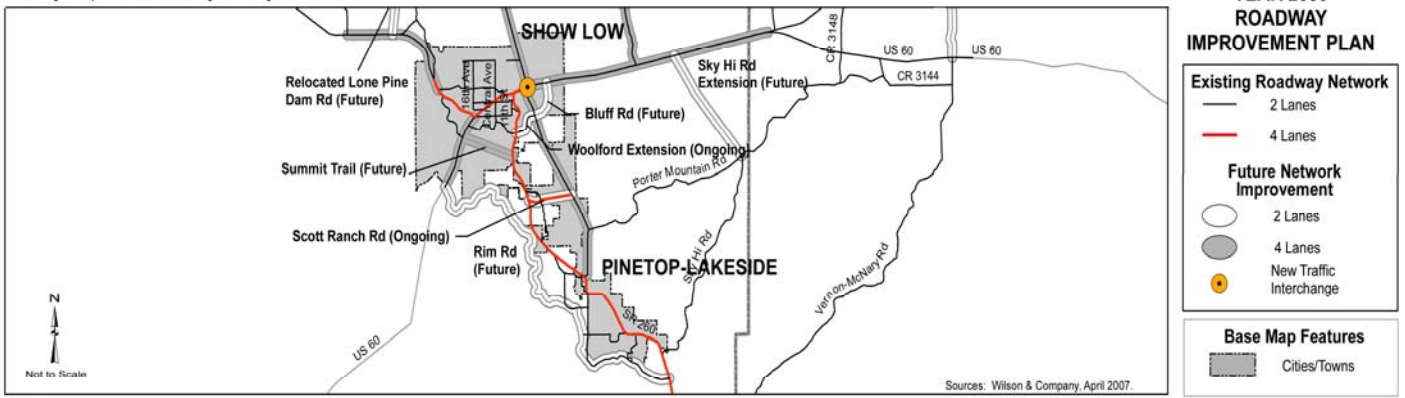


FIGURE 6-2 Southern Navajo/Apache County Sub-Regional Transportation Plan

Navajo/Apache County Study Area Overview

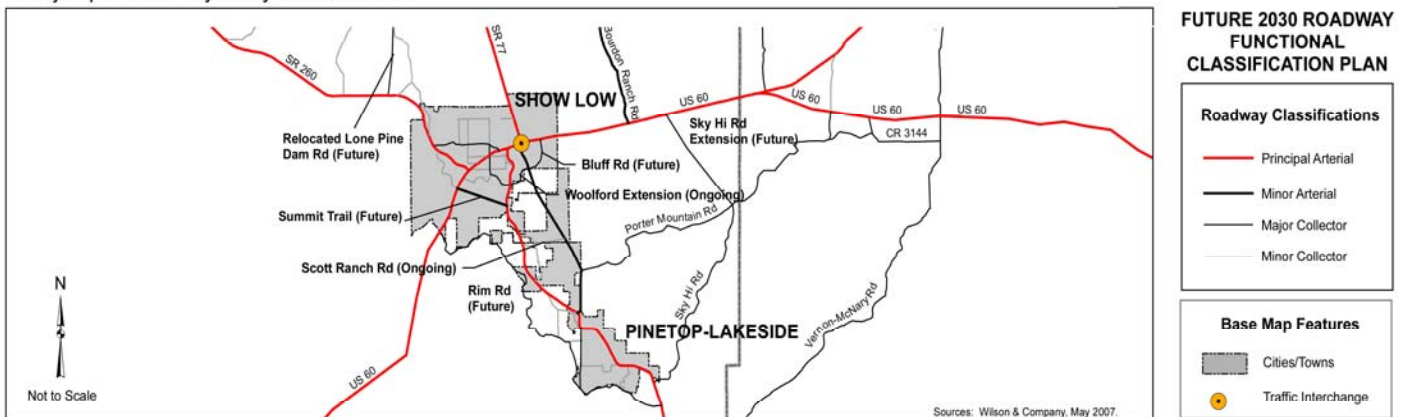


FIGURE 6-1 Southern Navajo/Apache County Sub-Regional Transportation Plan

**TABLE 6.2**  
**ESTIMATED SUB-REGION ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT COSTS BY JURISDICTION**

Street Name	From	To	Length	Number Of Travel		Improvement Cost Estimate (2006 \$)	Recommended Priority
				Existing	Future		
<b>Pinetop-Lakeside</b>							
Porter Mountain Rd	SR 260 (White Mountain Rd)	Penrod Rd	1.75	2	4	\$ 8,890,000	Mid-Range
Penrod Rd	Porter Mountain Rd	Show Low City Limits	1.50	2	4	\$ 7,620,000	Mid-Range
Rim Rd	SR 260 (White Mountain Rd)	Show Low City Limits	11.40	0	2	\$ 28,956,000	Long-Range
Total Estimated Improvement Need						\$ 45,466,000	

*Southern Navajo/Apache County*  
*Sub-Regional Transportation Plan*



## **COORDINATION WITH ADDITIONAL STUDIES**

The updated General Plan's Housing and Circulation Elements will benefit from ongoing studies being conducted by Lima & Associates and The Drachman Institute of the University of Arizona. These studies provide valuable, current economic, demographic, housing condition and transportation data. Their recommendations will be integrated into the General Plan Update.

### **□ Pedestrian Safety and Transportation Study (Lima & Associates)**

This work, by Lima & Associates, has targeted final draft production by March 2010. Pete Lima and Sandy Weir met with Betty Drake and Rick Counts to describe their findings to date. Relevance with GPAC observations (e.g., reducing hazards in crossing State Route 260) was discussed. The PARA website has been established. ([http://www.dot.state.az.us/mpd/systems\\_planning/pinetop\\_lakeside.asp](http://www.dot.state.az.us/mpd/systems_planning/pinetop_lakeside.asp)). Joint workshop sessions with both transportation and General Plan consultants may be advisable this winter.

The primary focus of the study is pedestrian safety and access control. The feasibility of installing medians along State Route 260 (SR260) is being evaluated. Particular attention is being directed to accident-reduction techniques in the vicinity of schools on SR260, Porter Mountain Road and other key pedestrian crossing points.

The Lima Study is also addressing related transportation issues identified in the 2000 Pinetop-Lakeside General Plan, which are discussed later in this report on pages 11-12. The *Community Transportation Study* identified poor Level of Service on major roadways noting that improvements are needed. Review of crash data was recommended to help address safety issues.

Betty Drake raised several additional issues ranging from snow removal policy to the consideration of HAWK signals or pedestrian-activated, illuminated crossings that are being used successfully elsewhere. Sandra Weir stated that they have reviewed "*Linking Our Landscape*" nodes and are looking at east/west pedestrian crossings of SR260 to provide access to the nodes.

## □ Housing Assessment and Strategic Plan (Drachman Institute)

The Drachman Institute is developing recommendations for improving and offering a variety of housing options. The housing assessment will help facilitate the 2030 vision cited in the Town's Strategic Management Plan, Pinetop-Lakeside Goal No. 9: "Adopt and implement policies that create diverse housing opportunities for all Town residents." The housing assessment will also provide input for incorporation into the General Plan Update.

The *Housing Assessment and Strategic Plan* examines housing trends, conditions and needs in the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside and provides recommendations for housing solutions that bridge housing affordability gaps. The assessment documents demographics, economics and projections. It researches occupancy rates, age of housing stock, housing inventory, building activity, home sales data and housing affordability. The Town and the Drachman project team have conducted several windshield surveys within the Town perimeters to assess multi-family and single-family housing conditions, together with housing concerns of Town residents. The Town will also conduct major business employer and employee surveys -- including government, schools, and other major regional employers -- to determine potential demand for affordable workforce housing. Affordable housing needs (including types, sizes, and levels of affordability) will be identified and projected, and recommendations will be developed.

A number of housing-related issues are identified. Among these are:

- The major cost disparity between high-end, seasonal homes and the prices year-round residents can pay (44% of Pinetop-Lakeside renters paid rent in excess of 30% of their income in 2000).
- Average home price for Pinetop-Lakeside area is \$330,000 (November 2009)
- Median Household Income is approximately \$52,000 which affords \$124,000 home in today's market (based on rent/mortgage and home costs less than 30% of gross income).
- Pinetop-Lakeside residents often have to drive considerable distances to their places of employment. Transportation costs sometimes even exceed housing costs for lower-income families (earning less than \$50,000/year).
- Inflated Construction and materials costs due to the Town's location.
- A restricted range of rental options.
- The local job base does not encourage an active "move-up" market.

As Drachman Institute study findings become available, they will be integrated into the General Plan Update.

## **COMMUNITY PRIORITY ISSUES**

Highest priority issues have been identified by GPAC, Planning Commission and Town Council members as well as other participating stakeholders. Citizens' values are much the same as when the 2001 General Plan was adopted, but impacts caused by growth, economic conditions, traffic congestion and other factors present new challenges for protecting Pinetop-Lakeside living quality.

The General Plan Update Survey, conducted last fall by the Town, identified issues that are important to Pinetop-Lakeside residents.

- The need for economic development and more employment opportunities
- Improved housing variety, lack of medium-priced housing
- Improved local services
- Improved housing/neighborhood maintenance, better construction quality
- Unplanned growth
- Streetscape improvements,
- Improved Town facilities and services
- Changing community character
- Traffic congestion on SR260
- Loss of open space and preserving natural character and environment
- Preserve Woodland Lake Park

Circumstances are always changing and additional issues may arise over the next several months, during the Plan's drafting, review and public hearings. A General Plan must be a flexible document that can be modified in response to community needs and desires. The General Plan's on-going flexibility can be achieved through the Amendment process, so it can be kept current, to guide the community for the next decade.

## □ Economic Vitality

Failures in the national economy have removed many financial support systems for individuals, companies and local governments. More than ever, the Town, the region and local citizens are on our own. Fiscal strategies need to be creative as well as forward-thinking, taking advantage of Federal stimulus programs' employment-creating strategies.

Municipal revenue depends on healthy businesses serving residents of the region and visitors. Because tourism and seasonal residents constitute a significant customer base, planning action steps need to encourage commercial expansion without degrading the environment that attracts visitors in the first place. Scenic and outdoor recreation values, together with efficient transportation modes, need to be integrated with Pinetop-Lakeside business development.

On-going job development helps maintain a balanced economy. A diversified employment base, offering well-paying opportunities with prospects for advancement, can secure a community's long-term stability. GPAC members and stakeholders stress the importance of education and training as critical ingredients to drawing employers, improving household incomes and providing career options for local young people.

Town policies should continue to support economic vitality in a number of ways. Prime locations for growth or expansion are being identified and, where appropriate, enhanced with public improvement projects. "Red tape" is kept to a reasonable minimum in permit processing and development entitlement requests. The Town cooperates with other entities (private/public) to encourage business investment.

## ❑ Open Space/Recreation

Open space, outdoor recreation and Pinetop-Lakeside's scenic natural setting amid forest and lakes are points of pride for residents and an attraction for visitors. Hiking, bicycling, riding horses, fishing, hunting, bird-watching and other recreational activities are important to the area's quality of life. Parks, trails and access to surrounding National Forest lands are part of the equation. A fundamental consideration is protection of the scenic natural landscape features, wildlife, lakes and riparian areas that give Pinetop-Lakeside its distinctive character.

The Open Space/Recreation Element of the General Plan Update will address a wide range of issues. Among these are:

**Access** -- creating and protecting access to open space and recreation areas; balancing the sometimes competing needs of recreation and conservation.

**Protection of private property rights** -- developing trails, parks and protected open spaces that are good neighbors, that reflect strong community consensus and respect property rights.

**Wildfire prevention** – awareness of and strategies for assuring forest health, preventing wildfires and managing recreational uses to minimize wildfire danger. Currently, the Town's forest health committee is working on drafting strategies and policies to one-day bring all properties into compliance with national "fire-wise" recommendations and local ordinances.

**Viewshed preservation** -- vistas, both distant and intimate, are important parts of the experience of living in Pinetop-Lakeside. Views of significant landmarks help with orientation. There may be locations where view protection should be considered as part of land use and other recommendations.

**Providing for all types of recreation** and recreational users -- open space, parks, playgrounds and recreation facilities should offer a full range of opportunities for residents and visitors, whether young, old, or disabled. Some users prefer the grand quiet and peace of a hike while others like to ride ORVs or play baseball with a group of friends. Recreational activities and attitudes differ and issues related to these may arise.

Seasonal recreation opportunities – ways of providing recreational activities and open space access year-round should be explored. At present, except for ski areas nearby, winter-time activities are limited.

**What role can development planning play in creating in-Town open spaces?** Town planning stresses maintaining natural environment inside the municipal limits and nearby private lands, not just counting on national forest to contain wall-to-wall urbanization. Preserving open space within the community raises a key issue: should mixed use and clustering be promoted to accommodate growth in designated locations or should only infill be allowed within developed parts of the Town, with

development in new areas limited to lower density. Community consensus, reflected in the *Town Plan's* nodal concept, indicates support for allowing clustered and/or mixed-use development, but concentrating it, to leave woodland areas relatively untouched.

**Vandalism of archaeological sites** and dumping in the National Forest -- Pinetop-Lakeside is located in the Sitgreaves East Geographic Area of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. It offers many natural assets for the enjoyment of Town residents and visitors assets ranging from game and fish to hiking and camping. Careful stewardship is needed. For example, this Forest contains high densities of archaeological sites. Easy access to and through this area has led to increased vandalism and dumping in the past.

**The acquisition and preservation of Woodland Lake Park** -- Funds are limited and Forest Service policies are a challenge. Woodland Lake Park preservation requires innovative solutions to acquire land and/or prevent intrusive development. According to the "*Woodland Lake Park Acquisition 'Blue Ribbon' Task Force Status Report*" (January 31, 2008), the 583-acre Woodland Lake Park Tract is comprised of the 103-acre Woodland Lake Park, the 40-acre Big Springs Environmental Study Area, and the 440-acre Walnut Creek riparian corridor and surrounding forest that connects the Park with Big Springs. This property serves as one of the Town's main community centers. The U.S.D.A. Forest Service owns this land, and has authorized special use permits for both the Town and the Blue Ridge School District to manage, maintain, and improve this resource for the greater Pinetop-Lakeside regional community.

Woodland Lake Task Force members, aware of the Town's limited financial means, are exploring other private and public sources to increase community ownership of the Park's protected area. Using scarce municipal funds or taxing to raise revenues for acquisition are limited options at this time. Forest Service policies are being contravened for the existence of this landlocked tract with no prospects for compensation, development or land trade.

**The need for recreational facilities** and resources is great and insufficient funding means that many needs cannot be met. Recreational needs are also going unmet in this time of limited resources. Prioritization will be required to determine which users (youth v. multigenerational), facilities (land, buildings); and programs (staffing, operations, maintenance) deserve first attention. Events and opportunities (e.g., Tour of the White Mountains, mountain bike races, using the Town's altitude advantage for summer athletics and training) could help to promote and generate revenue for recreation in Pinetop-Lakeside. The role that private developers can play in either integrating public recreation into proposed projects or contributing to public recreation resources should be explored.

**Trails for walking, bicycling and riding horses** are needed -- a Town trail system can connect to regional trails and serve a dual purpose for recreation and transportation. Pinetop-Lakeside has a strong history of trails advocacy through TRACKS. Maintaining existing trails and adding new ones is an enormous effort made possible through cooperation between the U.S. Forest Service and TRACKS, a volunteer organization that works closely with the USFS to plan, build and maintain the White

Mountain Trail System. The WMTS consists of over 200 miles of trails for non-motorized users (hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians) in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. TRACKS members also participate in group activities such as hiking, mountain biking, bird watching, kayaking, cross country skiing, horseback riding, camping, foraging for edible wild mushrooms and other outdoor enjoyments (White Mountain Independent, Nick Lund). Pinetop-Lakeside contains loop trails located in Woodland Lake Park and connecting to Big Springs.

The Open Space Committee has developed and mapped, the Draft Urban Trail Plan, a comprehensive trail system concept that should be integrated into the General Plan. Plans call for a Townwide trails system along Billy Creek and Walnut Creek, with secondary connections across SR260. The issue lies in developing a clear strategy for acquiring and improving these trails, including funding, phasing, updated design guidelines and allocation of responsibilities. This is an achievable dream and would provide huge "bang for the buck" in creating a community legacy of value to both residents and visitors for years to come.

## □ Land Use

As a regional hub, Pinetop-Lakeside demonstrates a wider variety of land use than its population would suggest. Moreover, with the influx of seasonal residents and tourists, the demand for hospitality services and goods vastly increases the Town's commercial base. With most jobs in retail, hospitality and the public sector, there is a relatively small industrial employment component. Commercial, industrial and institutional activities are sorely needed for community balance.

Pinetop-Lakeside's living quality depends on maintaining high residential and open space planning standards, the major land uses. It is essential that clear messages are sent to homeowners and developers, alike, as to expectations for acceptable housing densities, amenities, infrastructure and appearance.

**Orderly development** represents a central concern for future land use growth. To date, most commerce, professional offices/health care, motels, restaurants and apartment uses have been sited with frontage along SR260. View corridors exist along SR260, but they are being filled with new development. Town Plan nodal concepts suggest placement for broadened centers accommodating workplaces and residential units as well as retail, service and hospitality businesses. These areas would be accessible from the highway and buffered from interior, residential neighborhoods.

Overemphasis on Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning -- often allowing increased residential densities in conflict with neighboring uses has, in the past, brought negative reactions from Town residents. Encouraging other types of planned development including creative approaches in larger lot subdivisions, could promote better compatibility among neighborhoods; and limiting PUD to designated nodes (with appropriate use mixtures) are seen as possible solutions to land use efficiency without deleterious impact on housing areas.

**Growth Areas density**, therefore, may accommodate economic growth in specified locations without causing urban sprawl. Avoiding traffic congestion is an important corollary to the nodal concept. This community form preference is underscored by the multi-modal linkages called for in "*Linking Our Landscape*".

Piecemeal implementation of nodes' mixed use, lacking continuity in open space and trail connections is a problem that needs to be overcome. General Plan recommendations may suggest incentives for masterplanning, land assembly and landowner cooperation.

**Community appearance** factors rank high among considerations for sustaining the positive Pinetop-Lakeside image. Scenic views should be maintained. Entry treatments to the Town, as well as to individual properties, contribute to the pleasing "four seasons" character.

Site plan review, in combination with other development regulations, helps to assure the community's visual compatibility. The objective is to suggest economical, effective appearance guidelines rather than requiring costly improvements that might deter development investment. The Town seeks to lead by example through various projects to enhance streetscape and public facilities.

## □ Circulation

The 2000 General Plan identified a number of circulation issues. Most of these issues remain unresolved and are being studied as part of the Lima & Associates Pedestrian Safety and Transportation Study. They include:

### **Circulation Issues**

- An absence of collector road systems that could relieve traffic on SR260.
- No alternative access if SR260 is affected by a major accident or disaster such as a fire.
- People have no alternative but to use SR260 to get around Town.
- Private roads have limited ability to provide year-round access for emergency vehicles and winter residents.
- The ability of landowners to divide and sell properties without government review helps to create many substandard private roads.
- Improvements need to be made on private dirt roads to reduce ambient air pollution.
- Because there are no alternative routes, SR260 is designed to allow ingress and egress from all side streets and adjacent properties. This creates potential hazardous conditions and traffic conflicts.

- The center lane on SR260, which allows unlimited left-hand turns from strip development and side road, adds to the hazardous conditions. Compounding this situation is the design speed of the highway that encourages speed limits well in excess of the posted speed limit. As vehicular traffic volumes increase and more pedestrians and cyclists utilize the limited sidewalks, there will be more opportunities for conflicts, particularly, at major intersections.
- Currently SR260 is the only through-road from Show Low to the Hon-Dah Casino Complex. With the inevitable growth of the Tribal Casino-Conference business and the continued residential growth in the region, SR260 will be required to handle much higher volumes of traffic. A bypass connecting US60 south of Show Low and SR260 through Pinetop-Lakeside is needed.
- The current program for funding is not adequate to cover existing or future needs. A program for funding roads needs to be addressed immediately.
- The Penrod Road bypass, from US 60 to SR 260, is also needed to improve connections between Pinetop-Lakeside and Show Low and to provide better access to the Show Low Airport. The two lane paved road was completed in October 2000 and is open for public use.
- Sidewalks, crosswalks, bike lanes, bike paths and pedestrian bridges are all needed to provide better transportation facilities to complement the vehicular transportation network. This will also have an impact on safety. The White Mountains Regional Transportation Plan reported that "in the predominantly urban part of SR 260, specifically in the Pinetop-Lakeside area, accidents with pedestrians and bicyclists are unusually frequent. In the five mile stretch from milepost 349 to milepost 354, there were 15 pedestrian/pedalcyclist accidents."
- Continuation of the existing bus service is needed. Improvements, including reduced rates for youth, elderly, and handicapped riders, are also required.
- SR260 plays a key role in defining the "feel" of the Study Area and needs to be designed to help preserve the rural character of the area and to help create an "identity" for the community.
- Additional traffic signals are needed on SR260.
- Additional access is needed for Pinetop Lakes and Pinetop Country Club.

**Ongoing studies** and planned improvements may help address some of these issues, but substantial challenges remain. Highway improvements are proposed and can help reduce congestion, but funding is limited and progress is slow. The Town's major thoroughfare, State Route 260, is under ADOT jurisdiction. Penrod/Porter Mountain Road widening established a second link between State Route 260 and U.S. 60 in Show Low. Annual average daily traffic (AADT) along State Route 260 from 2006 to 2008 indicated some reductions in traffic volume:

**Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) Counts Along State Route 260**

Route	Starting Point To Ending Point	Length	AADT 2006	AADT 2007	AADT 2008
SR 260	US 60 - Show Low to Show Low Lake Road	3.93	21,492	21,355	17,325
SR 260	Show Low Lake Road to Woodland Road	4.95	22,349	21,865	19,070
SR 260	Woodland Road to Penrod Road	2.85	22,136	22,301	20,311
SR 260	Penrod Road to SR 73 South - Hon Dah	4.00	8,369	8,691	8,221

LEGEND: AADT = Annual average daily traffic during calendar years noted  
SOURCE: ADOT State Highway System Traffic Log Data 2006-2008 ver2

**Connectivity** remains a key circulation issue. Although geographic and development constraints limit options for creating or linking streets to create viable alternative routes for traffic now on SR260, improvements are possible. The Lima study, although it is focusing on pedestrian safety, is also looking at solutions, such as medians, that can benefit all roadway users. Consideration of intelligent transportation system technology, streetscape details that modify access to the highway, intersection design, provision of bicycle lanes, sidewalks (separated from the road, meandering where possible) and off-road trails and other measures can help mitigate traffic impacts.

**Circulation within neighborhoods** and other districts along SR260 should be reviewed to determine best routes for bicycling and walking connections, suggesting ways to allow convenient internal travel while improving safety. Because there are few additional options for adding traffic-carrying capacity, Pinetop-Lakeside is committed to improving transportation safety Town-wide, maintaining internal circulation in residential neighborhoods, enhancing traffic flow efficiency and reducing automobile trips where possible.

**Transit options** are limited at this time for people who don't have access to private motor vehicles. The Four Seasons Connection Public Transit System operates Monday through Saturday, beginning at 6:30 a.m. and ending at 6:30 p.m. and is provided by 16-passenger, disabled person(s) accessible buses. These buses provide a system comprised of two routes, one for the City of Show Low, and one for the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside, which interchange to provide continuous service to both communities. In addition, Four Seasons also provides pick-up service for disabled individuals who are not able to access the transit system at existing bus stops. Additional or expanded transit options may be considered in the future.

**Alternative Modes --** The potential of bicycling, walking and equestrian uses as transportation modes has not been fully explored. *Linking Our Landscape*, the *Town Plan*, the previous General Plan and other studies all endorse bicycling and walking as healthy ways to get around. Although bicycling and walking are not expected to become the dominant modes of transportation in Pinetop-Lakeside, many more people would try biking or walking if improved facilities were provided. It's an ideal way to combine recreation with errands or business trips and contributes to the "small-town" character of the area.

National transportation survey results show that more than half of the bicycle trips and a third of the walking trips are for social or recreational purposes. Family and personal business travel, along with school and church-related travel, were also significant contributors. The average length of a travel trip is 0.6 mi for walking and 2.0 mi for bicycling – a 10 to 15 minute bike ride for an average rider. Walking and bicycling are accessible to the very young, the elderly, all economic groups and to people with many kinds of disabilities. In addition to improving fitness, walking and bicycling help people maintain independence and mobility.

A bike/ped circulation system that links off-road trails along riparian corridors and other open space to routes along low-traffic neighborhood streets and to improved crossings and facilities on SR260 is a vision presented in previous planning documents. It is important that provision of facilities be supported by education programs, employer incentive programs, enforcement and programs such as "Safe Routes to School".

## □ Interrelated Elements

Each of the Plan's additional Elements relates to the four main components cited above (Economic vitality, Open Space/Recreation, Land Use and Circulation) as well as to one another with sub-issues of its own.

**Growth Areas**, for example, have been mentioned as the potential focus for more intense land uses, acting as magnet sites for economic development, business and jobs. The updated General Plan will likely adapt the Town Plan nodes to serve as principal development expansion areas. The Growth Areas Element should also refer to U.S. Forest Service lands future development potential.

**Cost of Development** raises competitiveness questions. Can the Town attract new investment and/or employers given the fact that transportation adds to the price of building materials and construction expense? Other factors (such as a growing customer base, available workforce and excellent community services/amenities) can more than offset higher initial capital expenditures.

**Environmental Planning** (to which we have added **Energy** considerations) meshes with alternative energy, forest products, forest and wildlife preservation, wildfire prevention and numerous open space concerns. The natural surroundings relate holistically with the total experience of living in, or visiting, Pinetop-Lakeside.

Studies being undertaken to evaluate **Housing** issues relate directly with economic and land use opportunities. Residential value, for persons and families at all income levels, is fundamental to the Town's planning vision.

**Public Services and Facilities**, too raise concerns about the Town's fiscal ability to encourage quality growth and meet its demands. Capital improvement programming over the coming decade must be efficient, prioritized and scaled both to community needs and resources to pay for them.

**Water Resources**, although not today a concern in terms of supply, also require long-range planning to provide for transport and treatment of wet utilities. Infrastructure expansion must be cost effective, coordinated with development timing decisions.

## **REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

As noted, the Town's influence and attraction affects a much larger area and population base than the existing municipal limits. Pinetop-Lakeside's current General Plan (2001) was completed in conjunction with Navajo County. Although this Update focuses on Pinetop-Lakeside, it recognizes many issue implications that are regional (or, at least, sub-regional) in scope. It is particularly important to work with neighboring jurisdictions.

The White Mountains, considered by many to be Arizona's prime vacationland, face shared problems ranging from traffic congestion and winter weather extremes to over-commercialization and high costs of development. On the positive side, common assets in the region include: multi-cultural enrichment, recreational variety and scenic excellence. The White Mountain Trail System, for example, currently consists of over 200 miles of connected, loop trails for non-motorized users (hikers, mountain bikers and equestrians) in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, which are convenient and immediately adjacent to Pinetop-Lakeside. The USFS and TRACKS ([www.tracks-pinetop-lakeside.org](http://www.tracks-pinetop-lakeside.org)) collaborate to plan, build and maintain the WMTS.

### ☐ Navajo County

Navajo County has a total area of 9,959 square miles, of which, 6 square miles is water. The County contains parts of the Hopi Indian reservation, the Navajo Indian Reservation and Fort Apache Indian Reservation. Its 2008 estimated population was 112,757 (up from 97,470 in 2000 and 77,674 in 1990).

Known for serving an historic transportation corridor -- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Route 66, Interstate 40 -- the County spans mountains, high deserts, woodlands, river valleys, and lakes. Generally speaking, water resources are more plentiful here than elsewhere in Arizona.

### ☐ White Mountain Apache Tribe

The White Mountain Apache Tribe has several land holdings and attractions in the region which appeal to tourists. Tribal facilities contribute to the region's overall tourism appeal. Among these venues are:

**Hon-Dah Resort-Casino and Conference Center.** The 128-room Hon-Dah hotel, with nearly 8,500 square feet of meeting room space, also contains a 250-site RV park to accommodate visitors, conference participants or overnight guests.

**Historic Fort Apache.** Listed on the *National Register of Historic Places*, Fort Apache offers guided or self-guided walking tours of 20 buildings that have been restored on the 288-acre site. It is a family destination for experiencing the drama of the old west first hand.

**Sunrise Park Resort.** Owned by the White Mountain Apache Indian Tribe, Sunrise Park Resort is Arizona's premier ski area that features a four season getaway destination. Tourists enjoying the three mountain, 65-run ski complex often stay in the outlying White Mountain communities of Pinetop-Lakeside, Show Low, Snowflake, as well as Heber, Taylor and Springerville. Summer visitors frequent Sunrise Lake which affords excellent fishing for Rainbow, Brook and Apache Trout, in addition to boat rentals. Golf courses, hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding are activities also available in the area.

## □ Adjacent/Nearby Municipalities

Issues with other communities in the greater region pertain to competition and cooperation. All municipalities are seeking employment growth; some have targeted a particular economic revenue niche (e.g., Eagar, forest products). Tourism produces revenue throughout the area, but there are varying degrees of spending – from travelers just passing through or on day trips to longer-term campers and seasonal residents.

Observations about selected places that may relate to Pinetop-Lakeside's community planning in positive or negative ways include:

**Show Low**, larger than Pinetop-Lakeside, is the Town's nearest (partly abutting) neighbor. It is the immediate area's commercial hub, capturing a disproportionate share of sales tax revenues. Show Low's proximity provides services such as health care and education for persons living in Pinetop-Lakeside; however, it would be desirable to become more independent of Show Low in shopping, job training and urgent care services.

**Snowflake and Taylor** are undergoing some commercial expansion. They are promoting retirement living and industrial employment. Proposed highway alternatives to State Route 77 (e.g., Scott Ranch Road) could afford a more direct route from those communities to Pinetop-Lakeside for recreational attractions (forests, lakes) not available in their high desert environment.

**I-40 Corridor** (Holbrook, Winslow, Gallup). Communities along the Interstate cater principally to through travelers. Their aggressive economic development efforts include exploration of alternative energy prospects, such as "wind farms".

**Payson**, approximately 100 miles to the west on State Route 260, represents a gateway to the Mogollon Rim from the State's largest, metropolitan population base. Smaller communities -- Forest Lakes, Heber, Overgaard, Pinedale, Linden and Clay Springs -- are popular cabin/campground spots with limited shopping for travelers goods and services for tourists bound for Show Low and Pinetop-Lakeside.

Payson is considered the western terminus of regional trail connections and scenic byways from the White Mountains. Although distant, the Payson entry to the Mogollon Rim represents improvements in highway safety and travel time that has made Pinetop-Lakeside even more accessible to millions of Arizonans over the past decade.

\* \* \*

Cooperation among White Mountain communities is most evident in prospects for regional tourism, day trips and trail linkages. Specialization -- rather than competition -- would support shared efforts toward employment expansion and educational opportunities. Funding joint activities is the central question in organizing regional economic development initiatives.

## □ Unincorporated Areas

Many persons living and working in areas outside the Town's municipal limits consider themselves Pinetop-Lakeside residents.

**Wagon Wheel**, an unincorporated island along 260 between Show Low and Pinetop-Lakeside, constitutes a gap in planning and land use guidance as compared with its municipal neighbors. Commercial development is in place along much of the highway frontage. Coordination with Navajo County could help improve this area, helping to improve Pinetop-Lakeside's "entry image". Residential neighborhoods are mostly smaller, older homes.

Past efforts to consider annexation into Pinetop-Lakeside were unsuccessful; however, Wagon Wheel stakeholders were welcomed to the General Plan process.

Residential areas west of **Rainbow Lake** are predominantly large-lot (one acre) residential uses with commercial uses along SR260 and scattered multi-family uses.

**White Mountain Summer Homes and Pinetop Lakes Country Club** are both County subdivisions immediately adjacent to the Town's southern boundary along or near Buck Springs Road. Both subdivisions are typically characterized as second-homeowners' residences and vacation homes. These and other seasonal home areas, such as Pinetop Country Club, are transitioning into more year-round populations as their owners retire, and, perhaps, find new business opportunities to keep them active. Residents are dependent upon Town services and amenities for shopping, retail, and dining.

## □ U.S. Forest Service

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest lands extend over more than 2.6 million acres. The Sitgreaves East Geographic Area is in and adjacent to the Town and neighboring communities. A map, prepared by the Town and presented to the National Forest Service, indicated National Forest lands that are Pinetop-Lakeside priorities for retaining as open space as well as those lands that could be supported as appropriate for exchange.

The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest Plan revision (2007-2009) updates the Forest management policies. A working draft plan, dated June 15, 2009, is currently available on their website (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/asnf/plan-revision/proposed-plan.shtml>).

Two issues have arisen during early General Plan investigations. First, there is a Forest Service concern regarding disposition of land in the Pinetop-Lakeside vicinity, as

evidenced by the landlocked nature of USFS acreage in the Woodland Lake Park tract. Second, access between the Town and Forest lands is pertinent to creating a regional trails system. Also, there has been some discussion of establishing a scenic roadway/reliever connection along Rim Road in Show Low and Pinetop-Lakeside.

## **THE NEXT DECADE**

Pinetop-Lakeside's adopted General Plan is reaching its ten-year threshold, requiring an update in 2011. The current Plan has served remarkably well. Many of its basic topics, or Elements, require only relatively minor adjustments to acknowledge growth and change since 2001. Even though the Town's basic values haven't changed, its context has -- from regional to global perspectives.

The community acknowledges that it must become more self-reliant. Financial or other support from outside sources has become increasingly restricted. The updated General Plan needs to focus on ingenuity, new ways to implement its citizens' vision.

### **□ Emphasis on Economic Sustainability**

Entering the new decade, a primary concern is solidifying the Town's economic base. Priorities include: maintaining/expanding existing businesses; generating greater sales tax revenues; attracting private investment; drawing employers offering well-paying jobs and increasing household incomes.

Growth management practices should encourage desired development, but not reduce the Town's selectivity in terms of quality, appropriate land uses. The community should continue to insist that proposed projects, their placement, intensity and appearance won't degrade its overall character. Cost-benefit analyses will be especially critical to assure Pinetop-Lakeside of sustainable progress. "Get rich quick" growth, however compelling it may look at first proposal, would be antithetical to local vision. Retaining "The Mountain's" unique attributes promises to serve Pinetop-Lakeside best in coming years' competition for economic recovery.

General Plan goals can embrace strategies that serve seasonal residents, visitors and the year-round population. In-state tourism, for instance, has great potential that may be enhanced through outdoor recreation improvements such as hiking/mountain biking trails. Part-time residents spend on goods and services. Desired new jobs in technical and professional fields call for educational training opportunities. In each of these instances -- whether a reasonably-priced family vacation, affordable living quality or rising disposable incomes -- the Town economy will be a major benchmark of this Plan Update's success.

### **□ Continued Stewardship of Natural Surroundings**

Maintaining community character is our predominant, underlying Update issue. It requires sound economic foundation cited above. Improvements, such as implementing an expanded trails system, must have funding. Preserving the natural environment, in

times when money is scarce, will depend more than ever on creative open space guidelines in the Town's development codes.

Nodal Growth Areas (Town Plan) define places where more intense development may best be accommodated. To the extent that the community and stakeholders accept those designations, low density development and/or open spaces can prevail elsewhere. Clustered, man-built land use should be connected with and benefit from accessibility to nearby open spaces.

In suggesting Plan principles for preservation and conservation, it would be well to maintain County support. That is, if development requirements in Town are too stringent compared with County practices, potentially positive growth could be driven away into unincorporated areas. Also, if the General Plan provides incentive encouragement for appropriate projects, some areas adjacent to the Town (such as Wagon Wheel) may become interested in annexation.

Coordination with Forest Service land management practices, too, will be instrumental to planning effectiveness between 2011-21. As noted, the Open Space Committee's long-range planning analysis of Forest Service lands may serve as a policy guide for the Town's participation. Some areas in Arizona (e.g., Yavapai County/Coconino National Forest) are operating under cooperative public-private procedures to foster more open processes for access, enjoyment and compatibility among adjacent land uses.