

Public Participation Plan



General Plan Update

November 2024

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

Introduction

The purpose of this Community Outreach and Communication Plan (COCP) is to outline how the public will be engaged during the development of the City of Maricopa General Plan Update. To comply with A.R.S § 9.461.06, various outreach goals, communication tools, and techniques are identified to engage the general public, key stakeholders, staff, and council in the planning process. The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the following core values for effective public participation:



Core Values for Public Participation

- 1 Public Participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be in the decision-making process.
- 2 Public Participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- 3 Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- 4 Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- 5 Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- 6 Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- 7 Public Participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision

The City of Maricopa is a fast-growing community currently approaching 70,000 people in total population. While a relatively young municipality since having incorporated in 2003, the City fosters a strong sense of community among its residents through hosting community events. Maricopa also seeks to highlight the community's historical significance of its status as one of the oldest communities in Arizona, with a rich heritage that is celebrated through local landmarks and historical sites of the residents that have lived in the area since the initial modern settlements in the 19th century. The City's commitment to growth and development is evident in its ongoing projects and initiatives aimed at improving infrastructure and enhancing the quality of life for its residents.

The Public

This section identifies the key audience for the General Plan Update inclusive of the general public and stakeholders:

Community Members

Maricopa's community is defined not only by individual residents but also by larger groups within the community. The planning team of the General Plan will seek out the following:

- Residents
- Community Service Organizations
- Neighborhood/Homeowner Associations
- City of Maricopa Youth Council
- Be Awesome Youth Coalition

- Local Faith Communities
- Maricopa Senior Groups
- F.O.R. Maricopa (Food, Opportunity and Resources)
- Maricopa Unified School District
- Education Networks
- Healthcare Groups
- Maricopa Historical Society

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are identified as groups or individuals involved in the decision-making process within the community or those whose support is critical to the success of the General Plan implementation. These stakeholders are also associated with a field of expertise that will enhance the broad range of perspectives. Stakeholders identified include:

- City Council and Commission Members
- Major Employers and Business Leaders
- Maricopa Chamber of Commerce
- Landowners and Community Developers
- Fire, Emergency and Public Safety Services
- Utility Providers
- Maricopa Stanfield Irrigation & Drainage District (MSIDD)
- Arizona State Land Department
- Native American Tribal Communities

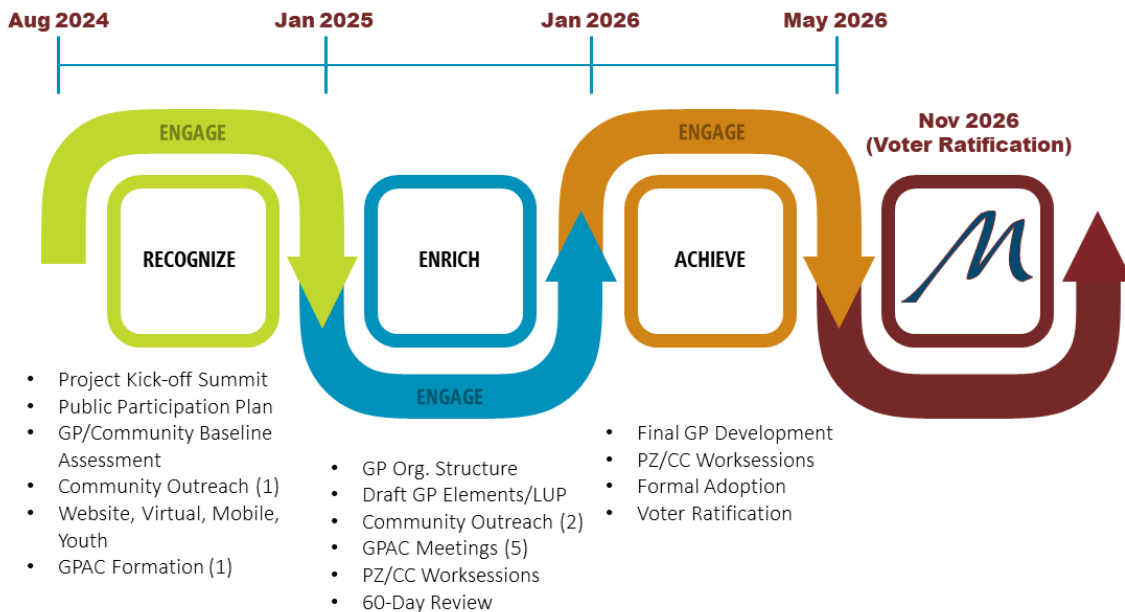
The consultant team will collaborate with the City to identify and compile a list of specific individuals representing these key stakeholder groups.

Engagement Approach and Goals

Throughout this process, community and stakeholder involvement will be supplemented with an array of engagement techniques that are outlined in the next section. The ultimate intent of this approach is to gain input to inform the decisions of the planning team, City staff, as well as appointed and elected officials who all play a key role in the facilitation of this General Plan Update effort. Any additional public participation efforts made as a result of feedback received from the public will be documented and updated in this Community Outreach and Communication Plan.

As mandated by State Statutes, once the final draft is completed, the General Plan undergoes a formal 60-day review period, before receiving a Planning & Zoning Commission recommendation, followed by City Council Adoption. With Council adoption, the General Plan is then sent to voters to be ratified. Currently, it is anticipated ratification of the General Plan will be conducted through the General Election held in November of 2026.

The overall phasing of the project is broken out into four key efforts: “Recognize”, “Enrich”, and “Achieve”, with the fourth effort “Engage” intertwined throughout the life of the project as outlined below:



Using, IAP2’s spectrum of participation detailed below, the “Engage” effort facilitated during each phase of the project process will seek to collectively inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower community members as well as stakeholders.

	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
Public Participation Goal	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, and/or solutions.	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decision.	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure the public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.	To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.
Promise to the Public	We will keep you informed.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public feedback influenced the decision.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to maximum extent possible.	We will implement what you decide.

The following is an overview of the engagement goals and objectives within each phase of the project.

PHASE 1: Recognize		
Engagement	Goal	Objective
	INFORM & INVOLVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How a General Plan’s policies and goals guide future growth • How residents’ needs will change as the community matures • The planning process and 2026 vote • How should the City grow in the future and how will those changes affect the City
PHASE 2: Enrich		
Engagement	Goal	Objective
	INFORM & COLLABORATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the public of the draft plan and policies, how the feedback was used to develop the plan and policies, and determine if there are any changes desired
PHASE 3: Achieve		
Engagement	Goal	Objective
	CONSULT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address 60-Day public review comments and prepare the final draft of the General Plan
	CONSULT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct two (2) State-mandated Planning Commission Public Hearings and one (1) City Council Public Hearing for formal adoption
	EMPOWER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • November 2026 Election for Plan Ratification by Voters

Engagement Techniques

A wide range of outreach techniques that will be utilized throughout the planning process for the General Plan are further outlined below:

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

The General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC) will be an informal group defined with the assistance of City staff and/or City Council direction to include involved stakeholders from the Maricopa community. Stakeholders may include residents, business owners, or select public/private agency representatives. Generally, members of the Michael Baker Team and City Staff will meet with the GPAC at key project milestones to review findings and/or plans, gather long-form input to inform the overall development of the General Plan as well as on specific topics, and preview information that will be presented at public meetings and outreach events. These meetings have the additional dual purposes of educating the members of the GPAC about the General Plan Update process and preparing them to promote to the general community members in the City of Maricopa to engage with and participate in the outreach efforts of the update process for the General Plan. The Michael Baker Team and City Staff will meet with this group up to six times throughout the General Plan Update process. Following the completion of the General Plan Update, the members of the GPAC will have become well-versed in the General Plan and the update process overall in order to advocate for the ratification of the General Plan prior to the resident vote.

Planning & Zoning Commission & City Council Touch Points

As the key regulatory bodies who approve the General Plan before it is ratified by the public, the City Council and Planning & Zoning Commission will be involved throughout the development of the General Plan. Through three key milestones of the project, City Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission will have individual or joint work sessions to provide additional input on the General Plan in conjunction with the project phases. These come in addition to an initial introductory Council Meeting and Planning Commission Meeting at the start of the project, as well as two additional meetings leading up to the Council adoption process.

Stakeholder Meetings

In coordination with City staff, the consultant team will plan and facilitate stakeholder meetings on an as-needed basis to achieve the objectives during the three project phases as outlined above. The consultant team will review and advise on outreach efforts to provide opportunities for stakeholder input. An invitation will be sent out to stakeholders inviting their participation in any scheduled meetings.

Awareness Campaign

Visual Identity & Branding

The consultant team in coordination with City staff, will create a unique graphic format and project branding for the project that garners enthusiasm and unity through a recognizable identity that aligns with the City's current branding styles. This brand will then be used for all project products, including the website, meeting materials, and planning documents. Messaging will make clear that the General Plan is being updated rather than being developed as a completely new effort.

The project team will meet with the City leadership in late October 2024 to gather input that will help create a compelling and resonant brand identity. This crucial step involves engaging with the City's internal team members to understand their perspectives, preferences, and expectations.

After collecting this input, the project team's creative group will perform an audit of the current design/brand of the general plan and conduct further research as needed. The project team will then use their research to develop several naming options. They plan on sharing three concepts with the City in November 2024:

1. The existing General Plan naming, but with an updated look
2. Using the new City branding, but with a more direct name, such as "The City of Maricopa General Plan Update"; and
3. A completely new name and identity

Upon receiving feedback from the project management team and City leadership, the creative team will edit, refine, and conduct a new presentation for the final review and approval by the end of November 2024.

Project Website

For the City of Maricopa's General Plan Update website, the consultant team will help the City create a site that is visually compelling, organized and establishes a positive user experience. The site will provide flexibility to incorporate visual communication collateral like infographics, video/photography, icons, button graphics, and other visual assets to help communicate the desired message and make the website more digestible.

The consultant team will meet with the City to discuss and plan the organization of content on the site and develop a logical information hierarchy that focuses on getting the user to find the information they need and participate through input and collaboration opportunities.

Print & Social Media

Through coordination with the City of Maricopa Community Enrichment Department, print and social media tools will also be employed utilizing established City channels (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, X, YouTube, Nextdoor) to promote opportunities for engagement and to distribute project information and meeting notices. In coordination with staff the consultant team will formulate public announcements associated with specified project surveys, deliverables, and meetings for use by Community Enrichment staff to utilize and post for the project. In addition, prior to each phase of outreach, media releases will be prepared and distributed by the City to the *Maricopa Monitor*, *InMaricopa*, *Copa TV* on Facebook and YouTube, and any other local media.

Community Workshops (In Person & Virtual)

The team will prepare for and facilitate three public workshops associated with the General Plan Update planning process. For each workshop, meeting announcements will be prepared in coordination with City staff and the public information officer (PIO) for advertising and distribution.

To compliment in person workshops and to allow the public to balance work and family needs, the team will also host innovative virtual workshops to allow residents to participate on their own time. This will result in increased participation and the collection of richer, more useful feedback than would be received by only utilizing a traditional public workshop setting.

Community Workshop #1 – Public Kick-off & Goal/Vision Validation

As one of the first steps in the planning process, the Michael Baker team will facilitate a project kick-off and community vision/goal validation workshop in winter 2024. The information gained as part of this workshop will help to refresh or amend the existing General Plan vision statement and primary goals/objectives expressed in the current General Plan. A multi-media presentation, interactive exercises and live polling will be used to obtain feedback from the community.

Community Workshop #2 – Revised Vision & Goals Validation

The Michael Baker Team will facilitate a second community open house and workshop in spring 2025 to present and validate the General Plan findings as discovered in Phase I and solicit input on the refreshed land use and growth area sections. Land uses, motorized and non-motorized circulation, water resources, energy, policies and goal statements, and parks, trails and open spaces will be reviewed in detail. At this stage in the process, the team will also conduct City Council & Planning Commission work sessions to review the growth and land use updates, their impact analyses, and public input.

Community Workshop #3 – Administrative General Plan Draft Review

The Michael Baker Team will conduct an Open House style meeting in late summer/early fall 2025 for the public review and comment of the Draft General Plan Update. Presentation boards of select maps will be stationed across the meeting space and the Michael Baker Team will engage the community in open dialogue to seek their final concurrence on the plan and identify any remaining and/or necessary changes that must occur prior to finalizing the General Plan Update.

Mobile Studios

Mobile studios act like pop-up workshops in a booth and are held at popular community events, prevalent locations throughout the City and can even be taken to local HOA board meetings. The goal of the mobile studio is to engage as many Maricopa residents and visitors as possible, educate people about the importance of the General Plan update, and collect community input on the project.

The consultant team will plan and hold three mobile studios, which can involve Project Overview posters, Prioritization Bucket Game, Vision Board, Neighborhood Rating Game, and Children's Activities. Mobile studios may utilize notable events such as Merry Copa in Winter, Copa Cultural Night in Spring, and Great American 4th Fireworks Show in Summer. All of these will be corresponded to the three individual rounds of Community Workshop.

Youth Council Workshop

For this General Plan update effort, the Michael Baker team will engage with the Maricopa's Youth Council to identify planning issues that are important to youth in the community and capture their vision for the future of the City. The youth visioning workshop will focus on high school-aged students and engage them in visioning similar to the initial community workshop.

Target Workshops (Optional)

Michael Baker will coordinate the application of optional Target Workshops. These may include meetings during the day at schools and/or retirement communities and senior centers making the process more accessible to populations who are less likely to participate otherwise. In addition, these workshops can also be facilitated as pop-up events, held at popular community events and locations throughout the City. Examples of the educational and interactive exhibits that could be conducted in Target Workshops include Project Overview Posters, Prioritization Bucket Game, Vision Board, and Children's Activities.

Digital Engagement

The Michael Baker will utilize select digital engagement platforms to ensure broad and robust participation during the update process. Online surveys and mapping tools will be used to provide an opportunity for community members to review and refine proposed plan content remotely and through common devices including personal computers, tablets, and smartphones. In congruence with the three rounds of workshops, there will be three virtual workshops and online surveys (as needed) made available to the public.