



## Environmental Integrity Focus Area Environmental Quality Element

### **BACKGROUND**

This working document presents draft goal and policies which emerged from Environmental Quality stakeholder working group meetings during the Fall of 2011. The Environmental Quality Element covers waste disposal and recycling, brownfields and other derelict sites, and air quality. The City's Environmental Services Department provides Tucson citizens and businesses with trash collection and disposal and recycling services. Other services provided by the Department include management of the Los Reales Landfill, ensuring that the City's air quality and industrial discharge permits are in compliance, cleaning up groundwater at old landfills and running an EPA-funded brownfields assessment program.

Brownfields are abandoned, idled or under-utilized industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination. Remediating and redeveloping Brownfields promotes economic growth, preserves the pristine desert and improves and protects the environment and public health. Left untouched, Brownfields pose environmental, legal and financial burdens to the community. .

To build a sustainable community, the City will need to plan for and implement policies to achieve the goals set forth in two nationally and internally acclaimed documents: the Mayor's Climate Change Agreement and the Urban Accords, approved by the Mayor and City Council in 2005 and 2006. The Environmental Quality element goals and policies below will contribute to general public health and will help build a clean, attractive, and safe community.

### **GOALS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY**

- I. Educate the public and encourage participation in environmental quality issues
- II. Encourage the redevelopment of brownfields and other potentially contaminated properties
- III. Meet and surpass federal air quality standards
- IV. Strive for a waste disposal system that meets sustainability objectives
- V. Ensure equity and justice in environmental quality policies
- VI. Pursue integrated planning

### **POLICIES FOR EACH ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY GOAL**

- I. **Educate the public and encourage participation in environmental quality issues**
  - A. Provide opportunities and training to ensure broad community participation in environmental improvement projects
  - B. Enhance public understanding of local environmental quality issues through expanded education, outreach, programming, and practices
  - C. Recognize service groups who undertake environmental improvement projects



## **II. Encourage the redevelopment of brownfields and other potentially contaminated properties**

- A. Continue to work with the community on assessing and redeveloping brownfields sites
- B. Educate the community on the brownfields redevelopment and involve them in the redevelopment process
- C. Target redevelopment of suspected contaminated, underutilized and derelict sites to improve surrounding neighborhoods and provide community benefits
- D. Provide priority funding for brownfields redevelopment
- E. Establish a mechanism to promote the redevelopment of brownfields with potential developers and investors

## **III. Meet and surpass federal air quality standards**

- A. Assess the risks and impacts of regional pollution, disparate standards, and commercial and industrial practices as they pertain to maintaining air quality
- B. Decrease vehicle emissions by promoting alternative fuel vehicles, reducing vehicle miles traveled, supporting expanded public transportation and creating walkable and bike-able environments
- C. Enhance the community's ability to further improve air quality under Clean Air Act attainment standards.
- D. Provide funding for successful programs and best management practices to improve air quality
- E. Encourage broad-based education and participation in air quality management practices
- F. Apply a multi-disciplinary approach to managing air quality
- G. Set tree canopy standards and desired ratio of impervious surfaces and urban forests as part of a clean-air strategy
- H. Promote land use development patterns that reduce air pollution
- I. Reduce migratory dust on undeveloped properties

## **IV. Strive for a waste disposal system that meets sustainability objectives**

- A. Develop an integrated waste reduction plan which incorporates the concepts of a zero waste model
- B. Evaluate ways the City can promote and increase recycling within city departments and at all public events within City limits
- C. Ensure that recycling infrastructure is included in all new development projects
- D. Support public-private sector partnerships that model the reuse of waste
- E. Continue to provide training and education to City staff and the public on environmental quality issues, policies, and practices
- F. Explore opportunities for City and County collaboration on waste disposal
- G. Develop a waste disposal fee structure that encourages recycling

## **V. Ensure equity and justice in environmental quality policies**

- A. Target degraded areas for urban forestry projects

- B. Encourage the development of community amenities and address blight in all parts of the City
- C. Address differential impacts when planning new projects and land use changes
- D. Evaluate all roadway and other City projects for their impact on the neighboring communities

**VI. Pursue Integrated Planning**

- A. Clarify relationships between all parties providing environmental quality services
- B. Redefine the approach to environmental quality from mitigation to innovation and economic development
- C. Ensure that policies and programs enhance economic development, sustain and improve the environment, and create renewable resources