

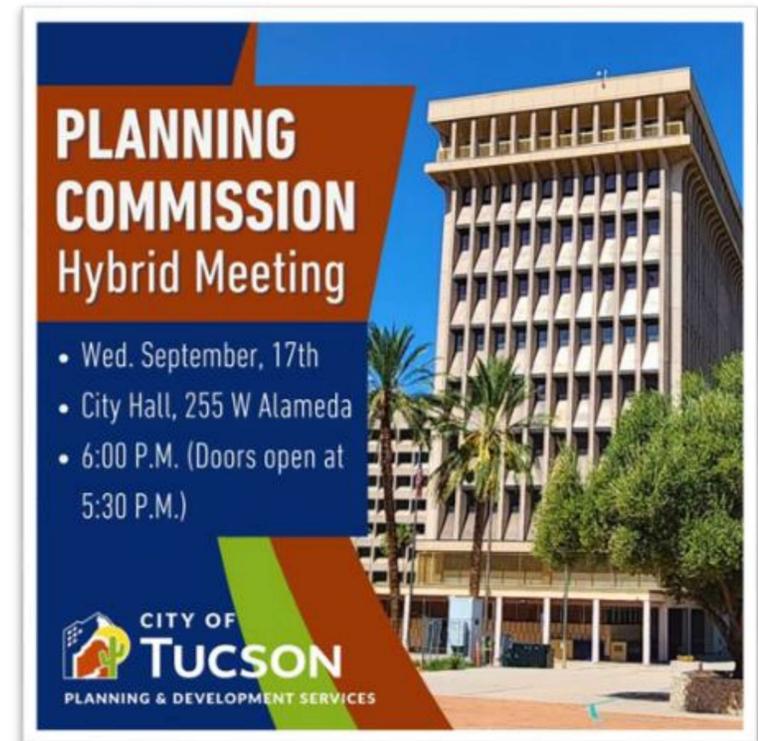


Planning Commission Orientation

March 4, 2026

Program Overview

- About the Tucson Planning Commission
- Why Plan?
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Code Amendment Process
- Land Use Planning Framework
- City of Tucson Plans
- Decision Making Process



About the Tucson Planning Commission

- Advise Mayor and Council, Planning and Development Services Department on the adoption of long-range plans, specific plans, and the Unified Development Code (zoning code)
- Maximum Number of Members: 13 with 8-year term limit
- Meeting Location: City Hall, Mayor and Council Chambers, 255 W. Alameda, and online
- <https://www.tucsonaz.gov/Departments/Planning-Development-Services/Public-Meetings-Boards-Committees-Commissions/Planning-Commission>

Why Plan?

- Provides direction for the City to adapt and evolve
- Helps to support goals and priorities of the City and community
- Supports sustainable growth and address climate change
- Provides direction for economic development
- Connects people to the broader community



Roles and Responsibilities

- Mayor & Council
- Planning Commission
- Staff
- Public



Roles and Responsibilities of Mayor and Council

- Sets Policy
- Appoints Planning Commission
- Decides Legislative Actions (General Plans, Unified Development Code, Zone changes, etc.)
- Hears appeals
- Establishes General Procedures
- Balances Relationships with Planning Commission, Staff, and Public
- Political Perspective



Responsibilities of Planning Commission

- Planning Commission roles include:
 - Assist in development of general, area and neighborhood plans
 - Coordinate planning efforts
 - Make special studies regarding planning issues of concern
 - Implement adopted city policy
 - **Does not review rezonings / special exceptions** because is not the quasi-judicial body, that is the role of the Zoning Examiner
- The Commission must balance relationships between the Mayor & Council, staff and the public
- The Commission helps to provide community perspective

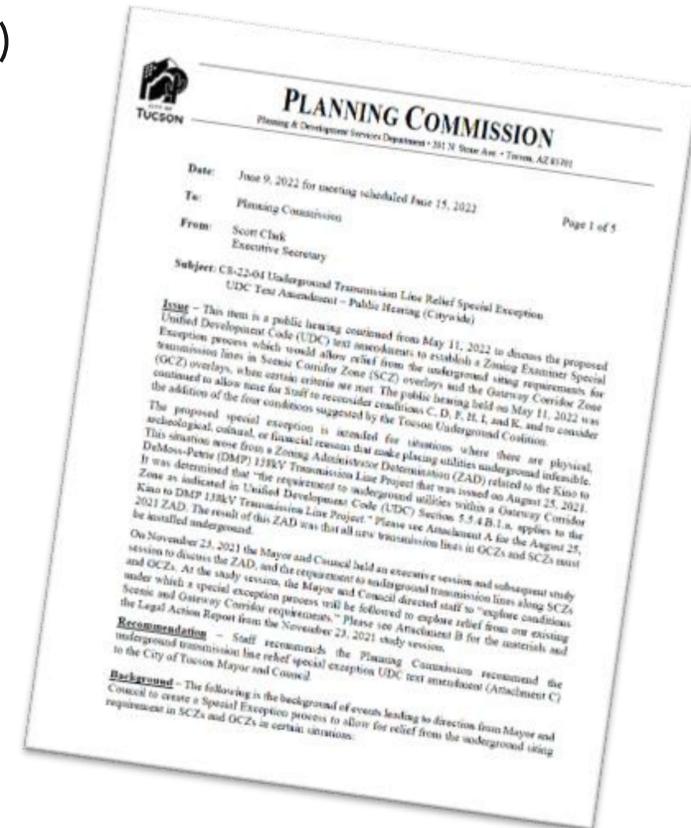
Role of Planning Commission and Commissioners

- Ensure the public is engaged in productive testimony
- Provide well thought-out recommendations
- Recognize Mayor & Council's role in Policy Development
- Review staff reports before the meeting and prepare questions for staff and other participants
- Stay focused on issue before you
- Provide constructive input
- Consider public comments / feedback



Staff Role

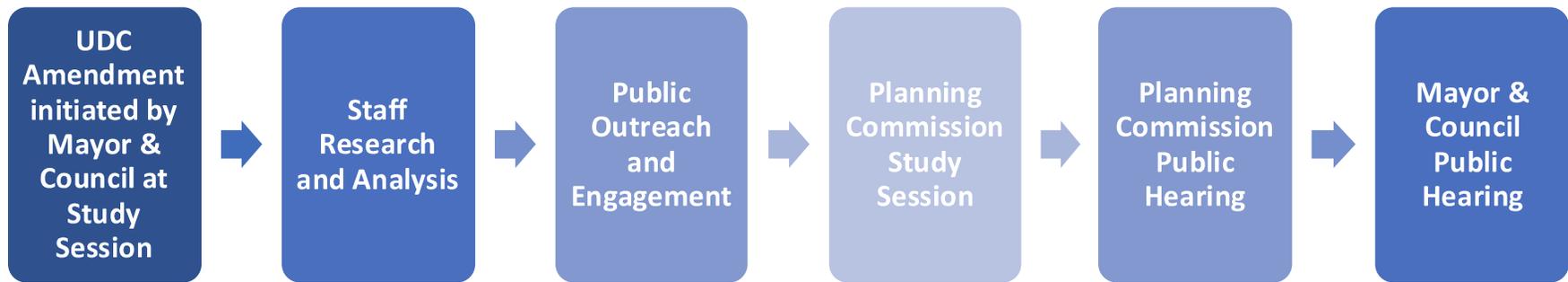
- Review applications for completeness (Plan Amendments)
- Act in a fair, ethical and consistent manner
- Inform Commission of local agency policies, plans and ordinances
- Provide background information and staff reports
- Prepare draft plans (General Plan, area plans, neighborhood plans, etc.)
- Make recommendations
- Answer technical questions
- Facilitate public review process
- Provide technical policy perspective



Role of the Public

- Present local background information
- Become informed on project and process
- Focus on issue before the Commission
- Provide community perspectives to the Commission

UDC Code Amendment Process



UDC Plan Amendment Process



Planning Framework

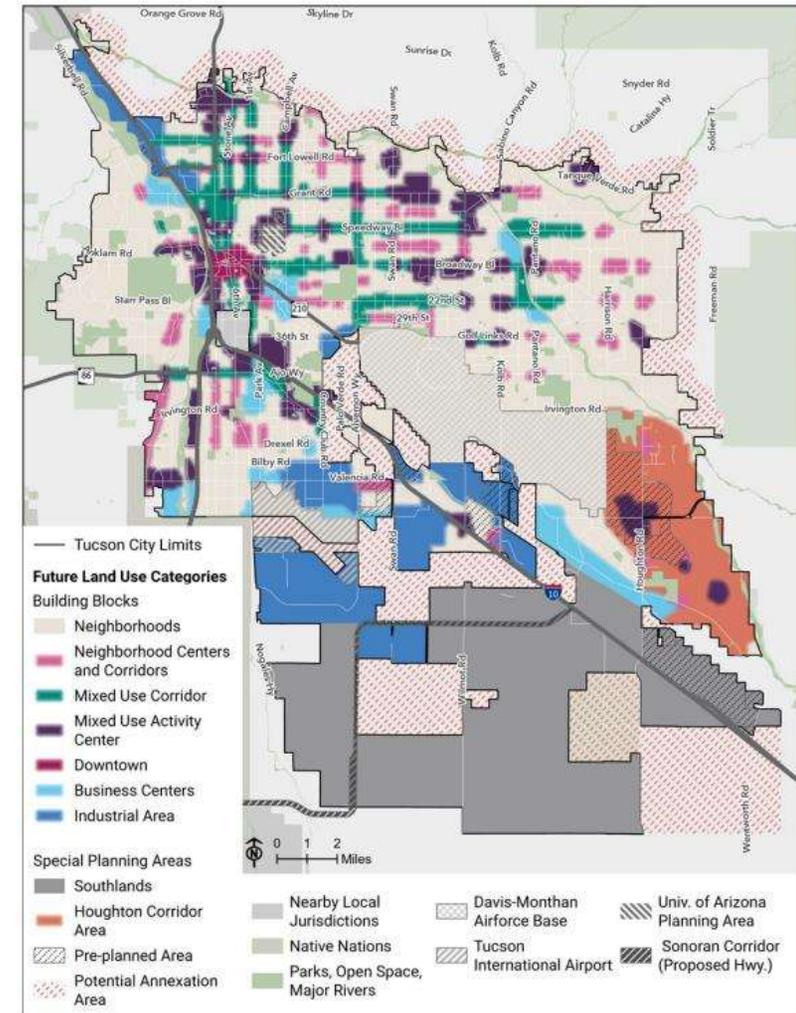
- General Plan (also specific plans, Urban Design Plan, etc.)
- Zoning
- Special Exceptions & Variances
- Permit processing streamlining requirements
- Subdivision requirements
- Environmental review

Land Use Hierarchy

- Federal Constitution and laws
- State Constitution and laws
- City General plan
- City area, neighborhood and specific plans
- Unified Development Code
- Relief from zoning; use (special exception) permits, variances, etc.
- Development package
- Subdivision plats
- Building permits

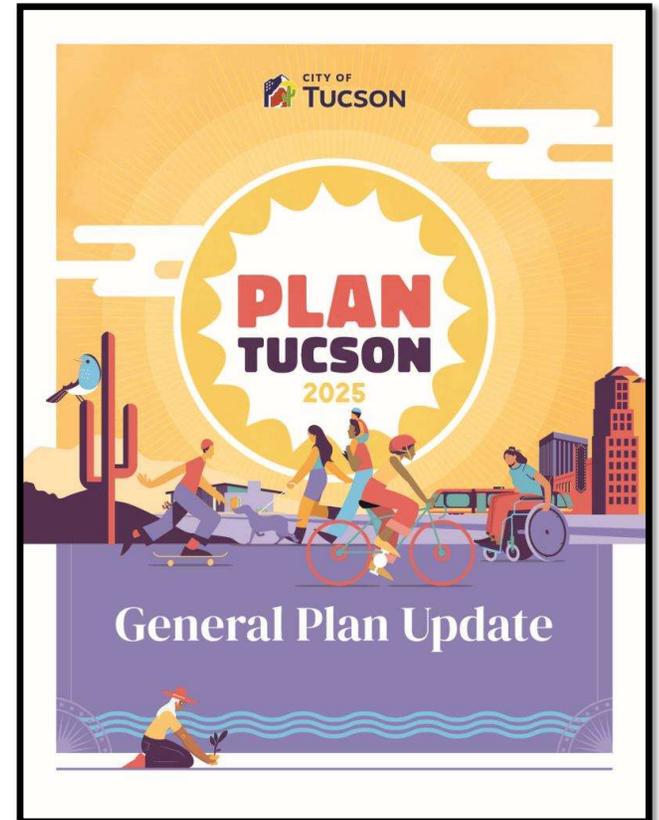


Plan Tucson Future Growth Scenario Map



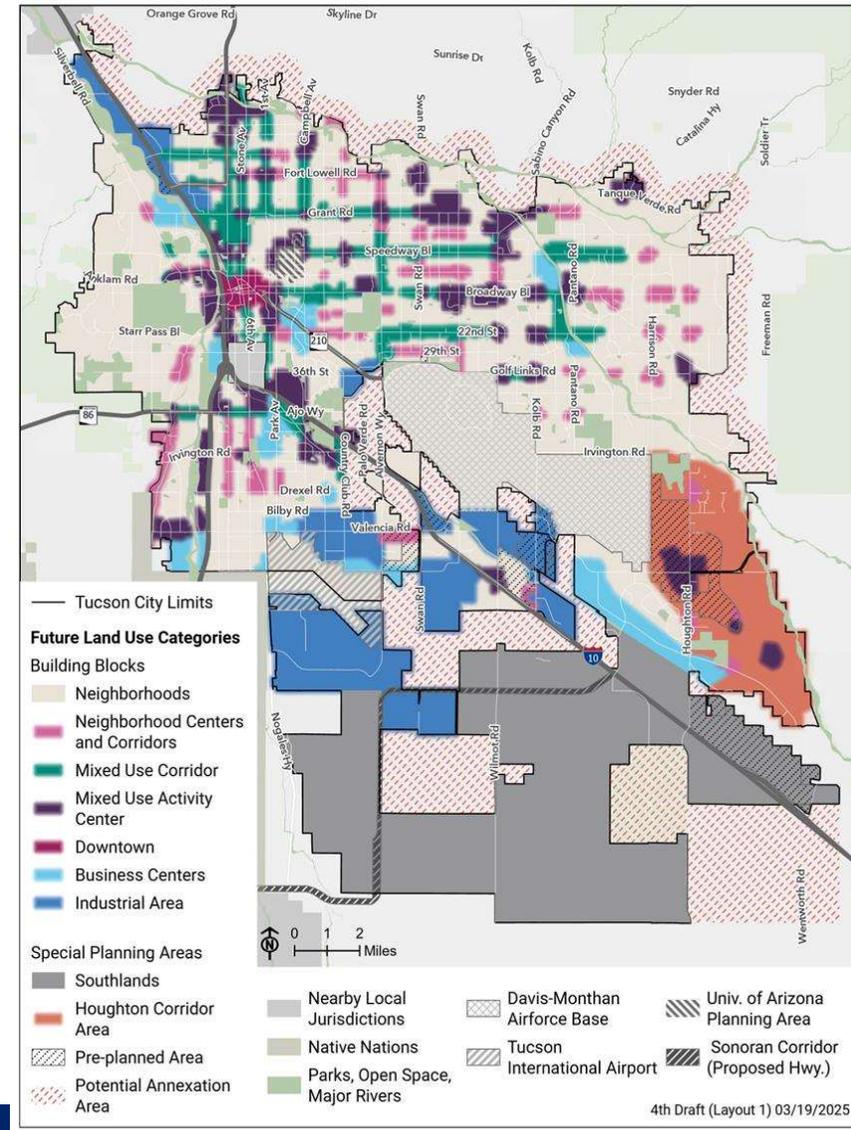
Plan Tucson 2025

- Voter approved General Plan guiding Tucson through 2035
- Developed with extensive community input (14,000+ comments)
- Key Focus Areas
 - Housing affordability and workforce stability
 - Transportation and infrastructure improvements
 - Climate resilience and infrastructure improvements
 - Economic development & water resources management
 - Community wellness, safety & cultural heritage
- Guides land use, policy decisions and City investments



Plan Tucson Future Growth Scenario

- The map provides the location and a general description of the types of development that may be supported in each location.
- Depicts a citywide development pattern that can accommodate the Tucson community's needs and furthers its values.
- The Map is accompanied by guidelines used in some planning and development review process, which can include Planning Commission review.



Neighborhood and Area Plans

- Types of “Specific Plans”
- Not statutorily required – But permitted by state law
- Intended to add detail and specificity for the implementation of the General Plan
- Currently there are 51 adopted neighborhood and area plans
- Most plans were adopted in the 1980’s, with some dating to the 1970’s



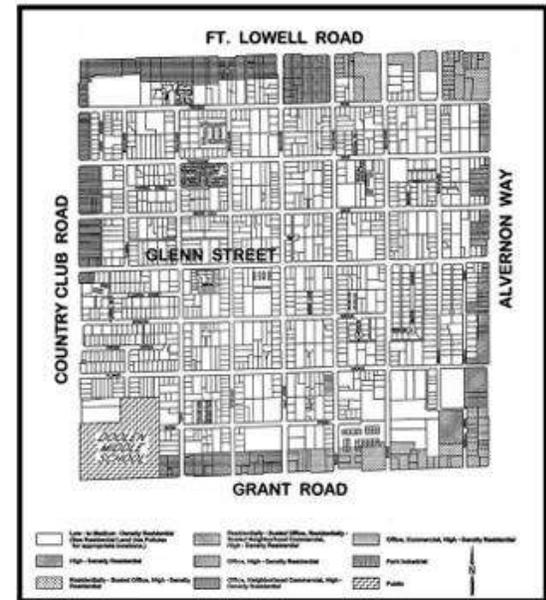
BROADMOOR-BROADWAY VILLAGE
NEIGHBORHOOD PLAN



Adopted by Mayor and Council, City of Tucson, September 11, 2024
Resolution No. 23815

Updates to Future Land Use and Area Plans (GAAP)

- Worked with the Grant Alvernon Area Plan (GAAP) committee to review and identify proposed map changes.
- Reviewed both the current zoning and existing conceptual land use maps
- Intended to add detail and specificity for the implementation of the General Plan
- Identified areas where there were non-conforming uses or inconsistencies between the existing zoning and land use maps, and identified changes

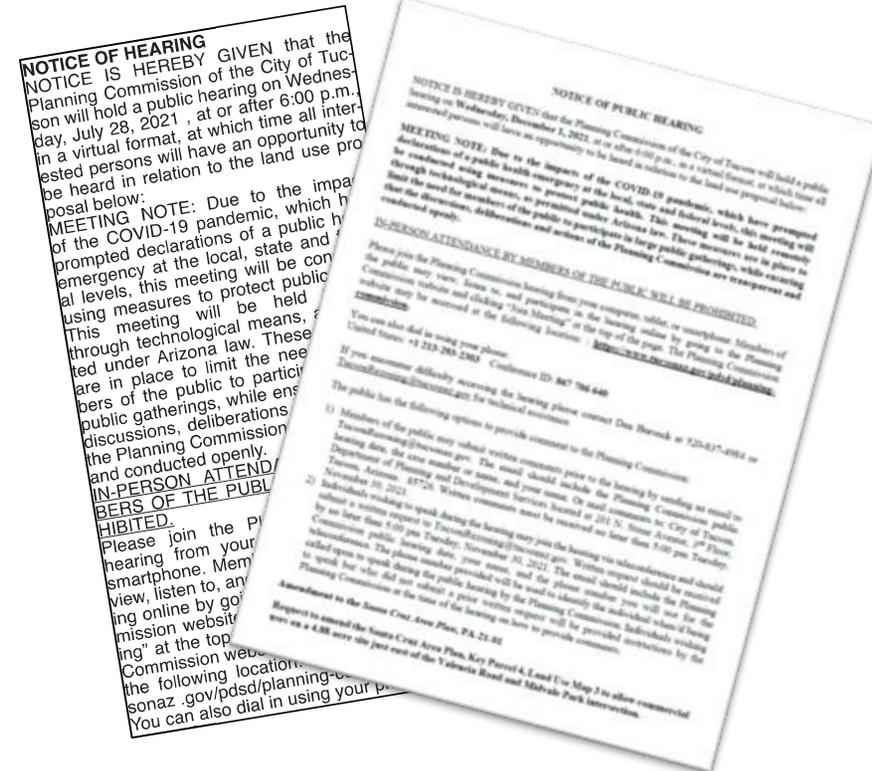


Decision Making Process

- Due Process
- Public Hearings
- Planning Commission Recommendations

Due Process

- Legislative vs. Quasi-Judicial Actions
- **Legislative** actions must be reasonable and nondiscriminatory
- **Quasi-judicial** decisions must be supported by substantial evidence in the record
- Notice
- Newspapers (legislative)
- Affected owners (quasi-judicial)
- Signs/notices



Effective Public Hearings

- Focus on subject under consideration
- Understand process
- Defined roles of responsibilities
- Maintain an open flow of ideas
- Following the meeting format



Skill in Making Decisions

- What is the issue you are deciding?
- Ability to review both written and oral testimony and to apply it
- Take initiative with policy issues
- Keep the long view
- Listen to what is really being said
- Remain objective
- Express yourself clearly and concisely

Dealing with the Unexpected

- Last minute and unexpected project opposition
- Submission of new documents and evidence at hearings
- Unanticipated change in political winds
- A continuance is sometimes a good thing
- Due process and conflict issues

Planning Commission Recommendations

- Purpose of recommendation:
 - Provide a framework for making principled decisions
 - Facilitate orderly analysis to reduce the likelihood of random leaps from evidence to conclusions
 - Creates a record for the basis for the Commission's decision
- In the Recommendation:
 - Explain the basis for the decision—just because you do not like the project—this doesn't work, need sound reasons. e.g., The project is not consistent with the General Plan BECAUSE..."
 - Refer to factual evidence (written or oral)
 - Part of the public record
 - Sufficient to determine whether and on what basis should judicial review be sought

Thank You!

