



4. COMMUNITY FACILITIES ELEMENT

4.A INTRODUCTION

Community facilities and services are important in assuring a high quality of life for Gila County residents and visitors. Inclusion of the Community Facilities Element in the Gila County Comprehensive Plan is intended to integrate the planning of community facilities into the development process, and help to assure that adequate consideration is given to the provision of necessary services and facilities by new development.

Community facilities and services are typically provided by governmental or quasi-governmental agencies but may also include for-profit utilities and service providers. In Gila County, the primary community facility providers include the school districts (elementary, high school and college), fire districts, public and private water and wastewater companies, parks and recreation districts and library districts. Gila County provides law enforcement services, including jail and court facilities, solid waste disposal facilities and public health care programs.

A primary challenge to the provision of traditional community-level utilities and services in Gila County results from the county's dispersed pattern of development and the number of isolated tracts of private land, often entirely surrounded by federal public land. This type of land ownership pattern makes the efficient delivery of services difficult at best. Gila County is a large, predominantly rural county with a topographic profile that constrains the ability to develop traditional urban utility systems and increases the cost and difficulty of providing non-utility services. The substantial distances between developed community areas and isolated private land holdings often make the development of community utility systems difficult, impractical or economically unfeasible.

These conditions, combined with limited county revenues to support service level increases, highlight the need to integrate the planning of community facilities with the planning of future development.

4.B PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Community Facilities Element of the Gila County Comprehensive Plan is intended to ensure that adequate community facilities are planned and provided commensurate with the growth and development of the county. The Community Facilities Element outlines the basic issues surrounding the delivery of community services and sets forth a series of goals, objectives and policies that should be incorporated into the review of development proposals.



4.C COMMUNITY FACILITY ISSUES AND VALUES

Community Facility Values:

The following community facility-related values were identified by county residents during the process to prepare the comprehensive plan:

- Limited role of government
- Local control of local service and facility issues

Community Facility Issues:

The following community facility-related issues were identified by county residents during the process to prepare the comprehensive plan:

- Potential negative impacts due to excessive use of individual septic systems
- Adequacy and reliability of water supply to residents
- Adequacy and response timing of fire and medical emergency services
- Adequacy and response timing of law enforcement services
- Lack of capacity of existing jail facilities
- Travel distances required to access governmental offices and functions
- Lack of automated and remote service options
- Lack of funding for service expansion and lack of service coordination



4.D COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES PLAN

The 2000 census reported the population of Gila County to be approximately 51,335 persons. This represents an overall population increase of approximately twenty-two (22%) percent, or approximately 11,120 persons, from 1990. Population projections based upon historical growth rates predict that the overall population of Gila County will approach 69,000 persons in the year 2010. This is an estimated population increase of approximately 17,650 persons. The projected growth of the county population over the next ten years will result in the need to increase community service levels to avoid a reduction in the overall levels of service provided to county residents.

County Operated Community Services

Law Enforcement

The Gila County Sheriff's Office (GCSO) provides law enforcement and jail services for the unincorporated areas of Gila County. Additionally, the GCSO provides law enforcement support services within the national forests on a contract basis and provides various contract services to the incorporated communities of Hayden, Winkelman, Globe and Miami. The GCSO currently has approximately 44 sworn deputy positions with additional jail and administrative support positions. Volunteer Search and Rescue and deputy support personnel provide assistance to full-time staff. The target staffing level for the GCSO is one sworn deputy per 1,000 permanent county residents. Current staffing levels fall short of the target staffing level. Based upon 2000 Census data, an additional 9-10 sworn deputy and accompanying support positions would be required to achieve the target staffing level. In addition to target staffing levels, additional service level considerations, to include service response times and jail capacity, generally exceed department target levels.

Utilizing the historical ten-year growth rate for the incorporated and unincorporated areas of the county, it can be expected that the GCSO will require an additional 47 sworn officer positions and accompanying support staff, equipment and facilities by the year 2012. Additional facilities should be programmed to provide an adequate level of law enforcement service to county residents. In addition to the projected need for additional law enforcement personnel, a substantial increase in jail capacity and corrections personnel can also be expected.

Solid Waste

The Gila County Solid Waste Department provides facilities for the disposal and transfer of solid waste materials in Gila County. The Gila County Solid Waste Department is part of the Public Works Department and is operated through the collection of user fees. Gila County currently operates two active solid waste landfill facilities and five waste transfer stations. The two operational landfills are the Buckhead Mesa facility and the Russell Gulch facility. The five waste transfer stations are the Christopher Creek, Gisela, Roosevelt, Tonto Basin and Young transfer stations. In an effort to accommodate planned growth and to offset



declining capacity in existing facilities, the Solid Waste Department is currently studying the available options for the expansion of existing facilities or the development of new facilities. It can be expected that the need for solid waste disposal capacity will increase commensurate with increasing population projections.

Other Services

In addition to providing law enforcement and solid waste services, Gila County provides health care and community college services to county residents. It can be expected that like the projected increase in the service requirements for law enforcement and solid waste services, these services will also see an increase in demand. This increase in demand will ultimately result in the need to devote increased resources to maintain or enhance service levels.

Non-County Provided Community Services

Water and Wastewater Services

Water and wastewater services in the county are provided by private companies, quasi-governmental improvement and service districts or are accomplished through individual well and septic facilities. Because operators other than the county provide water and wastewater services, the county's ability to regulate development based upon service levels is limited. Nevertheless, the county should review its existing policies and requirements for proof of service and service adequacy to make sure that development requirements are at the levels necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare. Such a review should also address the adequacy of the county's water supply and the protection of the public health based upon the proliferation of individual septic systems.



4.E GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

The following statements define the functional relevancy of the various statements that will form the basis for the county’s review and evaluation of future development proposals.

Goal: A “Goal” is defined as the end that one strives to achieve. It is a purpose or aim that is sought to be accomplished. A Goal is the condition that represents the expression of the citizen’s Issues.

Objective: An “Objective” is a statement of short-term action. Objectives should be achievable and if pursued and accomplished in conjunction with other Objectives, will ultimately result in the attainment of the Goal to which it relates.

Policy: A “Policy” is a specific statement of action that can guide the decision-making process to achieve the realization of the Goal and Objective to which it relates. Policies assist elected and appointed officials to make informed decisions related to land use, circulation and public facilities.

The following public facility goals, objectives and policies provide a basis for evaluating development proposals and other public facility-related activities in Gila County.

Goal 1: **Goal 6: A functional public facilities program that can provide a high level of service to existing and future residents.**

Objective 6.0: Ensure adequate public facilities for full-time and seasonal residents.

Policy 6.0a: The County shall explore available options that would allow the County to take a more active role in the establishment, over-sight and coordination of private emergency services and utility services.

Policy 6.0b: The County shall coordinate with local utility service providers to assure appropriate utilities are available concurrent with new development.

Policy 6.0c: The County shall require that proposed development will not significantly impact existing County public facilities and services.



Policy 6.0d: The County shall coordinate with and require that utility providers site new utility infrastructure in locations that provide the highest level of public benefit with the least visual, environmental or land use impacts.

Policy 6.0e: The County shall encourage new development in areas that are in close proximity to existing communities to utilize existing public or private utilities where possible.

Policy 6.0f: The County shall strongly discourage developments with lots that are less than one acre in size where utilities are not available and are not planned to be provided.

Objective 6.1: Provide an efficient, responsive and high-quality law enforcement service.

Policy 6.1a: The County shall require new subdivision and non-residential development to work with the County Sheriff's Department to discuss adequacy of law enforcement services prior to making a formal application for development.

Policy 6.1b: The County shall work with local emergency service organizations to address the adequacy of emergency vehicle access to all development within the County.

Policy 6.1c: The County shall work to ensure that private roadways and roadways within easements are constructed and maintained to standards for adequate emergency vehicle, school bus and two wheel drive passenger vehicle access.

Objective 6.2: Provide functional, accessible, clean and environmentally appropriate solid waste transfer and disposal facilities and services.

Policy 6.2a: The County shall locate solid waste disposal sites and waste transfer stations in locations that are screened from public view.

Policy 6.2b: The County shall provide adequate screening of existing and future solid waste facilities, where practical, and shall comply with all state closure and aquifer protection requirements.



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Policy 6.2c: The County shall discourage residential development in close proximity to solid waste disposal facilities and transfer stations.

Policy 6.2d: The County shall maintain a countywide solid waste management plan that is responsive to the goals, objectives and policies of the Comprehensive Plan.



4.F IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Table 4.1, *Community Facilities Implementation Program* outlines the implementation item, responsible party, timeline for initiation and potential funding sources for the tasks that have been identified as being necessary to implement the goals, objectives and policies in the Community Facilities Element of the Gila County Comprehensive Plan. The following definitions define the table headings:

- Implementation Item:** Lists the action necessary to carry out the Community Facility Element of the comprehensive plan.
- Responsible Party:** Identifies the county agency or department responsible for accomplishing the particular item.
- Targeted Timeframe:** Identifies the targeted timeframe for the initiation of the implementation item.
- Potential Funding Source:** Identifies the potential funding source or other required resource to carry out the implementation item.



TABLE 4.1
Community Facilities Implementation Program