



# GENERAL PLAN NEWSLETTER



SUMMER 2022

CITY OF YUMA, ARIZONA

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

## Yuma Residents Will Play a Key Role in Planning the City's Future

The City of Yuma is in the early stages of a comprehensive update to the City's General Plan. This is the first of a series of newsletters on this update. Voters must consider the General Plan every 10 years by law, and the City's General Plan will go to voters in 2022. Future newsletters will include information on different aspects of the 2022 General Plan. Residents are invited to participate in upcoming Listening Sessions and Public Hearings with the City of Yuma Planning and Zoning Commission.



### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Please join us at these upcoming Listening Sessions

**MONDAY, JUNE 7, 5-7PM**  
City of Yuma City Hall

**MONDAY, JUNE 21 5-7PM**  
City of Yuma City Hall

The City has practiced planning for land use, streets and public services for nearly 70 years. Comprehensive updates now happen approximately every 10 years. The Arizona Legislature and governor have determined that all municipalities and counties need to be both flexible and responsible in how to address growth. This flexibility begins with a requirement for communities within Arizona to implement long-term general plans that provide reliable frameworks for future growth.



### What is a general plan?

- *Have you ever wondered why things are where they are?*
- *Why houses are built here and why businesses are placed there?*
- *Why does this street have six lanes and that one has four?*
- *Where are new fire stations and parks planned?*

The answers to these and many other questions relating to the growth of the community can be found in the City of Yuma's General Plan.

The General Plan is an extensive document that provides guidance for the social, economic, environmental and overall physical development of a community. It consists of a series of interlinked sections, which are called elements. These elements seem quite varied, but each constitutes an important piece of the same puzzle. Land use, transportation, public safety and services, parks and redevelopment areas are just some of the items that the City is required to plan for. Within each element are a series of maps and charts that provide a look at the topics addressed in each element. Also included in each element are policies and objectives that identify a way to reach the goals for future development of the Yuma community.



### Our Past, Present, and Future

The City produced its first General Plan in 1954, and subsequent plans were adopted in 1973, 1983, 2002 and 2012. There have been frequent amendments to the General Plan over the years, including the landmark 1996 City/County Joint Land Use Plan, but the version of the General Plan that will be presented to the City Council in November and the voters next year will be the most detailed and comprehensive to date.

It is timely for the community to be considering this comprehensive update to the General Plan. The City of Yuma, like the rest of the nation, has experienced explosive growth, a significant slowdown and a period of steady growth during the past decade. Between 2010 and 2020, the City's population increased by 16%. As of July 1, 2020, the population within the City limits is estimated at 108,010 year round residents. This ranks Yuma as the 11th largest city in the state.

PLANNING AND ZONING  
COMMISSION MEMBER SPOTLIGHT  
CHAIRMAN  
CHRISTOPHER HAMEL



Christopher Hamel is the Operations Officer for Marine Corps Community Services aboard Marine Corps Air Station - Yuma. Christopher volunteered to serve on the Commission and was appointed by the City Council in May 2013. He was elected by his fellow Commissioners to the position of Chairman in 2015. He is a husband, father and family man who has lived in Yuma off and on since he retired from the United States Marine Corps in 2008.

In his role as Chairman, Christopher facilitates the agenda, guides the discussion of hearing items, ensures that the public has a chance to comment on cases before the Commission and leads the members to determine recommendations on specific development proposals within the City. A final determination on a majority of the cases before the Commission is made by the City Council and the City Council relies on the Commission to provide a sound review and recommendation on each case.

According to Chairman Hamel, the General Plan is an important tool that assists the Department of Community Development, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council with the present and future planning of our community, which will best benefit our citizens.

***“The elements of the General Plan touch many aspects of our lives in Yuma: roads, parks, where water comes from, to where our Fire Stations are built, the General Plan is the guide to how the needs of our growing community are met.”***

## Planning and Zoning Commission reviews and directs the update of the Plan

The Planning and Zoning Commission of the City of Yuma is made up of citizen volunteers who meet regularly to review development proposals and make recommendations to the City Council. As the development review body of the City, the Commission is charged with understanding the needs of the community with regard to housing, commerce and quality-of-life issues.

Planning Commission Members are: Chairman Chris Hamel, Vice-Chairman Fred Dammeyer and Commissioners Lorraine Arney, Gregory Counts, Barbara Beam and Joshua Scott with one vacancy at this time.



## Land Use Planning and Zoning - What's the Difference?

A common misconception is that land use planning and zoning are the same thing. In fact, they are quite different. A general plan identifies the locations for uses of land while a zoning ordinance regulates the actual uses of the land itself. The differing functions of these documents show this distinction.

**Role of the General Plan** - A General Plan is a guide that outlines goals and policies for the future growth of a community. The document is the result of significant study and analysis of existing physical, social and economic conditions and is designed to identify future trends.

The most prominent chapter is the land use element because all other elements relate to the utilities and public services needed to support the use of land and growth. Transportation, parks, water, housing and the environment are just a few of the issues requiring advanced planning to anticipate a community's needs. A land use element, with the

**A GENERAL PLAN IS A GUIDE THAT OUTLINES THE GOALS AND POLICIES FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF A COMMUNITY**

support of maps, visually outlines land use designations within a defined planning area. The map identifies where housing, commercial and industrial activities will be located. A function of the land use element is to insure the appropriate placement of land use activities that do not conflict with adjacent activities. This can benefit the whole community by improving development efficiency and can benefit individual landowners with the preservation of property values. A general plan, and particularly the land use element, aims to guide future growth in a manner that benefits the community as a whole with investment, opportunity, beautification, and a functional network of public services.



**Purpose of the Zoning Ordinance -**

Once areas for the appropriate use of land are determined, zoning districts that are consistent with the land use designations identified in a general plan are established and incorporated into a zoning ordinance. Similar to a general plan, a zoning ordinance will also contain maps. These maps, called zoning maps, identify the locations and boundaries of zoning districts.

Within the text of the ordinance, the permitted uses in that district are specifically listed. Also listed are the development standards for each zoning district. These standards regulate how a property is developed in terms of the height and distance to property lines of structures, minimum lot sizes and widths, and how much of a lot may be covered by structures. Additional development standards may regulate parking, landscaping and other amenities intended to provide for the occupants or customers to a given site.

Zoning is a police power that has one primary purpose—to promote and protect the health, safety, morals and general welfare of the public.

**Planning and Zoning Together** - Planning for land use and regulating uses of land are different applications of the same concept—the efficient and safe use of land. Zoning cannot be effective without first designating where land uses are most appropriate. Further, planning for land use would be pointless without the ability to regulate how land is physically used and developed. Although land use planning and zoning are as different as a general plan and a zoning ordinance, they are intertwined and are intended to work together to benefit the community, its citizens and its future.



**Para más información por favor llame al teléfono 373-5175.**



**City of Yuma**

Dept. of Community Development  
Community Planning Division  
1 City Plaza  
Yuma, AZ 85364-1436

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

For more information on the City's 2022 General Plan or to have staff speak to your community group about the Plan, please contact us at 928-373-5175.

Write to our offices at:  
Department of Community Development  
attn: 2022 General Plan.  
1 City Plaza, Yuma, AZ 85364

Or email to [Planning@YumaAZ.gov](mailto:Planning@YumaAZ.gov)

The current 2012 General Plan may be viewed online at  
[yumaaz.gov/GeneralPlan](http://yumaaz.gov/GeneralPlan)

**Para más información por favor llame al teléfono 373-5175.**

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## CALENDAR AT A GLANCE

### PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION LISTENING SESSIONS

June 7, 2021 – City Hall, 1 City Plaza – 5-7PM – General Focus  
June 14, 2021 – City Hall, 1 City Plaza – After regular meeting – Development Focus  
June 21, 2021 – City Hall, 1 City Plaza – 5-7PM – Parks Focus  
June 28, 2021 – City Hall, 1 City Plaza – After regular meeting – Government Partner Focus

### CITY COUNCIL/PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION JOINT WORKSESSION

July 19, 2021 – Location and time to be determined

### PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARINGS

September 13, 2021 – 4:30PM - Public Works Training Room, 155 W. 14th Street (tentative)  
October 11, 2021 – 4:30PM - City Hall Council Chambers, 1 City Plaza

### CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING - CITY HALL COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 1 CITY PLAZA

November 17, 2021 – 5:30 PM