

UPDATING THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

MARANA, AZ

MARANA LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE UPDATE FOCUS GROUP MEETING

Environment

Wednesday, November 16, 2016
4:00 – 5:00 p.m.

Recommendations:

Address issues from the Habitat Conservation Plan

- Low impact development interventions may need to be updated.
- Technical committee and stakeholder committee recommended that we add a Natural and Open Space Zone, for specific set-aside recommendations. A sliding scale was proposed, for 30% natural and open space set-aside with a fee, or 70% without, as an example. Some version of this would be helpful in the LDC, and is supported in the General Plan.

Keep wildlife linkages open

LDC language lays out buffer requirements for wildlife linkages, to be utilized at such time as a uniform riparian map is adopted.

Revisit recommendations in the Hillside Development Ordinance

Most of the other development ordinances say things like, “You will receive your grading approval permit when these certain conditions have been fulfilled.” However, no trigger clauses like that exists for the Hillside Development Ordinance. As a result, impacts are often significant. Averaging effect for slope percent is also a concern.

Engage concerns of Saguaro National Park

When the Park was County land, used to be more integrated into the zoning, with a buffer zone of a mile around the park to mitigate impacts. Land uses around the park have changed dramatically, with sound, lighting, and viewshed impacts.

- The Park would like to see the LDC have a transition of the character zones, particularly naturally functioning open space.
 - Converting Sonoran Desert into grassland doesn't translate into ecological conservation. Ensure specific plans fulfill General Plan goals, particularly buffering.
 - How do we deal with more highly-functioning land that better serves wildlife purposes?

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Identify and better define opportunities for cluster development to take pressure off natural environments.

Better integrate the Native Plan Preservation Ordinance in LDC planning.

Make use of current research on plantings, bioswales, etc. for managing storm water.

Prioritize Low Impact Development (LID)

- Consider water harvesting and retention instead of detention.
- Violent erosion on slopes is a big deal; channelizing is a problem that sends it downstream. Benefits of storm water retention include groundwater recharge and irrigation, as well as increased quality of life.
- Another hurdle we will hear is the installation of trees and soils when a swale is tree-lined and planted; it's a retooling process. Develop green streets sections with installation and maintenance instructions: don't over-compact native soils, etc. Maintenance is also something new to learn, to ensure it isn't overgrown with weeds. Upfront cost and maintenance cost of not having a sprinkler system is a savings, for either the Town or the HOA.
 - Regional examples:
 - Scott Avenue storm water retention is definitely a compelling feature, which can be scaled up. Much less expensive if done initially, instead of as a retrofit.
 - WLB on West Sunset Road near Tucson Mountain Park has similar design standards, to have drainage from roads come into canals, along with rainwater harvesting.
 - Places like Seattle and Portland have been using these interventions, and we can learn from them that bioswales next to the curb in the Pacific Northwest has worked for decades. Their Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) model is less applicable here, but still has much to teach.

Assure health of the River

- Groundwater code in the State of Arizona perversely incentivizes taking water out of the river. There are ongoing efforts with the City of Tucson, Bureau, and Metro Water to modify this practice, although may involve state legislation.
- In one way, would want water to be channeled to the river, but in another way want to recharge the raindrops where they fall.
- Much of the discharge into the river is problematic sewage effluent.