

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE COCHISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
WORK SESSION HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2025**

A work session of the Cochise County Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors' Hearing Room, 1415 Melody Lane, Building G, Bisbee, Arizona.

Present: Frank Antenori, Chairman; Tom Crosby, Vice-Chairman, telephonic; Kathleen L. Gomez, Supervisor

Staff Present: Sharon Gilman, Interim County Administrator  
Joe Casey, Interim Deputy County Administrator  
Paul Correa, Chief Civil Deputy County Attorney  
Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board

Attendees: Dan Coxworth, Development Services Director  
Christine McLachlan, Planning Division Manager  
Matthew Taylor, Planner II

Chairman Antenori called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

**ANY ITEM ON THIS AGENDA IS OPEN FOR DISCUSSION**

**ROLL CALL**

***INTRODUCTIONS***

***ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION***

**Board of Supervisors**

1. Discussion and possible direction regarding the 2045 Comprehensive Plan.

Christine McLachlan, Planning Division Manager, presented this item using a PowerPoint presentation. Ms. McLachlan discussed the county's comprehensive plan update, which serves as a guide for development based on current and future needs. She stated public outreach efforts include surveys, community meetings, and online engagement to gather input on key issues like land use, transportation, and infrastructure. She stated some of the challenges such as survey bias and differing regional perspectives were acknowledged, with data analysis helping to identify trends.

The Board and staff discussed the county's housing and economic challenges, emphasizing the lower property values compared to state and national averages. The Board and staff discussed whether the county has a well-educated workforce and a strong veteran presence, retaining younger workers remains a struggle due to limited job opportunities and inadequate infrastructure, particularly internet access. The Board and staff discussed how the county's economy is heavily reliant on government jobs, with a need to diversify into sectors like manufacturing and construction. The

issues will require investments in broadband, affordable housing, and economic development incentives to attract and retain a balanced workforce.

Ms. McLachlan discussed key survey takeaways, highlighting concerns about urban sprawl, affordable housing demand, and road maintenance. She stated residents rely on cars, there is interest in expanding bike paths, sidewalks, and public transit, particularly in community like Douglas.

The Board addressed the need for better transportation infrastructure, including potential rail development, improved roadways, and public transit solutions to accommodate future growth and port traffic. The Board stressed the need for stronger state-level advocacy to secure funding for highways 191 and 80, which are expected to deteriorate rapidly with increased truck traffic from the new port. The Board discussed that county officials should engage with state legislators, including those on transportation and international trade committees, to push for infrastructure improvements.

Ms. McLachlan highlighted the county's water issues and the strong interest in stricter conservation regulations.

Supervisor Gomez stated there have been discussions with the Mexican Consulate regarding water usage in Agua Prieta, as the city's significant water draw impacts the Douglas Basin.

The Board and staff discussed economic development challenges, including barriers for new business such as high startup costs and limited commercial space. The Board had notable opposition to large-scale agriculture and industrial projects, while renewable energy received some support, though concerns were raised about large solar farms' environmental and community impact. The Board's suggestions included designating specific areas for solar development, requiring developers to invest in transmission.

Ms. McLachlan stated a draft update of the growth area and land jurisdiction map is being developed for public review, ensuring alignment between land use designations and zoning regulations, it will include descriptions, allowable zoning, density, and minimum lot sizes.

In response to the Board, Mr. Coxworth stated that the maps enable what zoning districts go where and if there is a high density residential, you wouldn't see a low density residential permitted.

The Board and staff discussed coordination with cities on zoning to prevent conflicts, particularly areas like Douglas. Addressing the issues requires code enforcement, street lighting, and potential revitalization efforts, though costs remain a concern. The Board and staff touched on State Trust Land, where sales are determined by state, but leasing options could provide opportunities for economic development.

Ms. McLachlan concluded by requesting guidance on scheduling future updates, whether on specific dates or a regular monthly basis. She advised the Board to provide feedback and direction to ensure the comprehensive plan aligns with county priorities.

The Board and staff discussed strategies to increase public engagement in the comprehensive plan process, including leveraging social media, community meetings, and outreach through local organizations. Concerns were raised about

limited survey participation, especially from rural areas, prompting suggestions for targeted efforts in cities like Douglas and at local events. Economic development remained a key focus, with discussions on land use for industrial growth, commercial tech parks, and transportation infrastructure improvements. The potential for developing a transfer station near the new port, expanding rail access, and leveraging State Trust Land for business incentives was also considered. The Board emphasized the importance of aligning zoning and land use designations with economic goals while balancing environmental concerns. The Board agreed to a three-month timeline.

Chairman Antenori adjourned the meeting at 11:05 a.m.

APPROVED:

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Frank Antenori, Chairman

ATTEST:

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Lara Loewenheim, Clerk of the Board