



TOWN OF SAHUARITA

# Community Outreach & Communication Plan

**Michael Baker**  
INTERNATIONAL

# Introduction

The purpose of this Community Outreach and Communication Plan (COCP) is to outline how the public will be engaged during the development of the Town of Sahuarita General Plan Update. To comply with A.R.S § 9.461.06, various outreach goals, communication tools, and techniques are identified to engage the general public, key stakeholders, staff, and council in the planning process. **The International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) has developed the following core values for effective public participation:**

## THE CORE VALUES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- 1 | Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be in the decision-making process.
- 2 | Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will influence the decision.
- 3 | Public participation promotes sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- 4 | Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in the decision.
- 5 | Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- 6 | Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- 7 | Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Understanding the socioeconomics of Sahuarita is vital for effective public engagement within this unique community. According to the 2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates:



### Population by Age Groups

● Under 5	2,385
● 5 to 19	8,273
● 20 to 44	10,002
● 45 to 64	6,494
● 65 and up	7,084

### Population by Race

White	25,042
Black or African American	921
American Indian/Alaska Native	238
Asian	338
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	13,429
Some Other Race	2,435
Two or More Races	5,264



**12,970**  
TOTAL HOUSING UNITS

Source: U.S. Census Bureau. "ACS Demographic and Housing Estimates." ACS 5-Year Estimates Data Profiles, 2022, [data.census.gov/tables/ACSDP5Y2022.DP05?q=DP05:%20ACS%20Demographic%20and%20Housing%20Estimates&g=160XX00US0462140&moe=false](https://data.census.gov/tables/ACSDP5Y2022.DP05?q=DP05:%20ACS%20Demographic%20and%20Housing%20Estimates&g=160XX00US0462140&moe=false)

# The Public

This section identifies the key audience for the General Plan Update inclusive of the general public and stakeholders:

## COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Sahuarita's community is defined not only by individual residents but also by larger groups within the community. The planning team of the General Plan will seek out the following:

- ♦ **Residents**
- ♦ **Community Service Organizations**
- ♦ **Neighborhood/Homeowner Associations/Master Planned Communities**
- ♦ **Faith Communities**
- ♦ **Education Networks**
- ♦ **Healthcare Groups**
- ♦ **Youth Organizations**
- ♦ **Sahuarita Food Bank & Community Resource Center**

## STAKEHOLDERS

Stakeholders are identified as groups or individuals involved in the decision-making process within the community or those whose support is critical to the success of the General Plan implementation. These stakeholders are also associated with a field of expertise that will enhance the broad range of perspectives. Stakeholders identified include:

- ♦ **Town Council**
- ♦ **Planning & Zoning Commission**
- ♦ **Parks & Recreation Commission**
- ♦ **Sahuarita Teen Advisory Council**
- ♦ **Major Employers and Business Leaders**
- ♦ **Landowners and Community Developers**
- ♦ **Fire, Emergency and Public Safety Services**
- ♦ **Utility Providers**
- ♦ **Irrigation Districts & Water Providers**
- ♦ **Arizona State Land Department**

The consultant team will collaborate with the Town to identify and compile a list of specific individuals representing these key stakeholder groups.

# Engagement Approach and Goals

Throughout this process, community and stakeholder involvement will be supplemented with an array of engagement techniques that are outlined in the next section. The ultimate intent of this approach is to gain input to inform the decisions of the planning team, Town staff, as well as appointed and elected officials who all play a key role in the facilitation of this General Plan Update effort. Any additional public participation efforts made as a result of feedback received from the public will be documented and updated in this Community Outreach and Communication Plan.

As mandated by State Statutes, once the final draft is completed, the General Plan undergoes a formal 60-day review period, before receiving a Planning & Zoning Commission recommendation, followed by Town Council Adoption. With Council adoption, the General Plan is then sent to voters to be ratified.

Currently, it is anticipated ratification of the General Plan will be conducted through a Primary Election held in May of 2026.

The overall phasing of the project is broken out into four key efforts: “Recognize”, “Enrich”, and “Achieve”, with the fourth effort “Engage” intertwined throughout the life of the project as outlined below.



Anticipated ratification of the General Plan will be conducted through a Special Election held in May of 2026.

# IAP2 SPECTRUM

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION GOAL	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EMPOWER
PROMISE TO THE PUBLIC	<p>To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, and/or solutions.</p> <p>We will keep you informed.</p>	<p>To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decision.</p> <p>We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how the public input influenced the decision.</p>	<p>To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure the public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.</p> <p>We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public feedback influenced the decision.</p>	<p>To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.</p> <p>We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to maximum extent possible.</p>	<p>To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.</p> <p>We will implement what you decide.</p> <p><small>© IAP2 International Federation 2018. All Rights Reserved.</small></p>

Using, IAP2’s spectrum of participation detailed above, the “Engage” effort facilitated during each phase of the project process will seek to collectively inform, consult, involve, collaborate and empower community members as well as stakeholders.



# ENGAGEMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

PHASE 1: RECOGNIZE	
GOAL	OBJECTIVE
<b>INFORM &amp; INVOLVE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ How a General Plan’s policies and goals guide future growth</li> <li>◆ How residents’ needs will change as the community matures</li> <li>◆ The planning process and 2026 vote</li> <li>◆ How should the Town grow in the future and how will those changes affect the Town</li> </ul>
PHASE 2: ENRICH	
<b>INFORM &amp; COLLABORATE</b>	Inform the public of the draft plan and policies, how the feedback was used to develop the plan and policies, and determine if there are any changes desired
PHASE 3: ACHIEVE	
<b>CONSULT</b>	Address 60-Day public review comments and prepare the final draft of the General Plan
<b>EMPOWER</b>	May 2026 Election for Plan Ratification by Voters

The above is an overview of the engagement goals and objectives within each phase of the project.



# Engagement Techniques

A wide range of outreach techniques that will be utilized throughout the planning process for the General Plan are further outlined below:

## PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION & TOWN COUNCIL TOUCH POINTS

As the key regulatory bodies who approve the General Plan before it is ratified by the public, the Town Council and Planning & Zoning Commission will be involved throughout the development of the General Plan. Through three key milestones of the project, Town Council and the Planning & Zoning Commission will have individual or joint work sessions to provide additional input on the General Plan in conjunction with the project phases. These come in addition to an initial introductory Council Meeting and Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting at the start of the project, as well as two additional meetings leading up to the Council adoption process.





## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

In coordination with Town staff, the consultant team will plan and facilitate stakeholder meetings on an as-needed basis to achieve the objectives during the three project phases as outlined above. The consultant team will review and advise on outreach efforts to provide opportunities for stakeholder input. An invitation will be sent out to stakeholders inviting their participation in any scheduled meetings.

## AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

### Visual Identity & Branding

The consultant team, in coordination with Town staff, will create a unique graphic format and project branding to create a recognizable identity for the project and garner enthusiasm and unity. This brand will then be used for all project products, including the website, meeting materials, and planning documents. Messaging will make clear that the General Plan is being updated rather than being developed as a completely new effort.

The project team will meet with Town leadership in February 2024 to gather input that will help create a compelling and resonant brand identity. This crucial step involves engaging with the Town's internal team members to understand their perspectives, preferences, and expectations.

After collecting this input, the project team's creative group will perform an audit of the current design/brand of the general plan and conduct further research as needed. They will then use their research to develop several naming options. They plan on sharing three concepts with the Town in mid-April:

- 1. The existing General Plan naming, but with an updated look**
- 2. Using the new Town branding, but with a more direct name, such as "The Town of Sahuarita General Plan Update"; and**
- 3. A completely new name and identity**



**Upon receiving feedback from the project management team and Town leadership, the creative team will edit, refine, and conduct a new presentation for the final review and approval by the end of April 2024.**

#### **Project Website**

For the Town of Sahuarita's General Plan Update website, the consultant team will help the Town create a site that is visually compelling, organized and establishes a positive user experience. The site will provide flexibility to incorporate visual communication collateral like infographics, video/photography, icons, button graphics, and other visual assets to help communicate the desired message and make the website more digestible. The consultant team will meet with the Town to discuss and plan the organization of content on the site and develop a logical information hierarchy that focuses on getting the user to find the information they need and participate through input and collaboration opportunities.

#### **Print & Social Media**

Through coordination with the Town of Sahuarita Communication Department, print and social media tools will also be employed utilizing established Town channels (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Nextdoor) to promote opportunities for engagement and to distribute project information and meeting notices. In coordination with staff, the consultant team will formulate public announcements associated with specified project surveys, deliverables, and meetings for use by Communication staff to utilize and post for the project. In addition, prior to each phase of outreach, media releases will be prepared and distributed by the Town to local media.

## COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS (In Person & Virtual)

The team will prepare for and facilitate three public workshops associated with the General Plan Update planning process. For each workshop, meeting announcements will be prepared in coordination with Town staff and PIO for advertising and distribution.

Additionally, the team will work with Town staff to ensure broad and diverse participation during the update process using highly effective tools, including Engagement HQ, to obtain 24/7 feedback on planning and mapping efforts. To complement in person workshops and to allow the public to balance work and family needs, the team will also host innovative virtual workshops to allow residents to participate on their own time. This will result in increased participation and the collection of richer, more useful feedback than would be received by only utilizing a traditional public workshop setting.

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #1

#### Public Kick-off & Goal/Vision Validation

As one of the first steps in the planning process, the Michael Baker team will facilitate a project kick-off and community vision/goal validation workshop in summer 2024. The information gained as part of this workshop will help to refresh or amend the existing General Plan vision statement and primary goals/objectives expressed in the current General Plan. A multi-media presentation, interactive exercises and live polling will be used to obtain feedback from the community.

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #2

#### Revised Vision & Goals Validation

The Michael Baker Team will facilitate a second community open house and workshop in fall/winter 2024 to present and validate the General Plan findings as discovered in Phase I and solicit input on the refreshed land use and growth area sections. Land uses, motorized and non-motorized circulation, water resources,

energy, policies and goal statements, and parks, trails and open spaces will be reviewed in detail. At this stage in the process, the team will also conduct Town Council and Planning & Commission work sessions to review the growth and land use updates, their impact analyses, and public input.

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOP #3

#### Administrative General Plan Draft Review

The Michael Baker Team will conduct an Open House style meeting in spring 2025 for the public review and comment of the Draft General Plan Update. Presentation boards of select maps will be stationed across the meeting space and the Michael Baker Team will engage the community in open dialogue to seek their final concurrence on the plan and identify any remaining and/or necessary changes that must occur prior to finalizing the General Plan Update.

## MOBILE STUDIOS

Mobile studios act like pop-up workshops in a booth and are held at popular community events, prevalent locations throughout the Town and even to local HOA board meetings. The goal of the mobile studio is to engage as many Sahuarita residents and visitors as possible, educate people about the importance of the General Plan update, and collect community input on the project.

The consultant team will plan and hold three mobile studios, which can involve Project Overview posters, Prioritization Bucket Game, Vision Board, Neighborhood Rating Game, and Children’s Activities. Mobile studios will take place at Sahuarita Town Hall during the Town’s 2024 Sahuarita Stars and Stripes event and Winterfest 2024, as well as the Town’s 2025 Fiesta Sahuarita event.



### **STARS AND STRIPES** July 2024

Similar to Community Workshop #1, this mobile studio is intended to re-introduce the General Plan to the public and gather input for validating the Plan’s vision and goals. Community members will be asked to participate in live interactive polling and interactive activities at the booth.



### **WINTERFEST** December 2024

Corresponding to Community Workshop #2, findings from Phase I will be presented to the public for validation by requesting residents complete a survey online and sharing feedback at the booth.



### **FIESTA SAHUARITA** April 2025

Along with Community Workshop #3, this mobile workshop will promote the availability of the Draft General Plan Update, and interested residents and stakeholders can provide feedback on the draft for potential changes before the General Plan Update is finalized.

## YOUTH WORKSHOP

For this General Plan update effort the Michael Baker team will engage with local students to identify planning issues that are important to youth in the community and capture their vision for the future of the Town. The youth visioning workshop will focus on high school-aged students and engage them in visioning similar to the initial community workshop.

## DIGITAL ENGAGEMENT

The utilization of digital engagement tools via the Town’s existing resource, Engagement HQ, will ensure broad and diverse participation during the update process. To protect against trolling and other potentially inappropriate uses Engagement HQ will be available for verified users only.

**Surveys:** The project team will utilize tools such as Quick Poll and Surveys (if available) as a way of gathering public input. A variety of survey techniques will be used to get as much valuable information as possible from the members of the community. Quick Poll will be effective to engage at engagement events when quicker feedback is more appropriate based on the audience.

**Places:** The Places tool (if available) can be set up to capture location-specific input to guide visioning and priority development and feedback throughout the update phases.

**Questions:** Provide the public the opportunity to ask questions and provide public responses to the questions. Administrators of the site will be notified when new questions are posted.

