



**MINUTES OF THE ZONING, IMPLEMENTATION, POLICY, PROCEDURE AND ORDINANCE  
REVIEW (ZIPPOR) COMMITTEE OF THE  
FEBRUARY 19, 2026**

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Milhaven called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** **In-person**  
Ms. Linda Milhaven, Chair  
Ms. Jan Leighton  
Mr. Derrik Rochwalik  
**GoToWebinar**  
Mr. Erik Hernandez, Vice Chair (arrived @ 9:40 a.m.)  
Mr. Alex Finter  
Mr. Mihai Toma  
Mr. Warren Whitney

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mr. Kevin Danzeisen  
Mr. Spike Lawrence  
Mr. Jimmy Lindblom

**STAFF PRESENT:** Mr. Tom Ellsworth, Planning & Development Director  
Mr. Darren Gérard, Planning Division Manager  
Ms. Rachel Applegate, Planning Supervisor  
Mr. Adam Cannon, Senior Planner  
Mr. Ron Quarles, Senior Planner  
Ms. Nadia Barragan, Management Analyst  
Ms. Rosalie Pinney, Recording Secretary

**COUNTY AGENCIES:** Mr. Max Carpinelli, County Attorney  
Mr. David Anderson, OET / Technical Team

**OTHER AGENCIES:** Mr. Matt Klyszeiko, Consultant - Michael Baker International  
Mr. Steven Sifferman, Consultant - Michael Baker International

Chair Milhaven called the meeting to order and made the standard announcements.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**CPA260002** – Framework 2040 Comprehensive Plan and presentation on how the Municipal-Rural Influence Areas work with the urban services for urban development strategy.

Mr. Tom Ellsworth said we're excited about this policy session to discuss the Framework 2040 Plan. We've released the public review document for the mandatory 60-day review. It's out to the public online for immediate comment, as well as to this Commission. We've invited the consultant here today to go

through what's in the plan, where we're at, and what's left. Also, to get into some of the policy framing of what we're trying to accomplish within the plan as it relates to some of the development proposals you'll see coming before you and some of the analysis that will be done with staff. He introduced Matt Klyszeiko and Steven Sifferman with Michael Baker International to go through the presentation.

Mr. Matt Klyszeiko with Michael Baker International said we have three phases in this total process. We want to emphasize the public review process. By state statute it requires a 60-day review period once the plan is drafted. We are in the middle of that process, and so the plan is out to the public for comment and we're using the Konveio application for residents to place comments. Our review timeframe is from January 29th to March 30<sup>th</sup>, so within that timeframe we're collecting comments from the public. We wanted to come to this meeting to also give an update to the Commission. If you have questions, work with staff to share those, and then we can continue to make sure we're not only addressing feedback we receive from the public but also feedback that the Commission. The goal is to have this in front of the Board of Supervisors at one of their May meetings, which means it will be in front of the Commission for the Planning and Zoning hearing in April. When we rolled out the public review draft reminded them that while this is one plan, there's many roles that this plan must address. It has to address state statute first, but it must also establish policy for the county. It's helping protect our public health and it's helping to guide our use of public dollars to invest in improvements and the needs of the county. All those situations presented on the screen need to be considered in this dynamic plan and because of that, there's also many elements or topics within this plan. Because all of those components must balance in this comprehensive plan, while these are individual chapters, there also needs to be consideration for how these connect together and how they complement each other. The plan is organized with a series of introductory statements, and that sets the foundation for then viewing each individual chapter. The bottom exhibit shows a typical structure of a chapter. One of the things we wanted to do to make sure this comprehensive plan was user-friendly was to have a regular cadence to each chapter. The structure of each chapter is organized the same so that as a user goes through the document, they get used to how information is conveyed and hopefully make it easier for them to find what they are looking for. The foundation of how the document is structured and organized is what informed the development of the document and public involvement. For a comprehensive plan that must cover so many different areas, we tried to make sure that we got out to the public and met with residents where they are to engage as much as we could. We discussed in prior ZIPPOR meetings the way we went about that is having traditional in-person workshops, but also having a robust virtual presence to allow participants to engage on their own time, even outside of when a particular meeting might have taken place, so that they can experience the same material or share the same feedback that we requested in person. We're happy with the level of participation that we received overall. We always want it to be more, and we continue to put updates out to the public to remind them of the availability of this draft. We had several in-person meetings, but also our online presence yielded a lot of participation, not only in individual or unique visitors, but repeat visitors. That is a little indication to us that we're engaging with people, that they're coming back into the process to see what progress has been made or how the process responded to a comment that they may have shared. That is always something that we monitor, not just the unique visitors, but how many times someone re-engages with the process. That tells us that we're making sure that they continue to be a part of the feedback. We received hundreds of comments through all that outreach and when we organize it with some common groupings or themes of that content. There's some consistency about what you might hear or see from residents when cases come before you and the concerns that they share with you. There were a lot of surprises for us in terms of the focus areas residents wanted, but it did affirm where we may need to take a more detailed look in the comprehensive plan to either bump up a particular section or even refine it to make sure that we're accurately or comprehensively covering those key areas. When we as a team started to look at it, it really started to solidify that residents really have some common outcomes that they want to see out of this plan, and it came down to residents want to continue prosperity. They want to make sure we uphold stewardship of

our environment so that we continue to have opportunities in this County. These themes that are stitched into each chapter and we look at how a land use chapter or transportation is helping to achieve prosperity, stewardship, and opportunity to bridge and connect all the aspects of this plan. Each chapter references these themes as a common thread throughout the document. We encourage you to look at the plan in detail and this slide summarizes how each of those chapters focuses on, and the goals and policies that are within that. There are a total of 33 goals and 137 policies across all of the primary elements of chapters of the plan. Under land use, for example, the overall tone of that chapter is focused on continuing to promote coordinated high quality development, protect public health and safety, and maintain fiscal responsibility. Those aspects are a touch point to make sure that we're listening to residents and that we show the connection of their input to the policies of the plan itself. Sometimes residents don't see how that connection happens. These goals and policies help to align all the feedback and show that we're making sure to be consistent and follow through on what the public is requesting as long as it's alignment with the overall direction that is established by the Board of Supervisors. That gives us foundation of the primary aspects of the plan. We have unique and varied lands across the County where we have county islands, and those county islands can take on different characters. Some are urban in nature, and some are very rural in nature but the surrounding development of them, because they're an island, might also have an influence on that area. How to treat that and how to consider those dynamics is a challenge that the county faces. We have urban and rural edge. In some of our outlining areas as our municipalities grow, their edge treatment where their municipal limits meet up with the county, there's aspects as to where along that edge, rural or urban development is most appropriate and recognizing how that dynamic works is a challenge that the County faces. Making sure that consideration for infrastructure and the respect for existing development in those areas are all the aspects that the County and decision makers must balance. There are tools and documents that the County utilizes to address those challenges or those nuances. However, those tools aren't exactly laid out or organized in the current comprehensive plan. This update outlines a new framework that we are calling the municipal rural influence framework. What this does is to make sure that the decision-making process is clear and more transparent for the public to better understand. Currently the County utilizes the urban services for urban development process and that is a perfect example of how it's a useful and efficient tool. This framework helps to build that into an overall process. The area of municipal influence would be areas that encompass all of Maricopa County's unincorporated areas that fall within current limits of a municipal planning area, within an approved development master plan, or within an improvement association. A municipality has its city limits, but then they have a larger planning area that they anticipate they may grow to or annex into their community. If that planning area, because they would have a general plan that would capture that planning area, there is an identification already that area at some point in time would be part of the municipality. So that was one metric that we recognized if it's within a municipal planning area, if it has a master plan, like Anthem or a Sun City, then that is a consideration. If it has one of the nuances would be that improvement association, and there's a couple outliers that it falls into. All those areas of municipal influence are what you see in blue in this graphic, everything you see in gray are the municipal boundaries of every city and town within Maricopa County. The area of municipal influence is the blue area. The area of rural influence is all the areas that are not part of the municipal influence area. It's important to note that these are not administrative boundaries, they don't change any land use. We still have a land use plan. This map is just a guide to help evaluate where urban or rural development is most appropriate. That's the key distinction that this is utilized as a tool, not as changing anyone's existing land use. It's working to make this process and bring more clarity so that the public can better understand how decisions are made. With a foundation of understanding the first aspects of this framework, we have the municipal influence area and the rural influence area. If and when this plan is adopted that would be part of staff reports and the material that you will utilize or review as you make your decisions. Hypothetically, if a comprehensive plan amendment were to come in, the first step is to identify if it falls within that area of municipal influence or the area of rural influence. From there, we then reference the land use or area plans that the County has to determine if the subject parcel currently has an urban or

rural land use designation. Rural land use designations in the current comprehensive plan and the land use categories only include single-family rural or rural retail. That's what we mean when we're looking at whether it is in a land use or area plan, if it has an urban or rural land use, that will determine if you're in under urban land use or rural land use. That helps to then make sure that this consideration confirms the subject parcel is in an urban growth area or a rural service area. Next step is making sure that we are in a position to now apply the urban services for urban development tool or strategy. We're trying to organize this into a flowchart and process so that when applications are brought forward, we can all make sure that it is not or it's consistent in determining. For example, if a county island is viewed as an urban county island or a rural county island those should be considered on a case-by-case basis, not a unified approach which is kind of currently what the county struggles with. Once we're able to identify if we're in an urban growth area or rural service area, we would then make sure there are some exceptions within the rural consideration that address more unique situations. If you're in an urban growth area, that opens up all of the land uses for consideration for a project. If you're in a rural service area, then that limits you to rural land use types. The key outcome of going through this flow chart is making sure the County has a process to determine if an area is ready or prepared to consider urban land uses or that it's more appropriate for rural land uses. What we utilize to guide that process is the urban solutions for urban development tools. The urban services for urban development considers 12 conditions to cover all the essential aspects that one might evaluate when looking at urban development. These 12 areas look at things that you would anticipate with water, sewer, roads, flood control, dry utilities, and so on. However, not all of the urban development that we would be addressing requires these services or infrastructure and so the table on the right is utilized to calibrate or account for those factors. Once a project is being evaluated against the urban solutions for urban development strategy, we use the table on the right to account for some of the nuances that a particular area may not necessarily have libraries or other considerations on this, and they might not be applicable to a commercial project, for example, compared to a residential project. With the benefit of this information, staff can then provide a recommendation to the commission or the board as you see today. It can provide a recommendation of approval, a recommendation of approval with stipulations or a denial. What this overall effort does is start to bring clarity to the process, make it more visible to the evaluation effort, and ensure infrastructure is considered within this process and recognized as a vital component of serving urban development versus rural. This is making sure that development is properly placed but also properly timed. If the infrastructure isn't there, then this process will identify that and outline a consideration or the recognition that it may not be best to move forward on a particular aspect.

Commissioner Leighton said staff does such a great job in working these problems through before we even get them. If we look at, theoretically, we're talking about Buckeye, because we know that Buckeye has plans for expansion. Right now, that parcel may be rural, but what if Buckeye intends to annex that parcel. She asked is that then going to go to Buckeye for development and what about Terra Valles, that's already been approved, but there's a water issue out there. So does that come under Buckeye or is it under the County. Mr. Ellsworth said what we're trying to propose here is a foundation that lays a framework for an organized discussion. It provides clarity and it provides transparency in what we're looking at. When you're out in those areas of Buckeye we'll be looking at this framework. If you're not inside the city limit of Buckeye, but you're inside of their municipal planning area, which means they're planning for land use growth, they're planning for their infrastructure growth, but it's in Maricopa County. Through this framework, we're very clearly stating in our comprehensive plan, you are in a municipal influence area. As that comes through for evaluation, we will start having the applicant become involved with Buckeye and Buckeye will be looking for them to weigh in what their general plan is. What is the availability in their future for the availability of infrastructure and where are your water sewer plants. If the applicant continues to propose and say we're not needing that service or we're not doing that, we're able to do an evaluation. So then where is your water coming from. What is the effect on Buckeye's service for water in that area if you come in and you're not utilizing their services. All that goes into a land

use recommendation by this Commission and a land use decision ultimately by the Board of Supervisors. It's trying to get that framework, that foundation of that discussion, and be clear in our policy statements. Another example, maybe it's an urban county island. We've had rezoning cases come before this Commission where our land use designation on our current comprehensive plan. If you're not in an area plan, you automatically have a rural designation. If you're in a county island a mile from downtown Chandler, you're not technically in a rural framework. We're trying to say you're now in this rural framework; we need to have those discussions on the impacts of municipal growth.

Commissioner Rochwalik said we have county islands in north Phoenix that currently have rural designation, RU-43. He asked are you saying that under this new potential framework that they would be stripped of their rural designation. Mr. Ellsworth said we're trying to be very careful these are policy statements they're not regulations so it's not changing any current entitlement on a property. If they were to come forward for a rezone from the Rural 43 to industrial and now looking at what infrastructure is required for what you're doing, where is it coming from, what are the impacts of that infrastructure, is it impacting that municipality, giving the municipality ability to weigh in on that proposal and then put all of that information in front of you and the Board. Commissioner Rochwalik asked did you communicate with the cities and towns about the area municipal influence like where they intend to grow or don't intend to grow. Mr. Klyszeiko said that's something that all cities and towns have as part of their general plan process. We collected that data and used that as the foundation. In addition, this 60-day review process also requires that this plan be conveyed to all municipalities in the County. They're currently having the ability to review this and give comments and if they have questions. Mr. Ellsworth said that map actually represents is the municipal planning areas that have been defined regionally. We didn't just draw a line. What that represents is a municipal general plan that covers all that blue area on the map. Commissioner Rochwalik said he just knows that the City of Phoenix general plan as it relates to north Phoenix around Anthem and it is not consistent with our water use service boundaries. There are portions of that blue area that are in the county that the City of Phoenix has no intentions. In fact, we passed a policy on annexing because they are not in our water service area. He wants to make sure that when we go back to that table to determine what is considered urban residential, urban commercial versus rural and we're considering where they're getting their water. A lot of the northern valley can get their water shipped in from Epcor, but they're not getting their water from the City of Phoenix, they're not getting sewage from the City of Phoenix or they're on septic. Does that consider them urban or do we consider them rural if they're not part of any infrastructure. Mr. Ellsworth said the answer would be both because what you're looking at is we're trying to emphasize are those urban county islands where there's immediate infrastructure available. That's on that growth boundary. We need to start involving what the policies are in Phoenix. Where's the water coming from in Phoenix, and the water provider if they're not being provided and what district is that and then it gets into that regional type discussion. Does Phoenix have plans for it, how will this decision affect that. We're trying to get all that upfront as an entitlement or a land use decision comes through the County in an area that a municipality is saying, we're planning for what's happening in this future growth area. It doesn't change the land use entitlement or land use designations inside of the municipality, but it's a designation to us as we're making our review that you're in an area where we need to start asking these questions.

Mr. Klyszeiko said to add to that, and that's where the urban solution for urban development is a great strategy as well, because even if an area is through the process is determined, yes, this is an urban growth area, thus we're going to use this table to evaluate it. When we look at, or the County looks at water and says you don't have water service, then that's a red flag. That's a comment that comes into the staff report or that influences staff's decisions. Commissioner Rochwalik asked how that is going to impact existing county islands that are on well systems or outer lying county areas along that urban growth that are either serviced by a different water provider that's trucking water in or they're digging down into a well. If somebody wanted to build a home how's that going to impact their ability to do that. Mr. Ellsworth

said these are great questions because this is the exact reason why we're throwing this out there again. It's not precluding somebody from asking to develop that far out but it's asking that infrastructure question and as it comes before this body and then ultimately the Board. If they're asking for the zoning and they are 30 miles past Tonopah, where is the water coming from and water availability. Then they start asking us what the impact on the wells is. What you see in some of those instances is that we're looking for the ability for future planned land use, that future entitlement. What conditions of approval should we put on that that maintains this type of framework. Maybe there'd be a condition of approval at the time of a specific plan of development that must show the capacity available or a will-serve letter from the municipality or that the roadway network could handle this traffic. Usually that's in the form of a traffic impact analysis would be required at the time of specific plan of development. If those questions become so much that nobody can see how any condition of approval would do it, that would probably be the ultimate situation where we say, maybe it's not time for this decision to move forward. Mr. Klyszeiko said we would want to emphasize if we're dealing with the comprehensive plan here, not zoning, but if someone did have rural zoning and they wanted to come in and put a house. This does not impact someone from moving forward with their current entitlement. This is more to address if someone comes in with a development and says, well, I'm rural right now, but now I want to put in an apartment complex. Then that's where this framework kicks in to evaluate is this the best spot for that and this is how we're going to determine that.

Mr. Klyszeiko said he appreciates the follow-up questions because that's really what the focus of this morning was to lay this framework out. It is a distinct shift from the current comprehensive plan, but something that will be valuable for all, whether that be residents, staff, and decision makers. If there are areas that the Commission might have interest in, we'd encourage you to share that feedback earlier during the 60-day review process and then that gives us all enough time to vet and consider that. As far as the public goes, we wanted to share this information that you can go to the project website at [Framework2040.com](http://Framework2040.com). When you go to the website, you'll get a pop-up right as you enter the home screen. You click on that pop-up, and it'll take you to the Konveio commenting site. You'll see the document and you can flip through it and if you have a comment, you can just click on the document, and a screen will pop up. You type in your name and email address, and the email address is not shared; it's just for tracking purposes if we need to follow up on a comment. Then you can share your comments and it's right there for everyone to see and all other residents can see the comment, whereas in previously someone would submit their own comment and it's a one-way conversation. Now, it's dynamic where we can start seeing conversations and we're already getting comments. We encourage you to share with any of your friends or neighbors that they can go to the project website and share their feedback. At the end of the 60-day review process, we will be sharing the feedback and results of this review stage. This 60-day review closes on March 30th and then we'll be making final refinements and be back before the Planning & Zoning Commission in April and the Board of Supervisors in May for final approval. We're excited about this stage we're in, and we're ready to address any refinements that need to be considered in this plan so when we come back before you, we can be in the best place possible.

**No action needed from the Commission, for discussion only.**

Chair Milhaven adjourned the meeting of February 19, 2026 at 10:17 a.m.

Prepared by Rosalie Pinney  
Recording Secretary

February 19, 2026