

DIAGNOSIS

City of Tucson, Arizona

Land Use Code Revision Project



SUBMITTED BY

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April 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Project Purpose & Goals	1
Process Overview	1
Major Issue Summary	2
summary of recommendations	4
PART 2: KEY ACTIONS	6
Integrate the Land Use Code, Chapter 23A Procedures, Development standards, and Design Guidelines Manual	6
<i>Development Standards</i>	7
<i>Chapter 23A Development Compliance Code/Procedures</i>	9
<i>Design Guidelines Manual</i>	11
Consolidate Into Separater Sections All Procedures, Zone District/Use Provisions, and Substantive Regulations	12
Illuminate the “Shadow Code”	13
Add User-Friendly Summary Tables, Flow Charts, and Illustrations	14
<i>Land Use Table</i>	15
<i>Review/Decision-Making Responsibilities</i>	15
<i>Procedures</i>	16
<i>Illustrate Substantive Code Requirements</i>	16
Improve Quick-Reference Tools Such as the Index and Definitions	17
Revamp the Development Designator System	19
<i>Summary of the Development Designator System</i>	20
Draft a Citizen’s Guide to Summarize Key Code Provisions and Procedures	21
Adopt an Administrative Manual for Routine Requirements, Lists, and Fees	23

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

PROJECT PURPOSE & GOALS

Recently the City of Tucson has initiated efforts to simplify its land development codes. This code simplification effort has focus on identifying ways in which the city's land use regulations and procedures hinder realization of community plans and policies—fostering better designed development, encouraging mixed-use projects, and protecting established neighborhoods, among others. In 2006 Clarion Associates prepared a preliminary analysis of the city's development codes focusing primarily on how they could be revised to foster mixed-use and infill projects and protect neighborhoods from incompatible development.¹ In addition, the report noted some key organizational issues such as the need to streamline and simplify the development codes over time and clarify the role of the Design Guidelines Manual.

Disenchantment continues to grow in all quarters with the development codes, particularly with regard to their complexity and lack of user-friendliness. The development community, professional land use consultants, and neighborhood groups all agree that a reorganization and new formatting of the Land Use Code (“LUC”) and related standards and procedures would be an important and logical next step in a comprehensive overhaul of the city's development codes. Some city staff agree, although there is strong resistance in some quarters to making any changes in the Land Use Code and related documents.

Clarion Associates has been asked to build on its earlier work and to identify how the development codes could be reorganized and reformatted to make them easier to use and to understand. We have also been asked to note potential substantive and procedural revisions to the development codes we heard about from interviewees that might be tackled in later update efforts. These include issues such as overlay district requirements, grading regulations, and the relationship between the Planning and Development Services Departments.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The recommendations in this Diagnosis for reorganizing and reformatting the development codes are a result of a four-step process:

Step 1:

Review of Documents

The first step in diagnosing the city's development codes' organizational and formatting shortcomings was gaining familiarity with the governing documents. From the previous diagnosis, Clarion Associates already had a basic familiarity with the structure and organization of the city's development codes. In order to draft a more detailed and comprehensive review and propose solutions to the development codes' organizational

¹In this document, the term “development Codes” means the Tucson Land Use, Chapter 23A Procedures (Development Compliance Code), Development Standards, Design Guidelines Manual, and related land-use regulations.