

# BABOCOMARI AREA PLAN

(Adopted by the Board of Supervisors on September 6, 2005)  
Resolution No. 05-67

## BACKGROUND

The San Ignacio del Babocomari Land Grant (Babocomari or Land Grant) has been, largely and historically, a ranch that extends from the County's boundary with Santa Cruz County in the Huachuca Mountains along the Babocomari River, east for approximately 47 miles through Whetstone to the Presidential Estates, a residential community located east of the junction of SR 82 and SR 90. Sand and gravel mining activities within and adjacent to the Land Grant are prevalent. The Whetstone Airfield, an active private airstrip used by adjacent property owners, extends into the eastern part of the Land Grant. Aside from new roads and some recent residential construction in the eastern portion, the Land Grant is largely undeveloped and used for grazing under the current zoning of RU-4, which allows one residence per four acres.

Higher-density residential as well as some commercial uses exist adjacent to the planning area at or near the junction of SR 82 and SR 90. The surrounding, adjacent landscape to the east and southwest is largely defined by rural-residential uses in the unincorporated areas. The East Range of Fort Huachuca and the Hubbard Assault Strip, used for tactical training, C-130/C-117 aircraft and other activities including storm water recharge and erosion control lie, southeast of the plan area. The vast majority of the Plan Area and adjacent properties fall within the military's restricted airspace where over flights extending from ground level to 15,000 are permitted. The incorporated Town of Huachuca City to the south is characterized by medium to high density residential, commercial and some industrial uses.

The existing Growth Category B, "Developing" area extends approximately 1 mile west and 1½ miles east of SR 90. The "Developing" designation is used when there is an expectation of growth but the trend of growth has not yet been defined at the time of adoption, as was the case for this area in 1984. The remainder of the Land Grant was designated as Category D, "Rural". In 1984, it's apparent that the "Developing" designation was applied to this portion of the Land Grant along SR 90 in anticipation of some growth extending between Huachuca City and Whetstone. Over 20 years later, the pattern of development may be more clearly defined through this planning process, taking into consideration the interests of stakeholders, including property owners, the County, Fort Huachuca, and Huachuca City. It's important to ensure that the type of development currently proposed be compatible with the topography and hydrology of the area and be adequately served by local infrastructure such as water resources, drainage systems, and access roadways.

**Plan Area Boundaries:** The Babocomari Area Plan (Plan Area) is currently defined by the boundaries of the entire San Ignacio del Babocomari Land Grant east of Highway 90 and may be amended from time to time in the future as defined in the Comprehensive Plan and Cochise County Zoning Regulations.

**Reasons for Creating the Plan:** The San Ignacio del Babocomari Land Grant is zoned RU-4 allowing agricultural and large lot rural-residential development on a minimum of four acre lots. Recently, the eastern portion of the land grant was sold and subsequently the new buyers changed the predominant land use from ranching to residential lot splits of four acres in size and larger. Additionally, new roads were graded into the area and a number of requests to rezone to more intensive residential or commercial uses are anticipated. This change in the trend of development raises a number of concerns that trigger the need for a more coordinated and planned approach to determining the appropriate type and location of new development within the plan boundaries and the infrastructure needed to serve new development. The issues to be addressed in plan policies include:

1. Determining the appropriate types and density of land uses in the high priority encroachment area associated with the Hubbard Assault Strip in Fort Huachuca's East Range.
2. Determining the appropriate types and density of land uses in areas with environmental constraints such as steep slopes, washes, floodplains and areas disturbed by sand and gravel mining;
3. Managing access onto SR 90 and SR 82 and County maintained roads;
4. Providing coordinated review to ensure adequate infrastructure (sewer, water, fire protection and roads) for multiple subdivisions and rezonings; and
5. Adopting policies to address water conservation and management in the Sierra Vista Sub-watershed in accord with concerns and policies of the Upper San Pedro Partnership.

## **POLICIES**

### **1. New Land Uses General Policies**

**Policy 1.1** New land uses should be compatible with adjacent existing uses, particularly with historic ranching, mining, rural-residential and military activities and should incorporate setbacks, vegetative and visual screening, and noise attenuation measures into project design to mitigate potential impacts associated with proximity to these historic land uses.

**Policy 1.2** New commercial or higher density residential development should be located in areas where services exist, or can be extended, and only when these services can adequately serve both new and existing development for the anticipated lifetime of the uses.

**Policy 1.3** The use of conservation tools, such as fee-simple acquisition, conservation easements, and conservation subdivision options, are encouraged and supported by this plan to protect washes, open space, wildlife corridors and the hydrologic functions of the Babocomari River.

**Policy 1.4** Developers of property should provide disclosure to future buyers of military activities in the air space over the Plan Area, as required by ARS §33-422, and all new subdivision plats should include a note about military as well as private airfield activities in the area.

## 2. Circulation and Access Management General Policies

To the East of SR 90, a system of existing road networks has been identified as potential County collector roads that will provide access to the Babocomari Plan Area. These County facilities are deemed potential collectors based on their configuration and relationship to the area's other streets rather than their present design adequacy as functional class collector roads.

Additional capacity and non-capacity improvements and access management tools to include widening; radii improvements; realignments; access location; and separations on these County facilities, may be required and necessary to accommodate additional traffic generated from Babocomari Plan Area developments. Developer(s) will need to contribute to the cost(s) of these improvements based on the proportionate share of traffic impacts attributed to their development.

The two major transportation arterials abutting the Babocomari plan area are:

- State Route (SR) 90 which is a major north-south arterial that traverses the Babocomari area and provides access to Interstate 10 (I-10) to the north, and to the cities of Huachuca City and Sierra Vista and Fort Huachuca to the south.
- SR 82 is a major east-west corridor along the northern part of the plan area extending from the County's boundary with Santa Cruz County to Tombstone.

Any development of the Babocomari Plan area should conform to the following policies regarding transportation, circulation and access management relative to SR 90, SR 82, adjacent County maintained roads, interior roads within the Plan Area and the circulation systems of adjacent neighborhoods.

**Policy 2.1** As a general roadway rule, all internal roads within the Babocomari Plan Area and adjacent roads should comply with the roadway function classification connectivity hierarchy system. This will apply as follows:

- Individual residential driveways should connect to local roadways and should not access onto internal collector roads, SR 90 or SR 82 or adjacent County maintained roads.
- Local roadways should connect to collector roads within the Plan Area. The following existing roads, which are adjacent to the Plan Area, may be considered a part of the County collector road network if improved to County standards: Pine Street, North Washington Road, East Lincoln Road and East Roosevelt Road.
- Access from major collector roadways within the Plan Area to SR 90, SR 82 and adjacent County maintained roads should be limited to locations and configurations approved by ADOT and the County.

**Policy 2.2** A one foot no access easement [NAE] Right-of-Way condition shall be placed along all abutting parcels and internal roads to SR 90 and SR 82 and County-maintained roads in the Plan Area with the exception of approved access points as designated by the County and ADOT. All new development proposing connections to the existing County roadway network shall obtain an approved right-of-way permit from the County. The County shall consider placing a

one foot no access easement within the right-of-way of some County roads in order to control the number and location of access points.

**Policy 2.3** Parcels which are granted direct access from SR 90, SR 82 and adjacent County maintained roads at approved locations shall make provisions to allow abutting properties to share that access for vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle purposes, even if these abutting properties have direct frontage along these roads.

**Policy 2.4** New development should, to the greatest extent feasible, avoid access to existing local streets outside of the Plan Area which pass through established neighborhoods. Developments in the Babocomari Plan Area shall not use East Oak Street as a viable vehicular access onto SR 90.

**Policy 2.5** Pine Street shall be improved to meet County urban local/minor collector roadway standards in order to support developments from the Babocomari Plan Area and to provide better traffic distribution and circulation in the Coronado Estates Subdivision and within the northern portion of the Babocomari Plan Area.

**Policy 2.6** Any future access connection from the Babocomari Plan Area to Truman Road should be at section/mid-section lines.

**Policy 2.7** All State and County maintained roadways accessed by new development within the Plan Area may require additional improvements to include: right-of-way acquisition, and capacity, safety and operational augmentations as deemed necessary to accommodate traffic generated by new development and existing roadway traffic. A traffic impact analysis, report or statement may be required of new development in order to address associated impacts.

### **3. Water Management and Conservation General Policies**

The Babocomari River and its tributaries are considered a significant contributor to streamflow in the San Pedro River which supports its own downstream riparian habitat as well as the riparian habitat of the San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area, designated by Congress in 1988. The recently released Arizona Department of Water Resources report titled: *Groundwater Resources of the Upper San Pedro Basin, Arizona* (February, 2005) makes numerous references to the Babocomari River and its role in the hydrology of the Upper San Pedro Basin. In addition, the Upper San Pedro Partnership, through its member agencies' studies, has shown that ephemeral stream channels, like portions of the Babocomari River and its tributaries, are critically important for recharging the regional aquifer of the Sierra Vista Sub-watershed – the area's sole source of ground water.

The current zoning of RU-4 (one residence per 4 acres) throughout the plan area provides a baseline for determining what the potential ground water impacts may be if the area were developed under current, permitted densities. Therefore, future requests for increased densities and/or intensity of uses should take this into consideration and should not increase groundwater withdrawals in the Plan area beyond this baseline assumption.

**Policy 3.1** Reduce potential ground water pumping within the Plan area to a level that will contribute, on a cumulative basis, to the Upper San Pedro Partnership's target of reducing the Sierra Vista Sub-Watershed's projected annual deficit which is based on projected growth in the area.

**Policy 3.2** New development proposed as subdivisions, special uses or in rezonings, shall indicate the design features that will be incorporated into the development to:

- a. Minimize overall water use through water conservation measures such as drought-tolerant landscaping, low-flow fixtures, gray water re-use, water harvesting, deed restrictions and other water conservation methods.
- b. Address water quality issues associated with post development run-off.
- c. Conserve and enhance ground water recharge through methods such as the use of storm water recharge and flood control basins, pervious pavement, infiltration galleries, dry wells, building envelopes, protection of open space and minimizing disturbance of soils and other methods.

**Policy 3.3** With the exception of storm water detention basins, water harvesting facilities, or effluent recharge basins, new development shall not incorporate open water storage facilities or water features, such as ponds, fountains, "misting" features, or non-drip irrigation systems for landscaping.

**Policy 3.4** New development shall meet or exceed County Highway and Floodplain Department standards to preserve existing watercourses within the Plan Area and protect from erosion, pollution and alteration of natural drainage patterns resulting from new development.

**Policy 3.5** No new wells should be placed in the alluvium of the Babocomari River, defined here as the 100-year Floodplain.

#### **4. Enterprise Designation Specific Policies**

The following policies apply to those areas designated as "Enterprise" within the Plan area boundaries.

**Policy 4.1** Non-residential uses which take direct access onto SR 90, SR 82, and County maintained roads at approved locations and/or interior roads within the Plan Area should provide shared physical and legal access to adjacent parcels to ensure that access onto these roads are minimized. Driveways for non-residential uses and multi-family uses which access onto interior roads within the Plan area should be a minimum of 500 feet apart.

**Policy 4.2** New non-residential development shall incorporate water conservation design features and BMPs to reduce potable water use and to maximize water harvesting and recharge opportunities. Non-residential developments shall incorporate many of the water conservation systems and features described for residential development and, in addition, shall incorporate the following measures and BMPs:

- Incorporate water harvesting and storm water filtering and recharge facilities;
- Installation of waterless urinals in employee and public restrooms;
- Utilize drought-tolerant native plants in landscaping;
- No irrigated turf in parking areas, roadway medians or landscape features;
- No use of misters or water features;
- Use of outdoor drip irrigation systems;
- Use of air conditioners rather than evaporative coolers

**Policy 4.3** Any new commercial development wherein on-site use of ground water is integral to the processes, function or product of the commercial development is discouraged. Car wash operations, commercial water bottling operations, recreational water activities or industrial processes consuming large amounts of water are not appropriate for development under this plan. New commercial development wherein net water use is expected to exceed 200 gallons per day per acre for all uses shall incorporate an integrated design system of ground water, wastewater and storm water management, including recirculation and capture of water for reuse and recharge, for each project. Proposals shall include descriptions of planned water management measures designed to demonstrate how projected water use over 200 gallons per day per acre shall be off-set to the extent feasible. Proposals for subdivisions, rezoning or special uses should include details on how the project will be designed to conform to this policy.

**Policy 4.4** New non-residential development will ameliorate noise, dust, odor and glare impacts to adjacent neighbors by providing adequate setbacks and screening from areas designated as Low Density Residential.

**Policy 4.5** All development in the Enterprise Designation shall conform to Growth Category B development standards as specified in the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations.

## **5. Low-Density Residential (LDR-1) Designation Policies**

The following policies apply to those areas designated as "Low Density Residential (LDR-1)" within the Plan area boundaries.

**Policy 5.1** Only rezonings to residential and rural zoning districts will be considered in this designation. Gross residential densities shall not exceed 1 residence per acre or up to 1.5 residences per acre if a conservation or minor subdivision option is exercised with the appropriate contingencies. Proposals for higher densities should be accompanied by a master development plan.

**Policy 5.2** All approvals for rezonings to a higher density in this designation shall be conditioned with the requirement that new development proceed under the subdivision process.

**Policy 5.3** New development should conduct a site resource analysis and consider natural topography, soils conditions, watercourse and drainage patterns, wildlife corridors and human pathways in designing site-specific roadways, drainage systems, water conveyance systems including water harvesting, building areas and conservation/trails and open space areas. Preservation of natural features should be determinants in laying out new development on whole

subdivisions and on individual lots. Proposals for rezoning or special uses should include details on how the project will be designed to conform with this policy.

**Policy 5.4** New development shall incorporate an integrated design system of ground water, wastewater and storm water management for each parcel and for entire subdivisions or development such that, in the aggregate, on-site potable water systems are designed to use the same or less water than would be used if the property were developed under existing zoning. This determination shall be based upon the Arizona Department of Water Resources' (ADWR) most current estimates of rural water use. Proposed and verified effluent recharge may also be used to off-set projected demands. Most current estimates of rural water use are between .89 and 1.14 acre-feet of water per household, or 312 gallons per person per day (gpcd), which also includes a per capita portion of outdoor water use normally associated with rural properties. Proposals for rezoning or special uses should include details on how the project will be designed to conform with this policy, including the intent of forming a water company or district, or joining with an existing water company or district.

**Policy 5.5** New residential development should conserve water use by incorporating efficient, effective and integrated water pumping, distribution, metering and recharge systems as well as water conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs). Those measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Installation of separate potable water, "grey water" and sanitary sewer distribution lines on individual structures with grey water lines connected to a water harvesting system for on-site use. Rooftop runoff should also be connected to the water harvesting system;
- Limiting landscaping to drought-tolerant native vegetation as defined by the County's Low Water Use/Drought Tolerant Plant List, and incorporate landscape features in locations and of specific types that would shade structures and living areas in summer;
- Elimination or limiting amount of turf in landscaping;
- Requiring front-loading or water efficient washing machines;
- Establishing a building envelope within the lot;
- Prohibition of use of potable water in irrigation and washing down pervious surfaces;
- Prohibition of swimming pools and water spas using potable water;
- Incorporation of effluent re-use and recharge within subdivisions that provide wastewater treatment systems;
- Incorporation of storm water recharge facilities on individual lots, to the greatest extent possible;
- Prohibition of use of evaporative coolers in favor of air conditioning systems with the exception that a dual system is allowed provided that the evaporative cooler portion utilizes a water harvesting system;
- Installation of water line insulation, hot water on-demand systems, and hot water recirculation systems within structures;
- Installation of timers and rain sensors on drip irrigation landscaping systems;
- Installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures;
- Installation of water meters on interior and exterior potable water systems and requirements for financial levies for excessive water use;

- Provision of "water wise" or similar publications and contact information as part of sales contracts to home buyers;

Proposals for subdivisions, rezoning or special uses should include details on how the project will be designed to conform with this policy.

**Policy 5.6** All development in the Low Density Residential Designation shall conform to Growth Category B development standards as specified in the Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations.

## **6. Rural Residential (RR) Designation Policies**

The Rural Residential (RR) Comprehensive Plan designation for this area provides for residential development on larger lots which would better conform to the environmental constraints of the area, including flood zones, steep slopes, proximity to mining and other industrial land uses, as well as proximity to military airfields and private airstrips. The following policies apply to those areas designated as "Rural Residential (RR)" within the Plan Area boundaries.

**Policy 6.1** Gross residential densities shall not exceed one dwelling per 1.5 acres, as allowed by the conservation subdivision option.

**Policy 6.2** No additional rezonings to Heavy Industry (HI) will be allowed. No industrial-type special uses will be approved that will have the effect of impacting the rural, residential character of the Plan Area.

**Policy 6.3** All approvals for rezonings to a higher density in this designation shall be conditioned with the requirement that new development proceed under the subdivision process.

**Policy 6.4** Preservation of natural features, such as floodplains, wildlife corridors, washes, and steep slopes, should be determinants in laying out new development on whole subdivisions and on individual lots. Proposals for rezoning or special uses should include details on how the project will be designed to conform with this policy.

**Policy 6.5** New development shall incorporate an integrated design system of ground water, wastewater and storm water management for each parcel and for entire subdivisions or development such that, in the aggregate, on-site potable water systems are designed to use the same or less water than would be used if the property were developed under existing zoning. This determination shall be based upon the Arizona Department of Water Resources' (ADWR) most current estimates of rural water use. Proposed and verified effluent recharge may also be used to off-set projected demands. Most current estimates of rural water use are between .89 and 1.14 acre-feet of water per household, or 312 gallons per person per day (gpcd), which also includes a per capita portion of outdoor water use normally associated with rural properties. Proposals for rezoning or special uses should include details on how the project will be designed to conform with this policy, including the intent of forming a water company or district, or joining with an existing water company or district.

**Policy 6.6** New residential development proposed in subdivisions, rezonings to higher densities, or special uses, should conserve water use by incorporating efficient, effective and integrated water pumping, distribution, metering and recharge systems as well as water conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs). Those measures may include, but are not limited to:

- Installation of separate potable water, "grey water" and sanitary sewer distribution lines on individual structures with grey water lines connected to a water harvesting system for on-site use. Rooftop runoff should also be connected to the water harvesting system;
- Limiting landscaping to drought-tolerant native vegetation as defined by the County's Low Water Use/Drought Tolerant Plant List, and incorporate landscape features in locations and of specific types that would shade structures and living areas in summer;
- Elimination or limiting amount of turf in landscaping;
- Requiring front-loading, water efficient washing machines;
- Establishing a building envelope within the lot;
- Prohibition of use of potable water in irrigation and washing down pervious surfaces;
- Prohibition of swimming pools and water spas using potable water;
- Incorporation of effluent re-use and recharge within subdivisions that provide wastewater treatment systems;
- Incorporation of storm water recharge facilities on individual lots, to the greatest extent possible;
- Prohibition of use of evaporative coolers in favor of air conditioning systems with the exception that a dual system is allowed provided that the evaporative cooler portion utilizes a water harvesting system;
- Installation of water line insulation, hot water on-demand systems, and hot water recirculation systems within structures;
- Installation of timers and rain sensors on drip irrigation landscaping systems;
- Installation of low-flow plumbing fixtures;
- Installation of water meters on interior and exterior potable water systems and requirements for financial levies for excessive water use;
- Provision of "water wise" or similar publications and contact information as part of sales contracts to home buyers;

Proposals for rezoning to higher densities or special uses should include details on how the project will be designed to conform with this policy.

**Policy 6.7** All development in the Rural Residential (RR) Comprehensive Plan designation for this area shall conform to Category D development standards as specified in the Zoning Regulations.

## **7. Hubbard Assault Strip Encroachment Area Policies**

Fort Huachuca has identified the eastern portion of the Plan Area as an area of critical concern regarding encroachment on military activities associated with the Hubbard Assault Strip located south of the Babocomari Plan Area, on the Fort's East Range. This area is used by the military for tactical training using night-vision goggles, and C-130/C-117 military aircraft landings. Higher residential densities or certain special uses in this portion of the Plan Area could impede

these activities and impact the Fort's ability to provide critical support for their missions. In addition to the policies set forth for the Rural Residential designation, the following policies will be applied to property in the Plan Area falling within the Hubbard Assault Strip Encroachment Area:

**Policy 7.1** Gross residential densities in the southern half of the Hubbard Assault Strip Encroachment Area should not exceed 1 residence per 3 acres. Requests for increases in density in the northern half of the Hubbard Assault Strip Encroachment Area shall be reviewed on a case by case basis for their potential to impact military activities.

**Policy 7.2** Sellers will provide disclosure of the Hubbard Field Encroachment Area (HFEA) and military activities to potential buyers of lots within the encroachment area, as well as provide a disclosure notice on subdivision plats. The disclosure statement shall inform prospective buyers of the following potential impacts and restrictions on their land related to the HFEA mission:

- Noise from high speed and low altitude flights
- Noise from landings at the airfield
- Potential dust and "drift" of debris from landings at the airfield
- Turbulence, and dust from turbulence, of low-flying aircraft in the airspace above the Babocomari Land Grant area
- Limitations on outdoor lighting to reduce glare to pilots and
- Limitations on electro-magnetic radiation transmissions to reduce interference with aircraft communications.

**Policy 7.3** No special uses will be approved that have the ability to impact the military missions of the East Range. This would include special uses that propose creating new airstrips or expanding the activities of existing private airstrips; special uses that propose outdoor lighting in excess of that expected on existing rural residential properties, such as outdoor recreation activities; wireless communication towers exceeding the height limit of the zoning districts; and any other special uses deemed to have a potential impact on military activities.

**Policy 7.4** Additional light pollution control measures may be considered for application to new developments within the Plan Area to protect the military activities occurring in and around the Hubbard Assault Strip