
MAJOR CHANGES TO WAY WE THINK, PLAN MUST BE MADE NOW TO AVOID A SPRAWLING SUBURB

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As Arizona boosters like to point out, people "vote with their feet." In that election, more have come to Arizona than have been leaving. But a lot do leave.

For many, Arizona is a desert encampment: a good place to make money so you can afford to move on. For others, it is a sunny place to retire. But long-term commitment to this place has not been an Arizona norm.

Fast-forward to the Sun Corridor in 2035, a vast region with eight million or so residents. A robust and energetic place, for sure, but one where the heat and mobility are increasingly daunting. Will you want to stay?

As the Sun Corridor grows, trade-offs will be required. Residential densities have already been rising in response to increased costs and different consumer choices, but much more will be necessary to accommodate the projected influx.

Much of that density will need to be accommodated in the existing urban fabric. Yet, few development proposals spark as much controversy as inserting tall buildings into old neighborhoods. If the Sun Corridor is to be something other than an endlessly sprawling suburb, changes in planning and mindsets must occur. When, where, and how do we choose?

Water supply provides a close-to-home example of the possible trade-offs between current and future lifestyles. In much of metro Phoenix, two-thirds of domestic water use now goes for landscaping. Ultimately, though, severe limitations on landscaping and a ban on outdoor swimming pools could be necessary to continue stretching water supplies. If you could have nothing beyond crushed granite and a few cacti in your yard, would you still want to live in the Sun Corridor?

Or, would just a few extra degrees of nighttime heat each decade start producing a 21st-century "Hohokam effect," a place that's just plain too hot to enjoy?

There are many more possibilities described in the report on the Sun Corridor of how the future of Arizona will present great opportunities and substantial threats to the lifestyle so many enjoy here now. The question we want you to ask yourself upon reading these descriptions and speculations is simply: Do you want to live in the future Sun Corridor?

For most people, the answer will be a resounding "maybe."

Albert Hirschman in *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty* shows the major choices in the face of perceived decline as either leaving or trying to make improvements. Which path is chosen is largely a

function of loyalty. It is in the Sun Corridor's long-term best interest to understand the importance of developing regional loyalty and genuine public involvement in building a desirable, sustainable place.

The Sun Corridor's future isn't inevitably either rosy or bleak. It will be what we make it.

The Sun Corridor should be the exemplar of how people live in populous, hot, dry places: of how to use the sun, to build appropriately for the climate and find economic strength in numbers and social strength in diversity. We owe ourselves nothing less than figuring this out.

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