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## **For Housing Feasibility Consultants**

# **Lively discussion, field trip**

**By Ákos Kovach**

Richard Merritt and Danny Court from the Elliott D. Pollock Consultant Company were treated to a lively discussion on their first day of their boots-on-the-ground investigation into the Housing Feasibility study.

Over 40 participants crowded around the video screen in the meeting room of the Greenlee County Golf Clubhouse. Larry Catten, SEAGO Economic Development Planner, asked everyone for a brief self-introduction.

There were ranchers, farmers, home builders, business owners, numerous elected officials, two bed and breakfast operators,



RV Park managers, investors, an architect, educators, a nurse, Freeport McMoRan officials and nearby local residents.

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*Addressing the local group, at left, is Eric Swanson of Hague Creek Properties. At right is Richard Merritt of Elliott D. Pollock Consultant Company.*

## **Sometimes, even locals aren't aware of all we have**

**By David Gomez  
Supervisor, District 1**

A good feasibility study requires a great framework of stakeholders in stage one. The second stage required these stakeholders to take on the tough task of good planning, goal setting and outcome tracking. Thanks to Freeport-McMoRan, SEAGO, the Towns of Clifton and Duncan and of course Greenlee County, the first stage is now well-established.

Stage 2 of the process got well under way yesterday. An excellent turnout of stakeholders gathered at the Golf Course Clubhouse with lots of open discussion and candid conversation among all. The open session was followed by a bus tour

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*Supervisor David Gomez, center, discusses potential for housing development during tour.*

**DEVELOPMENT**

## Housing tour . . .

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Much was said about where the housing demand might come from, but mostly the largest segment would likely be mine employees. This led back to the age-old risk topic of copper prices and the sometimes up and down nature of employment in the area.

### Who keeps lists?

Royce Hunt wondered if there was a list kept of available land, lots and homes in Greenlee County. Because there are no real estate agents or real estate agencies in Greenlee County, local residents rely on internet sites, word-of-mouth and bulletin board posts.

The County Economic Development Department maintains a roster of land owners and land availability upon request. It is difficult to track homes for sale, land and lots for sale because the market changes so quickly and sales are not always filed of record.

### Finding mortgage money

County Assessor, Linda Durr, wondered if finding home financing was an issue which was



*captions line*

answered by Heather Zink from OneAz Credit Union. Appraisals in the past were more difficult than they are today and even with comparable sales from nearby Graham County, finding mortgage money is not difficult.

Duncan Vice-Mayor, Denise Ice, replied to an inquiry to the audience by consultant Richard Merritt about rental costs.

Vice Mayor Ice stated she thought rental fees were too high,

only the consultants and builders, but also for the local residents who had a chance to see the county with new eyes.

One individual commented that the tour was very educational and showcased aspects of the county unfamiliar to them until yesterday, this being the subject of this article.

### What investors look for

Even local residents don't always know what home builders and investors look for or want

a sentiment echoed and supported throughout the audience. Duncan Town Council member, Doug Barlow, pointed out the low rents offered by FMI in Morenci also had an impact on both the rental and home buying housing market in the County.

### Rental prices

Comment was made that rental prices in the Clifton area were  
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from an area before they invest. For this reason we invite you to join us on this journey. Attend meetings of the Board of Supervisors and Town Council meetings to stay informed.

With that said, the official newsletter for Greenlee County is the *Greenlee Clarion*.

It is published once each month and we do our best to keep the public aware of news, events and things that matter to our residents as well as the region and world around us. We welcome feedback

## All we have . . .

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with participants, stakeholders and consultants to view possible sites for housing development.

This tour has been provided many times over the last 4 years. Although, this time local residents joined the tour.

The result was an eye opening experience for not

## Housing tour . . .

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often very high and that the B&B market was strong. These valid comments and several others helped point out to the consultants the wide range of opinions and viewpoints represented in the audience.

Questions were asked if this was a study just about FMI employees interested in buying homes and the answer was quickly given that this study was intended to cover all buyers, renters, etc. regardless of their employment.

### Gomez' experience

Greenlee County Supervisor, David Gomez, spoke about two previous Housing Summits and years of his personal experience when he worked for SWGas Corp.

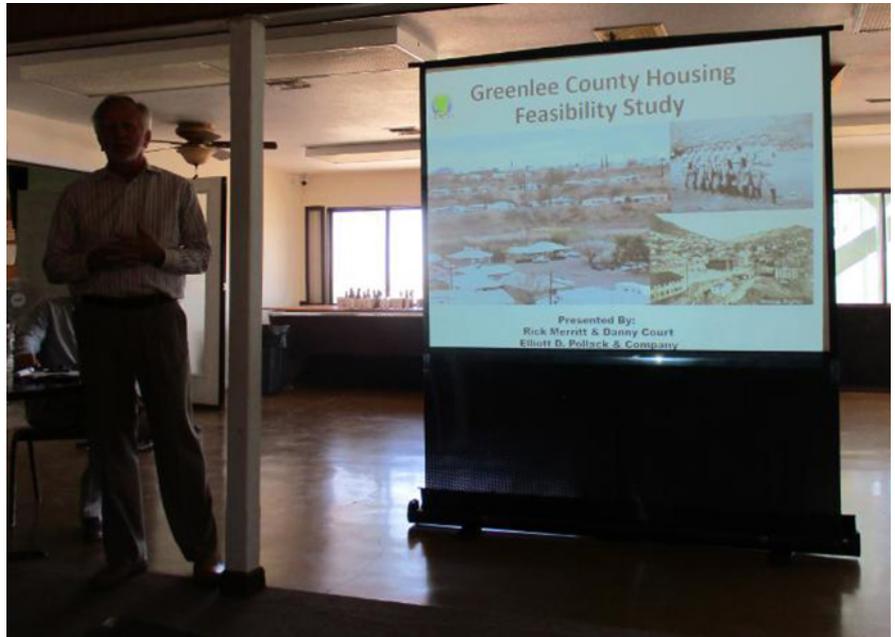
'We have learned that mine employees want to live as close as possible to the mine. Clifton, Table Top, Verde Lee and Loma Linda are the closest properties according to distance and drive time.

"Some have a different preference and prefer living in nearby Duncan. The local retirees have wanted to stay in Greenlee County but all the available housing has been in Graham County."

Bobby Pollack from FMI mentioned that approximately 100 employees retire from the mine annually.

### What about blight?

Another animated conversation revolved around the subject of blight and blight mitigation. Several people spoke up about the ongoing mitigation efforts in Duncan.



*Afternoon bus tour show available or potential housing areas.*

Councilman Doug Barlow added another part of that problem is out-of-state property owners. 'They don't live here, they let these properties degenerate. It's a shame'.

Clifton Mayor Luis Montoya said 'Clifton has about 180 properties with and without homes on them. Some can be fixed up, others should be torn down but the lot is ready to build.'

### Bus tour

After a short lunch break and additional networking, a bus tour of available and or potential housing areas was given.

John Basteen Jr., Duncan Town Manager, gave a detailed description of points of interest along the way in Duncan Valley. Basteen pointed out where service lines for water and waste water ran and plans for future expansion.

The tour began at the weigh station in Franklin on Highway 70 where County-owned land surrounded by leased State Land Trust property was available.

This area could serve as a focal point for bringing in diverse economies, jobs and industries. This would also enhance the demand for housing.

The Duncan tour was very thorough and several stops were made to point out lots and land parcels.

Property along Highway 75 was also pointed out because they had good access to utilities.

The tour stopped at Greenlee County Airport as the topography there lends itself nicely for a large housing subdivision.

### On to Clifton

Parcels in the Loma Linda and Verde Lee areas were pointed out as well as a stop at the peak of Table Top, where the Town of Clifton owns 120 acres that are within the Town limits.

The tour continued to Morenci where participants disembarked at three sites

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**DEVELOPMENT**

## AOT to present to Tourism Council

The Rivers, Valleys, Mountains and Trails Tourism Council has something BIG in store for members and guests at its meeting on July 10.

Kiva Couchen and Benjamin Stewart will be our featured speakers.

Their presentation will focus on: “The value of tourism to Greenlee County and what this part of Arizona means to AOT”.

The meeting will begin at 11:30 sharp at the Greenlee

County Golf Course Country Club. Lunch will be provided by the Tourism Council, RSVP’s are requested.

We encourage you to bring a friend and experience first-hand the telling of the Greenlee County story by a statewide authority.

The Greenlee County Tourism Council is an active and vibrant part of events throughout Greenlee County, to learn more follow them on [Facebook](#) or their [web-site](#).

## Housing tour . . .

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and went through two homes and an apartment. It was impressive to see the size of these rentals and to understand rental pricing and eligibility requirements.

On the way back south, the bus drove down Chase Creek Street to see some of the lots mentioned earlier by Mayor Montoya as well as the original business district where many rooms are rented on the first and second floor of the restored historic buildings.

### Stop at Three Way

The final stops were at Three Way and County owned land in York Valley adjacent to the Golf Course.

The attendees were very impressed with the quantity and quality of the land and lots available for housing.

For more information contact: [economicdevelopment@co.greenlee.az.us](mailto:economicdevelopment@co.greenlee.az.us)

## Rural Policy Forum

The Arizona Rural Policy Council’s 2018 Rural Policy Forum will be held in Wickenburg this year from Aug. 8-10.

The event will provide an opportunity for skill-building, networking, building relationships and educating each other about the needs and services in rural Arizona. Activities include capacity-building sessions, receptions, workshops, and keynote presentations all of which culminate with the Grant maker Roundtables. Here, grant makers host tables where rural nonprofits have the opportunity to describe their organization’s mission and present a project for the host to consider for potential future funding.

- › Grow rural advocates
- › Develop new strategies for building resilient communities.

A keynote speaker will be Charles Marohn, lead author of Thoughts on Building Strong Towns — Volume 1, Volume 2 and Volume 3 — as well as the author of A World Class Transportation System.

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### Goals and Outcomes

- › Increase the community capacity of rural towns
- › Improve regional collaboration between nonprofits and public entities such as businesses
- › Build relationships and facilitate networking between rural stakeholders

An excellent resource point can be found at the Growing Greenlee website  
<http://growinggreenlee.org>

Including current County-wide Asset Inventory data, archived Clarion Newsletters as well as interactive maps, and other valuable links.