

Preferred Energy Generation Areas

As part of Apache County's ongoing efforts to support strategic and responsible energy development, the following areas have been identified as the most suitable for electrical generation in its various forms. These areas reflect the County's preferred land planning designations for future energy infrastructure development, based on geographic suitability, infrastructure access, and minimal land-use conflicts.

Primary Preferred Energy Generation Area

The primary area designated for electrical generation includes:

- All land **north of U.S. Highway 60**, beginning at **Springerville, Arizona**, and extending eastward to the **Arizona/New Mexico state line**.
- From Springerville, the area continues **east of U.S. Highway 191**, running **north to St. Johns, Arizona**.
- From St. Johns, it includes all land **east of U.S. Highway 191/61**, continuing **north to the junction with County Road N7200**, where U.S. 191 and U.S. 61 diverge. This point marks the **northernmost boundary** of the preferred area due to the adjacent **Navajo Nation boundary**.

Secondary Preferred Energy Generation Area

The secondary area designated for electrical generation includes:

- From **St. Johns**, all land **west of U.S. Highway 191/61**, extending **north to the Navajo Nation boundary**.
- Additionally, from St. Johns, all land **north and east of U.S. Highway 180**, extending **to the Apache County boundary or Interstate 40** to the north

These identified regions represent Apache County's preferred areas for current and future electrical generation projects, which may include but are not limited to solar, wind, geothermal, and other renewable or conventional energy forms.

Alternative language for Comp Plan Preferred Areas.

Apache County has identified certain geographic areas as preferred locations for large-scale electrical generation facilities due to favorable infrastructure access, geographic suitability, and reduced potential land-use conflicts. These areas are identified in the Apache County Comprehensive Plan and are intended to guide future renewable energy development.

The designation of Preferred Energy Generation Areas is advisory in nature and does not create a zoning district, development entitlement, or limitation on renewable energy development in other eligible zoning districts. Projects located outside these areas may still be considered through the Conditional Use Permit process in accordance with the standards of this Article.

The County encourages renewable energy developers to evaluate sites within the following preferred areas:

Primary Preferred Energy Generation Area

- All land north of U.S. Highway 60 beginning at Springerville, Arizona and extending eastward to the Arizona–New Mexico state line.
- From Springerville, land east of U.S. Highway 191 extending north to St. Johns, Arizona.
- From St. Johns, land east of U.S. Highway 191/61 extending north to the junction with County Road N7200.

Secondary Preferred Energy Generation Area

- Land west of U.S. Highway 191/61 extending north from St. Johns to the Navajo Nation boundary.
- Land north and east of U.S. Highway 180 extending to Interstate 40 or the Apache County boundary.

Renewable energy projects proposed within these preferred areas may demonstrate improved compatibility with the County’s long-term land use planning objectives.

Suggested Comprehensive Plan Language

Scenic Travel Corridors and Visual Resource Protection

Scenic Travel Corridors

Apache County contains several major travel routes that provide important scenic views of the County’s rural landscapes, agricultural lands, mesas, and open spaces. These corridors contribute to tourism, community identity, and the visual character experienced by residents and visitors traveling through the region.

Apache County recognizes the following transportation routes as significant Scenic Travel Corridors due to their contribution to the County's rural character, scenic landscapes, and travel experience:

- **U.S. Route 60** – extending across Apache County from the Arizona–New Mexico state line westward through Springerville and continuing to the western county boundary.
- **U.S. Route 180** – extending from the Arizona–New Mexico state line northwest through Alpine, Eagar, and Springerville, then north to St. Johns, then northwest to the Apache County line just south of Petrified Forest National Park western entrance.
- **Arizona State Route 61** – extending from St. Johns southwest to the Apache County boundary.
- **U.S. Route 191** – extending northward from the Apache–Greenlee County line through Eagar and Springerville, continuing north to St. Johns, and further north to Interstate 40 at Sanders.
- **Arizona State Route 260** – extending from Eagar westward to the Apache County boundary near McNary.
- **Arizona State Route 261** – extending south from its junction with State Route 260 to its junction with State Route 273 near Big Lake.
- **Arizona State Route 273** – extending from its junction with State Route 261 southwest and looping back to its junction with State Route 261 near Big Lake.

These corridors provide some of the most widely experienced views of Apache County's landscapes and serve as primary travel routes for residents, visitors, and commercial transportation.

Scenic Resource Protection Policy

Apache County shall consider the protection of scenic viewsheds and the visual character of these corridors when evaluating land use proposals, infrastructure development, and major energy facilities.

Land use decisions along identified scenic travel corridors should seek to:

- minimize visual impacts on the traveling public
- protect long-distance views of natural landscapes and open space
- maintain the rural character of the County's transportation corridors
- encourage siting of large-scale industrial or energy infrastructure in locations that reduce visual conflicts with scenic routes

The County may adopt land use regulations, siting standards, and mitigation measures to reduce visual impacts along these corridors and to implement the goals and policies of this Comprehensive Plan.

Draft