

3. CURRENT CONDITIONS

This Chapter summarizes the current conditions in the Study Area. Included are descriptions of socioeconomic conditions, physical and environmental conditions, and the existing transportation network and services. Numerous studies have been undertaken in the study area reflective of the rapid development in the region. The consultant also conducted a comprehensive review of previous studies and programs, as well as traffic impact studies. Overviews of the most recent applicable studies and related findings and recommendations are presented in Working Paper 1-A, Existing Conditions.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

The following section provides an overview of the socioeconomic conditions within the study area. The demographic composition, employment, and commercial developments in both Coolidge and Florence are presented, as well as an environmental justice analysis.

City of Coolidge Socioeconomic Data

Demographic Composition

In 2000, the population in the City of Coolidge was 7,786, a 12 percent increase over the last decade from 6,934. The most recently released draft population estimates from CAAG for the region indicate the onset of rapid growth between the last census and the beginning of 2006. As presented in Figure 3-1, the population increased from 7,786 in 2000 to 10,392 in April of 2006. The growth rate averages 4 percent over the six years, with an increase of more than 18.4 percent over the twelve months previous to April 2006.

Table 3-1 provides an overview of the demographic composition of Coolidge. Approximately 58 percent of the residents are white, while Hispanics or Latinos constitute 39 percent of the total population and represent the highest minority group. More than half of Coolidge resident are females.

Employment Overview

The Arizona Department of Commerce study – *Economy of Coolidge (ZIP Codes 85228 and 85291)*, June 2004 summarizes the employment conditions in Coolidge based on the Zip Codes for the year 2001:

- In 2001, Coolidge had an estimated total employment of approximately 4,336 or total employment of 382 per 1,000 residents.
- Based on the 2000 Census, there were approximately 3,800 employed Coolidge residents, with additional people commuting into Coolidge from nearby communities.

Pinal County can establish another regional trail corridor that will not only provide recreational opportunities to its residents but promote economic growth through the development of facilities that will capture additional tourism dollars as well.

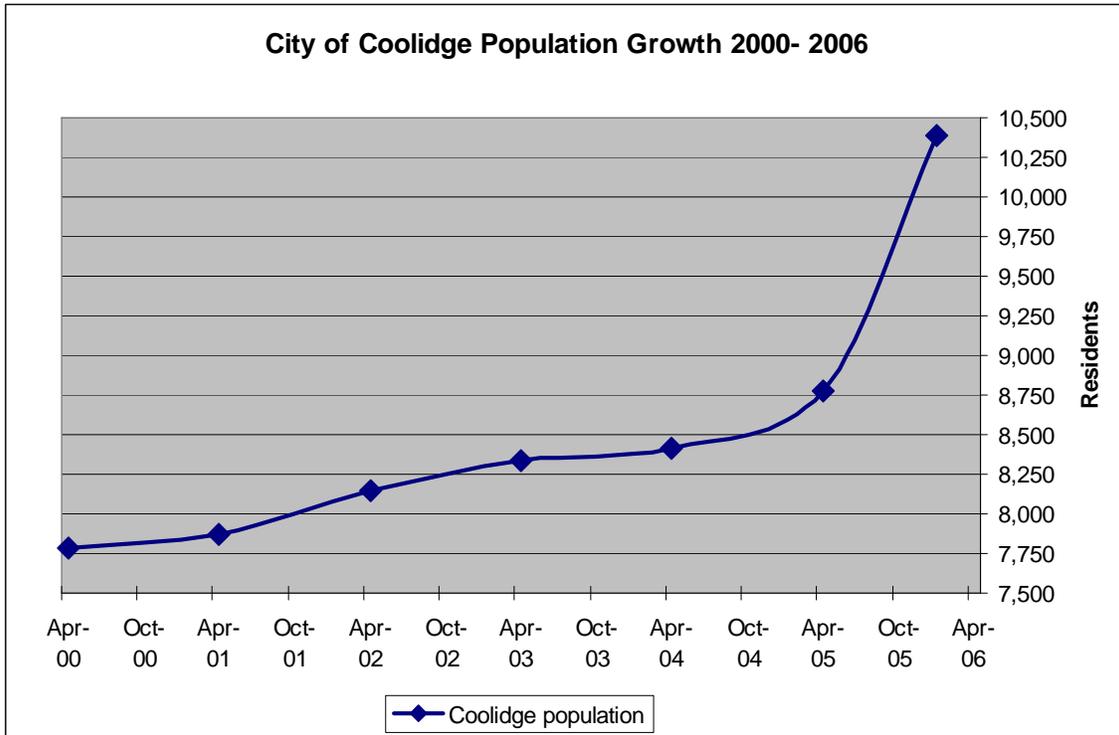
Great Western Trail

The Great Western Trail is a proposed motorized trail that will eventually connect the Mexican and Canadian borders. However, there are segments completed in only parts of Utah and Arizona, with portions proposed for Pinal County. This trail uses a combination of backcountry roads and surface streets. The section of the corridor that runs through Pinal County is east of SR 79 and falls within the area that is currently under review by the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership.

Town of Florence Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan

A *Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan* is being developed for the Town of Florence and is anticipated to be completed by the summer of 2008. The plan will include concepts for paths and trails following existing canal alignments as well as alignments following new and existing roadway rights-of-way. Open space for parks, including those located within new residential developments, will be provided for. This plan will incorporate the Florence Greenway, an urban multiuse path loop proposed to encircle the downtown Florence area. A detailed description of the Greenway was provided in Working Paper 1-A.

FIGURE 3-1. CITY OF COOLIDGE ESTIMATED POPULATION GROWTH BETWEEN 2000 AND 2006



Source: Draft Population Estimates, Central Arizona Association of Governments, June 2006

TABLE 3-1. COOLIDGE DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW CENSUS 2000

Demographic Variable	Coolidge	
	Number	Percent
Total population	7,786	100
Male	3,757	48.3
Female	4,029	51.7
White	4,504	57.8
Black or African American	646	8.3
American Indian and Alaska Native	438	5.6
Asian	56	0.7
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	3,052	39.2
Median age (years)	31.2	

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000

Note: Race and ethnicity overlap and do not sum to total population.

Employment in Coolidge was categorized into three major sectors: Agriculture, Government, and Non-Agriculture Private, as displayed in Table 3-2. The government sector constitutes 43 percent of the total employment with the majority of the employment attributed to Central Arizona College (CAC) at Signal Peak Campus.

TABLE 3-2. COOLIDGE EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Sector	Employment	Percentage
Agriculture	775	18%
Government	1,875	43%
Non-Agriculture Private	1,686	42%

Commercial Developments

The majority of commercial activity occurs along SR 87 and Central Avenue with numerous businesses situated along the corridor such as restaurants, gas stations, car dealerships, banks and other financial services and supermarkets.

Other major employers include:

- Wal-Mart Super Center
- Central Arizona College
- Coolidge Unified School District
- State of Arizona Training Program
- City of Coolidge
- Pinal County Health Department

Utilities are provided by Arizona Public Service (APS), Electric District 2, Hohokam Irrigation/Drainage District, and San Carlos Irrigation Project.

Proposed Commercial Developments

Westcor Mall: Preliminary plans call for a 1.2 million square-foot indoor mall similar in size to Chandler Fashion Center, which will consist of a 600,000 square-foot outdoor big box power center and a 60-acre auto mall on a property bordered by Randolph and Bartlett Roads, east of Attaway Road Alignment. Estimated construction will begin once there are 200,000 residents within five miles of the property, or in approximately 15 years.

Vestar Development on SR 287 and Attaway Road: A 180-acre, four-corner development is planned for SR 287 and Attaway Road. Vestar Development has plans for a power center of up to 120 acres at the northeastern corner that is expected to draw business from new developments such as Anthem at Merrill Ranch in Florence and Sandia in Coolidge. Plans call for two anchor stores, such as a SuperTarget or Ross. Evergreen-Devco Inc., through several subsidiaries, plans to develop the other three corners. A 40-acre spot is likely to include retail and a grocery store, a 14-acre site will have mostly offices, and a 6-acre spot will have convenience store type businesses.

Major Institutional Sites

Several institutions provide educational services in the Coolidge planning area, as presented in Table 3-3. The Coolidge Unified School District administers six schools in addition to a

TABLE 3-3. COOLIDGE MAJOR INSTITUTIONAL SITES

Name	Location	Students
Barely Bears Child Development	407 N. 9 th St	59
West Elementary School	460 S. 7 th St	1,125
Hohokam Middle School	800 N. 9 th St	802
McCray Junior High School	450 N. Arizona Blvd	281
Academy of Excellence – Central Arizona	1530 S. Arizona Blvd	39
Coolidge High School	800 W. Northern Ave	868
Coolidge High School Success Center	8470 N. Overfield Rd	61
Central Arizona Community College- Signal Peak Campus	8470 N. Overfield Rd	2,000
Total		5,235

charter high school called Coolidge High School Success Center. Central Arizona Community College, the Signal Peak Campus, is located on the western side of the study area and is considered one of CAC’s largest and most comprehensive. The college is connected with the other campuses through the district's distance-learning network and offers upper-division coursework through Northern Arizona University.

Town of Florence Socioeconomic Data

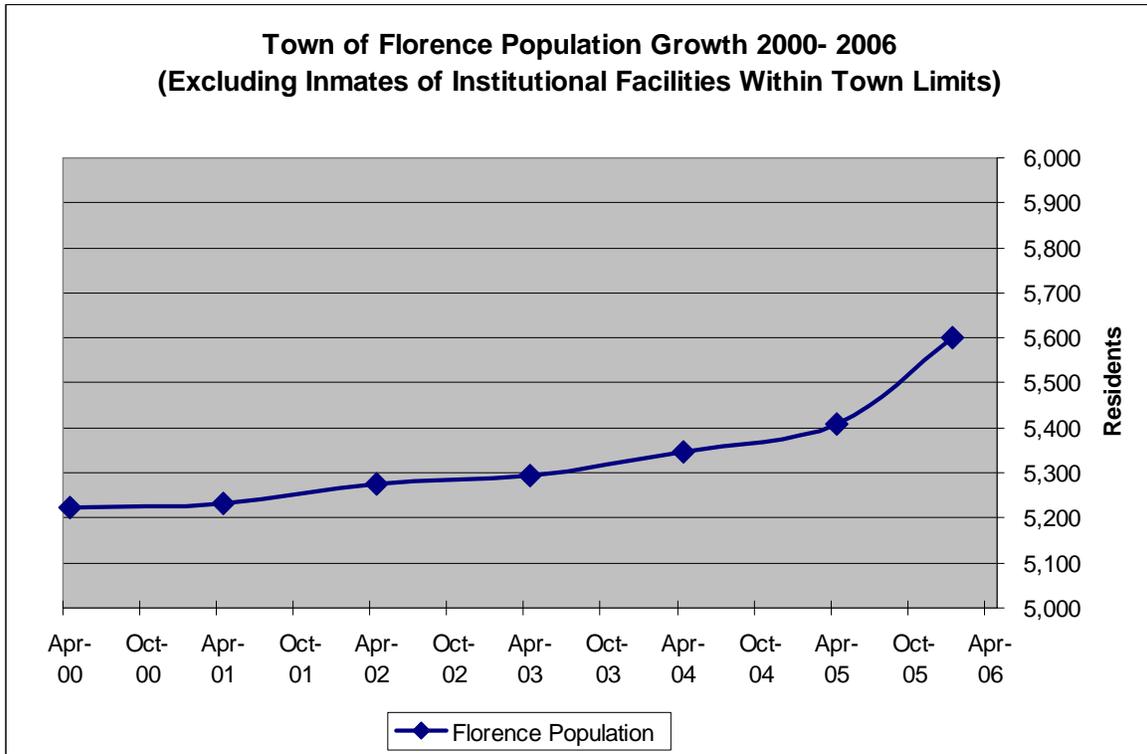
Demographic Composition

The Town of Florence was founded in 1866 and developed along SR 79 as the County Seat and agricultural center of Pinal County. Population grew from 7,321 in 1990 to 17,054 in 2000, and was estimated at 20,261 in April of 2004. However, the majority of population increase is due to the growth of the prison population in Florence. In 2006, approximately 14,662 residents of Florence lived in Group Quarters leaving a resident population of 5,599. The most recently released draft population estimates from CAAG for the region indicate the onset of rapid growth between the last census and the beginning of 2006. As presented in Figure 3-2, population (excluding group quarters) increased from 5,224 residents in 2000 to 5,599 residents in January of 2006. The growth rate averages 1 percent over the six years with an increase of more than 3 percent over the twelve months previous to April 2006.

As Table 3-4 presents, in 2000 the actual resident population of Florence excluding prison population was 5,224. The majority of the population are white (81 percent), in contrast 26 percent of the population are of Hispanic ethnicity. Similar to Coolidge, women constitute over half the population at 53 percent.

As of July 1, 2007, the prison population in Florence was 15,243. Arizona Department of Corrections, Pinal County, and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security administer correctional facilities in Florence, which includes those listed in Table 3-5.

FIGURE 3-2. FLORENCE ESTIMATED POPULATION GROWTH BETWEEN 2000 AND 2006



Source: Draft Population Estimates, Central Arizona Association of Governments, June 2006

TABLE 3-4. FLORENCE DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW CENSUS 2000

Demographic Variable	Florence	
	Number	Percent
Total population	5,224	100
Male	2,465	47.2
Female	2,759	52.8
White	4,211	80.6
Black or African American	221	4.2
American Indian and Alaska Native	177	2.2
Asian	23	0.4
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,383	26.5
Median age (years)	35.4	

Source: US Census Bureau, Census 2000

Note: Race and ethnicity overlap and do not sum to total population.

TABLE 3-5. FLORENCE AREA CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

Facility	Population
Arizona State Prison Complex-Eyman	4,021
Arizona State Prison Complex-Florence	3,779
Arizona State Prison Complex-Florence West	724
Central Arizona Detention Center	3,147
Florence Correctional Center	1,736
Pinal County Adult Detention	1,024
Pinal County Juvenile Detention	46
Homeland Security ICE	1,211
Total	15,688

Source: Town of Florence (as of July 1, 2007)

Employment Overview

The Arizona Department of Commerce study – *Economy of Florence (ZIP Codes 85232), June 2004* summarizes the employment conditions in Florence’s based on the Zip Code for the year 2001:

- In 2001, total employment in Florence had been estimated at approximately 5,325 or a total employment of 998 per 1,000 residents.
- Residents from other communities commute to Florence for work due to the availability of extra employment.

Employment in Florence was categorized into three sectors: Agriculture, Government, and Non-Agriculture Private as shown in Table 3-6. Government accounts for 69 percent of the total employment; the high percentage of government employment is partly due to the three state run prison facilities and Pinal County facilities in Florence. Privately owned prisons are not included in the Government sector, but account for 70 percent of 1,454 Non-Agriculture Private Employment.

TABLE 3-6. FLORENCE EMPLOYMENT BY SECTOR

Sector	Employment	Percentage
Agriculture	200	4%
Government	3,680	69%
Non-Agriculture Private	1,454	27%
Total	5,334	100%

Arizona Department of Commerce, *Economy of Florence, June 2004*

Commercial Developments

The majority of commercial activity occurs along Main Street, SR 79, and SR 287 with businesses such as restaurants, banks, other financial services, and stores.

Other major employers within Florence include:

- Correction Corporation of American
- Correctional Services Corporation
- Arizona Department of Corrections
- Pinal County
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security
- Florence Unified School District
- Town of Florence

Utilities are provided by APS, San Carlos Irrigation Project, SRP, and Southwest Gas Corporation.

Major Educational Sites

Florence Unified School District administers two schools within the study area, as presented in Table 3-7. Central Arizona Community College also has a center located in Florence along Butte Avenue.

TABLE 3-7. FLORENCE MAJOR EDUCATIONAL SITES

Name	Location	Students
Florence K-8 School	225 S. Orlando St	862
Anthem K-8 School	2700 N. Anthem Way	622
Florence High School	1000 S. Main St	1,111
Central Arizona College-Florence Center	800 E. Butte Ave	175
Total		2,770

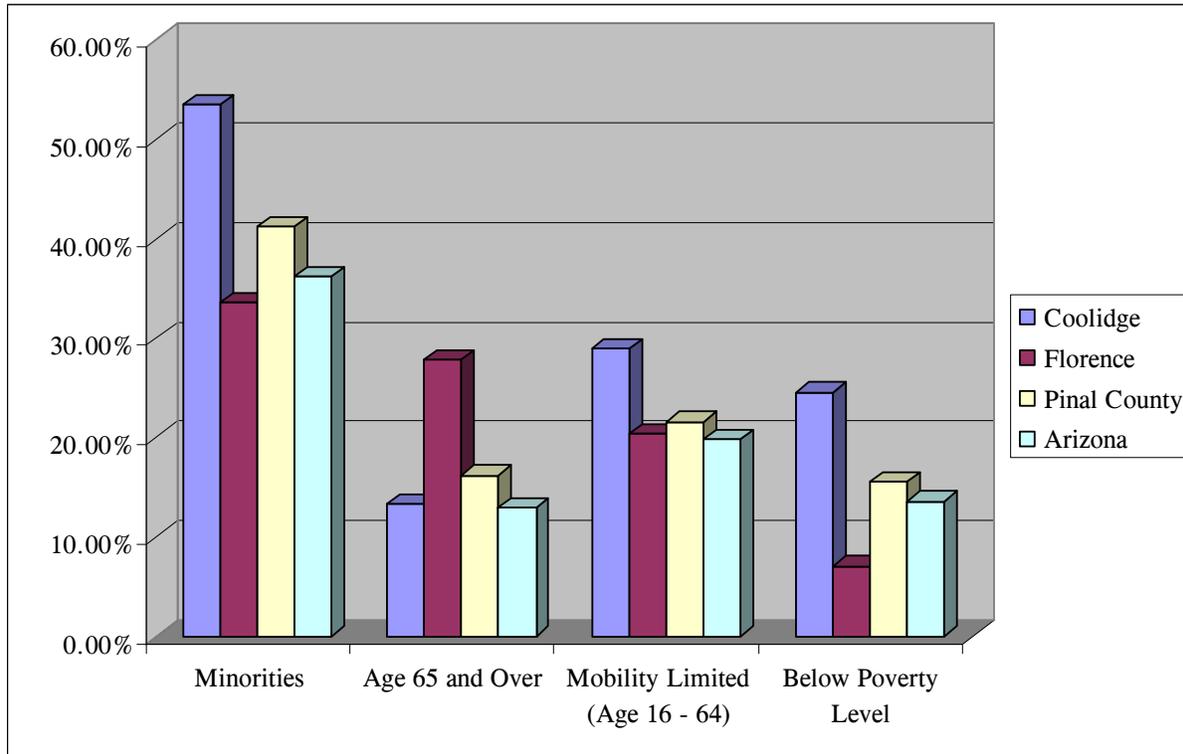
Source: Florence Unified School District, As November 9, 2006

Title VI and Environmental Justice Considerations

Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act specifically refers to discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, and income. Proposed transportation improvements and projects that use public monies are required to include a review of socioeconomic conditions near and surrounding the project. Affected populations covered in this review include: persons aged 65 and over, minorities, people living below the poverty level, mobility limited persons, and households without access to a vehicle.

Figure 3-3 compares the percentages of the four Title VI populations within Coolidge and Florence with the percentages of the same four populations for Pinal County and the State as a whole. A complete review of this subject, including maps depicting the distributions of these population groups, is included in Working Paper 1-A, Existing Conditions.

FIGURE 3-3. COMPARISON OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE VARIABLES FOR COOLIDGE AND FLORENCE (NON-INSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION)



Source: U.S. Census 2000, SF1 tables, and SF3 tables

PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

The physical condition of the study area is presented in this section. An overview of the biotic communities, hydrology, national monuments, historic properties, areas of environmental concern, air quality, and current land use is discussed in turn.

Physical Character

The study area is located in the basin and range province of southern Arizona. This geological province consists of expansive valleys with dispersed mountain ranges. The erosion of the mountain ranges led to deep alluvial fill of the basins. The planning area is generally on flat terrain at an average elevation of 1,450 feet. The highest point is found at Signal Peak at an elevation of 2,282 feet in the Sacaton Mountain range in the northwestern corner of the study area. The majority of the planning area is gently sloped to the Gila River in the north and to the Casa Grande Valley to the southwest.

OVERVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Figure 3-4 presents an environmental overview of the study area. The figure includes the topographical contours, predominant vegetation, major rivers, and washes in the study area. In addition, the figure illustrates the location of underground storage tanks, waste management facilities, sand and gravel and other mines.

The Ashurst-Hayden Diversion Dam northeast of Florence diverts the Gila River waters into the Florence/Casa Grande and Florence Canals, which run south to the Picacho Reservoir, then westward towards Casa Grande. The Pima Lateral Canal flows from south of Valley Farms westward through Coolidge to the Gila River Indian Community. The South Side Canal branches off from the Pima Lateral Canal near the intersection of SR 87 and Macrae Road in the northwest portion of the Coolidge city limits; the canal travels southwest before turning north out of the study area. In addition, the Central Arizona Project canal (CAP) enters the study area from the north and travels eastward, crossing the Florence/Casa Grande Canal east of Florence. From the crossing point onward, the CAP parallels the Florence Casa Grande Canal and the Florence Canal forming a band of three canals through the study area until reaching the Picacho Reservoir Dam.

The study area is also part of the Pinal Active Management Area (AMA), as defined by the Arizona Department of Water Resources. The Pinal AMA extends over 4,000 square miles and is comprised of five sub-basins. The study area is located in the Eloy sub-basin. As of year 2000, the Pinal AMA showed an overdraft of 77,000 acre-feet of groundwater. Possible consequences of groundwater overdraft include land subsidence and subsequent fissures; however, this condition does not exist within the study area. Based on the Coolidge and Florence General Plans, the Gila River and the adjacent area are identified as a 100-year flood hazard area. The area south of Kenilworth/Cactus Forest Road and north of Coolidge Municipal Airport is also considered a flood hazard within Florence.

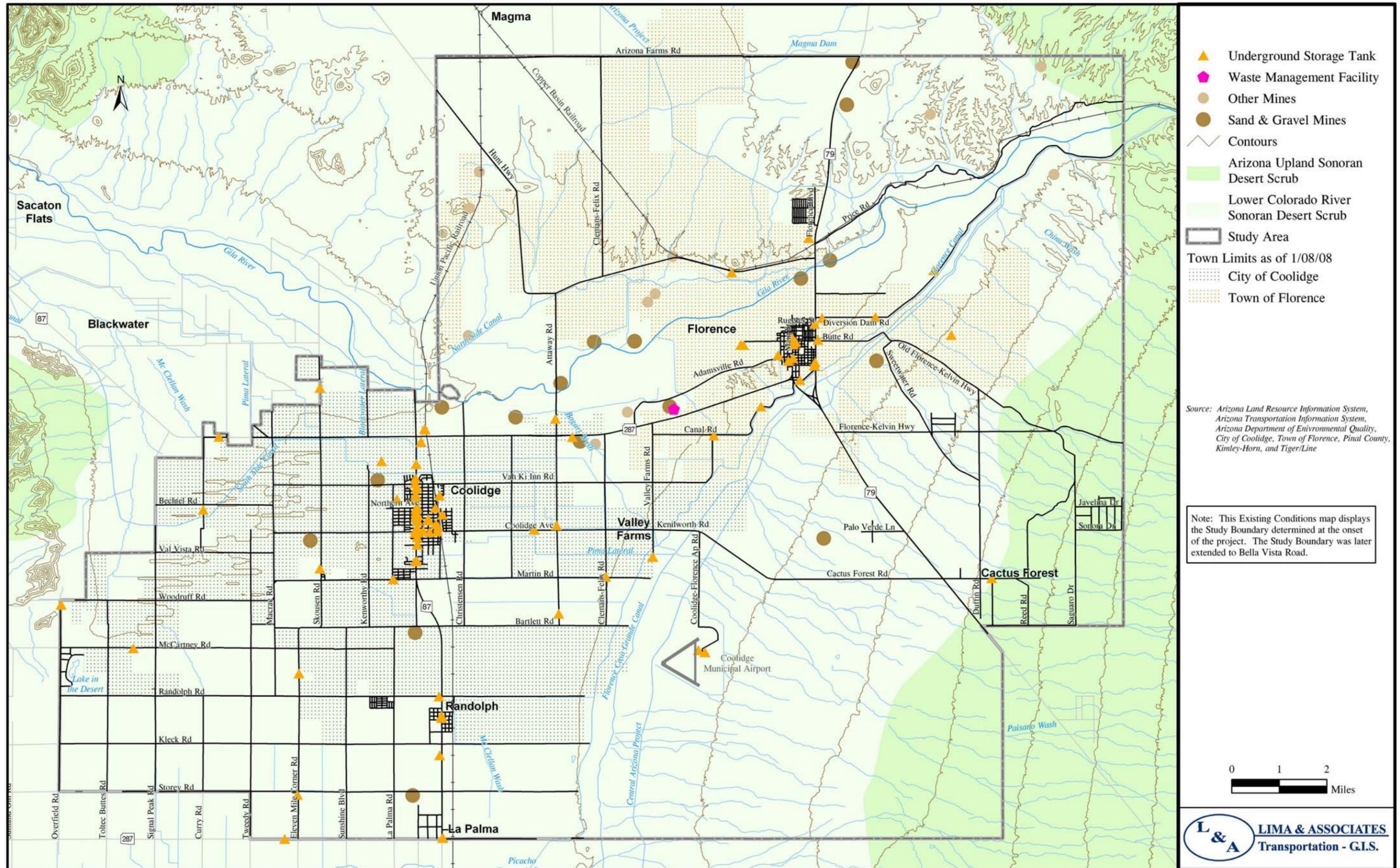
Solid Waste Sites

The only waste management facility (Figure 3-4) within the study area is the Ironwood Landfill located in the vicinity of SR 287 and Adamsville Road. The landfill is owned by Waste Management.

Areas of Environmental Concern

Numerous underground storage tanks (Figure 3-4) are located within the study area. A very high concentration is located along SR 87/287 within the town center of Coolidge. In addition, Heritage Environmental Services operates an 80-acre fuel recycling, hazardous waste treatment, and disposal facility located on East Storey Road.

FIGURE 3-4. ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW



Mining Operations

Sand and Gravel operations are an industrial activity with numerous sites in the study area, primarily along the Gila River bed as presented in Figure 3-4. Sand and Gravel operations extract sediments from the alluvial deposits typical for the basin and range formation. Production involves excavating loose alluvial material from the riverbed or its banks, sorting and grading the material, and hauling it in trucks from the site.

The primary environmental impacts from such mines are degraded air quality from stack emissions and disturbed areas on the site of the gravel operation and groundwater usage. The most recognized health hazards from these mines involve airborne particulate emissions such as PM₁₀. Another important impact of aggregate and stone mining is aesthetic degradation of view sheds.

Transmission and Pipelines Lines

Several existing 115 kilovolt (kV) and 230 kV transmission lines transverse through the study area. The Southeast Valley/Browning project (PW-SEV/BRG) is a proposed 500 kV transmission line that will serve Pinal and Maricopa Counties. Figure 3-5 presents the approved alignment of the PW-SEV/BRG, which consists of 1,000 feet of right-of-way. Construction of the estimated \$160 million project will likely begin in late 2006 and is slated to be completed by 2011.

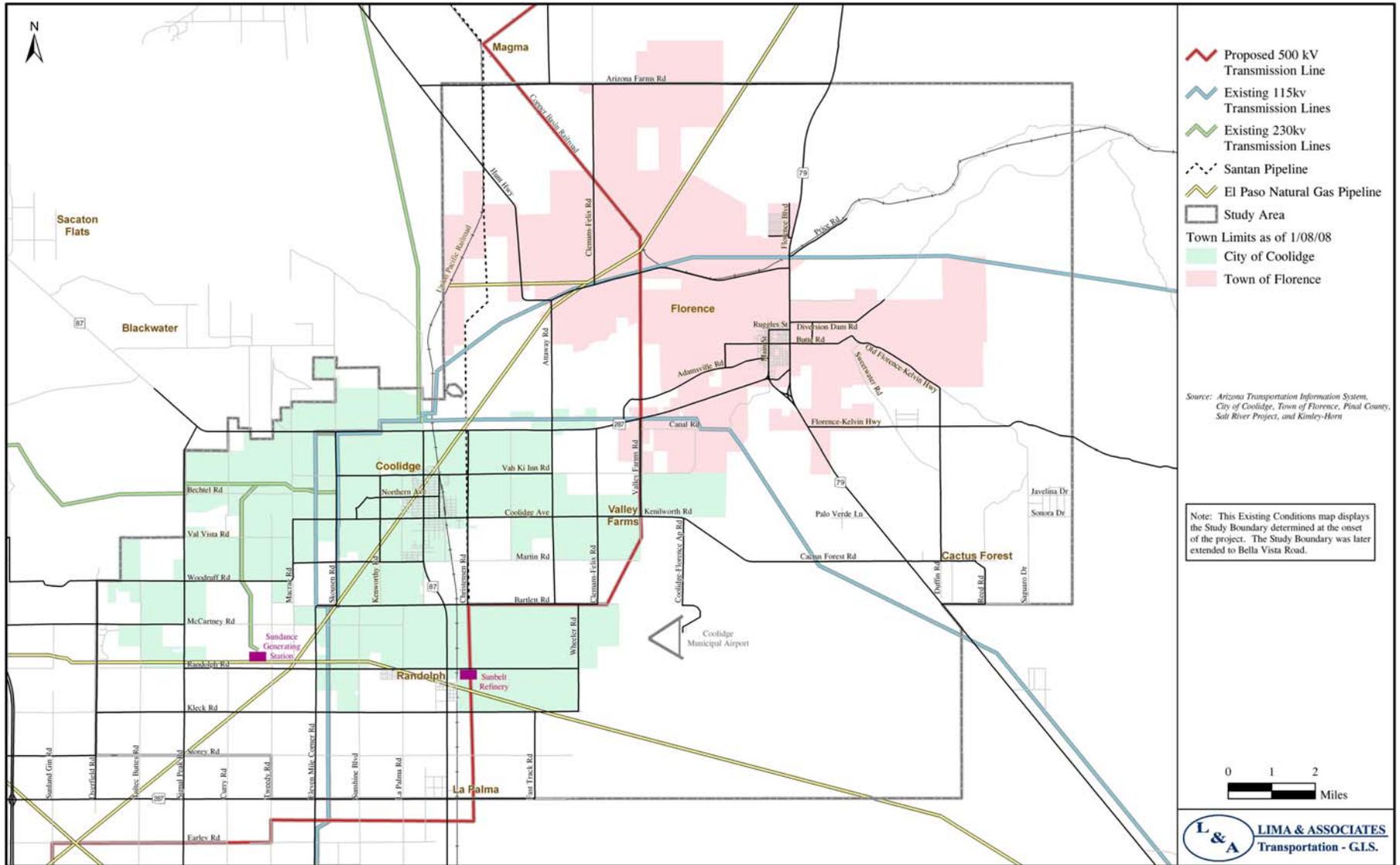
Through an existing 230 kv transmission line, Sundance Generating Station near Coolidge is tied to the APS network. Sundance Generating Station is a 450-megawatt, simple-cycle, natural gas-fueled station consists of 10 quick-start combustion turbines and is located within the vicinity of Randolph Road and Tweedy Road. The generating station is primarily used to provide peak capacity for APS customers.

Santan Pipeline connects to the Sun Belt Refinery east of Randolph, which opened in 1989 on 37 acres. Initially the facility was hailed as pioneer in the refining industry for production of diesel and jet fuel in Arizona for consumption by Arizonans. The refinery is owned by Valero's Sunbelt Refining Co. in a partnership with Huntway Refining Co. of Wilmington, California and is currently not in operation. El Paso Natural Gas also operates a pipeline through the study area. An out-of-service Kinder-Morgan six-inch pipeline parallels Christensen Road through Coolidge. According to the company, it will never be re-activated to transport petroleum products but may ultimately be leased as a conduit for fiber optic or other cable use.

Air Quality Attainment Status

Based on maps created by the Pinal County Air Quality Department, the study area is in attainment for PM₁₀, Ozone, CO, NO₂, and lead.

FIGURE 3-5. EXISTING TRANSMISSION LINES AND PIPELINES IN STUDY AREA



The study area is at risk of becoming a non-attainment area for PM₁₀, especially with agriculture activities such as tillage, harvesting, and cattle feedlots that produce fugitive dust emissions. Fugitive dust is also caused by wind erosion of disturbed surface material from agricultural fields, undisturbed vacant land and desert, and fluvial channels. In addition, increases in vehicle traffic as well as construction activity will likely increase fugitive dust emissions from both paved and unpaved roads; this is particularly true in places like Coolidge and Florence that are rapidly developing.

CULTURAL RESOURCES AND HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Cultural Resources

Archaeological evidence such as village sites and ancient irrigation systems indicate that the area along the Salt and Gila Rivers has been inhabited by humans since at least 300 B.C. Modern-day Pimas may be descended from those ancient farmers, the "Hohokam", which means "those who are gone". In villages along the Gila River, the Pima and Maricopa grew crops of corn, several types of beans, tobacco and squash, as well as cotton that was woven into cloth. As indicated in Figure 3-6, numerous archeological sites identified along the Gila River are indicative of the historical settlement of the area. The ruins of their dwellings are preserved at the Casa Grande Ruins and Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monuments. Figure 3-6 illustrates the cultural resources in the study area.

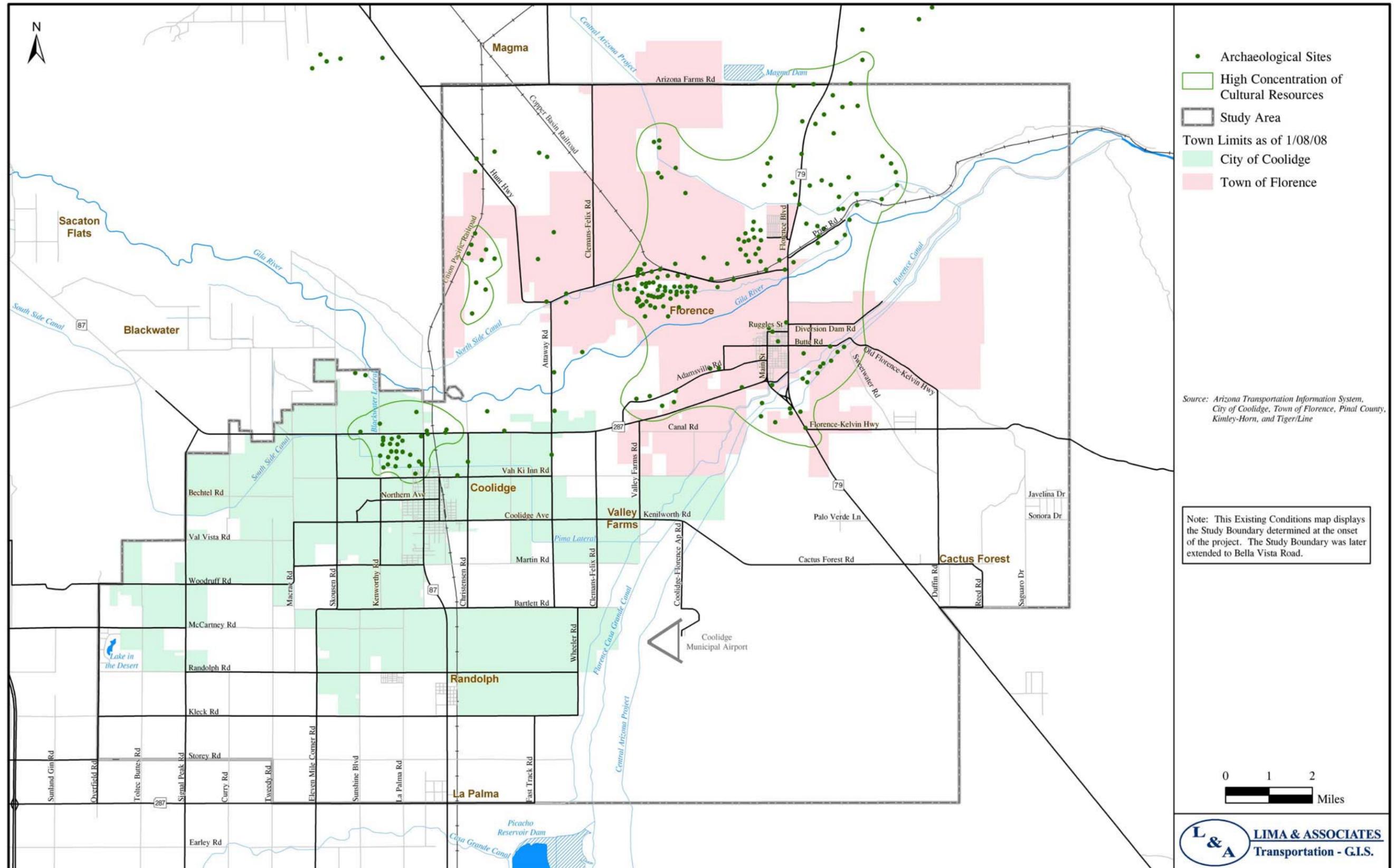
National Monuments

The Casa Grande National Monument encompasses some 470 acres and is administered by the National Park Service. The site is located in the northern part of Coolidge west of SR 87/287 and south of SR 87. The Casa Grande Ruins is the first archeological site to be preserved by the federal government and the fifth oldest unit in the National Park Service. The site was set aside as a federal land reserve in 1892 and then as a National Monument in 1918. Annual visitation was 97,214 in 2005.

Historic Properties

The Town of Florence Historical District has a total of 139 structures listed on the National Register including Silver King Hotel, the first Pinal Courthouse, and McFarland State Park. The Historical District is bounded by 3rd Street, Florence Street, Butte Avenue, and Central Avenue. Additional structures are located within a larger area of: Bush Street, Adamsville Road, 3rd Street, and SR 79. The Coolidge Women's Club, located on Main Street and Vah Ki Inn Road is the only structure in the City currently listed on the National Register. According to the General Plan, an additional commercial building on Main Street and the Vah Ki Inn itself have been nominated to the Register. According to the Plan, the Historical District in Coolidge runs along Coolidge Avenue, Main Street, and Central Avenue.

FIGURE 3-6. CULTURAL RESOURCES IN STUDY AREA



CURRENT LAND USE

The developed portions of Coolidge extend along SR 87/287 from Martin Road to SR 87 and SR 287 intersection. The city developed as a Main Street community and most commercial activity is found along SR 87/287 with residential development to the east and west of the corridor. Unlike Coolidge, Florence was established in the 19th Century and was a stop on the Phoenix to Tucson stage route. Rail service arrived in the early 1900s, followed by the establishment of Highways. Hence, the highways in Florence frame the “old town” area, rather than bisecting it, preserving the frontier character of Main Street. Newer developments have abutted the State Highways and connecting farm section roads.

Land Ownership

As previously mentioned, the study area covers more than 184,000 acres or 287 square miles. Land ownership within the study area is presented in Figure 3-7. Sixty-five percent of this acreage is privately held. Another 27 percent is State Trust land, including the majority of non-Tribal land north of the Gila River and most of the acreage south and east of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) Aqueduct. The Bureau of Land Management administers approximately 3 percent of the study area, while the Bureau of Reclamation owns less than 2 percent of land, mostly parallel to the CAP Canal. The Florence National Guard Military range encompasses close to nine square miles or 3 percent of land within the study area.

Land Use

The General Plans for Coolidge and Florence reflect anticipated changes in land use from historical agricultural uses to those of a large urbanized area. The land use plan included in the Coolidge General Plan is depicted in Figure 3-8, and the land use plan included in the Florence General Plan is shown in Figure 3-9. The majority of land is planned for low to medium residential densities.

Coolidge Planned Area Development

Figure 3-10 presents the known developments in the Coolidge area. In total, about 25 square miles are entitled for development, with more than 51,266 planned dwelling units within the Coolidge planning area alone. Combined with entitled developments in Florence, more than 30 percent of all privately held land is entitled. Within the Coolidge area, approximately 2,051 units per square mile are planned. However, actual build out numbers might be as much as 20 percent lower than the planned gross density.

FIGURE 3-7. LAND OWNERSHIP

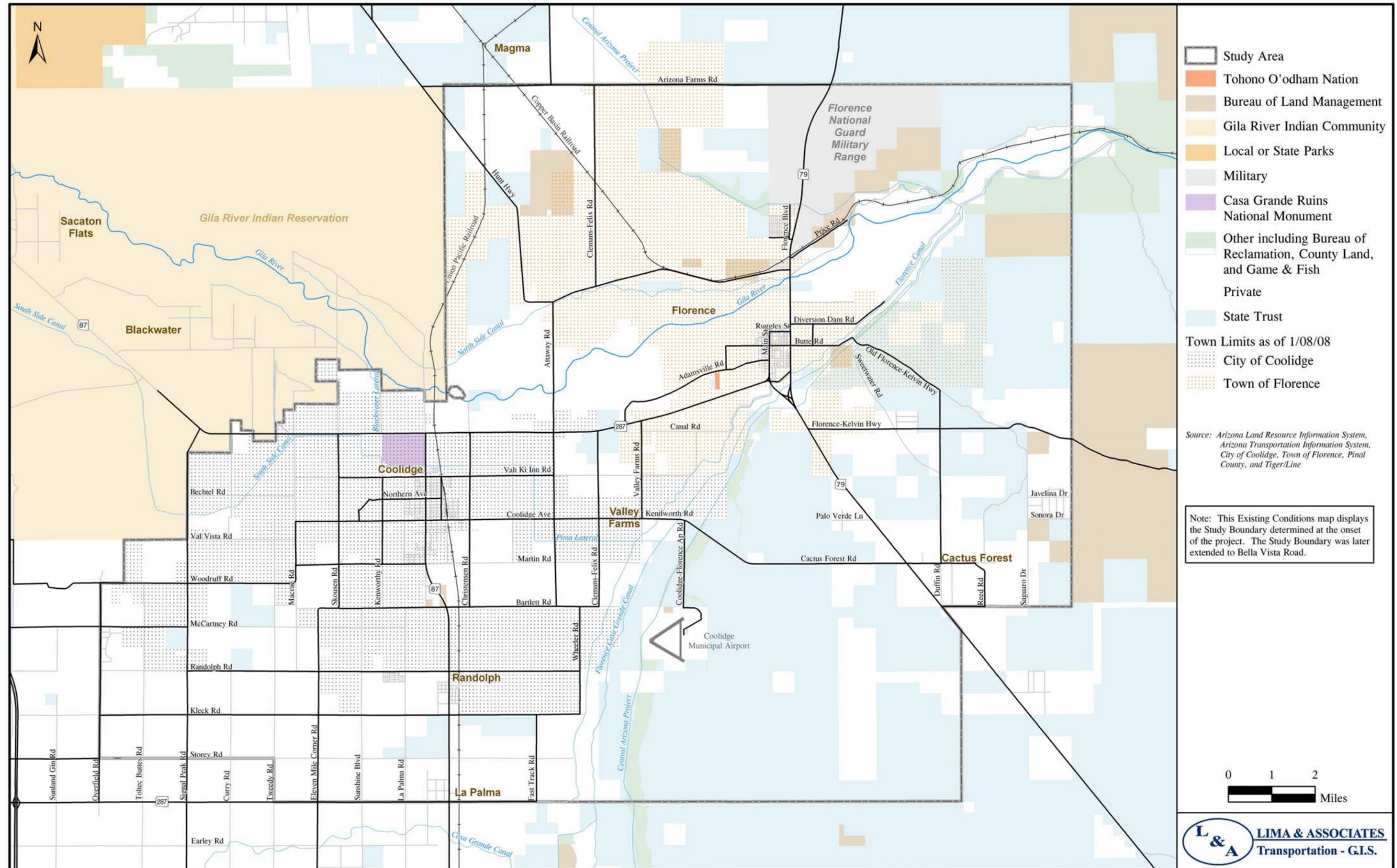


FIGURE 3-8. COOLIDGE GENERAL PLAN LAND USES

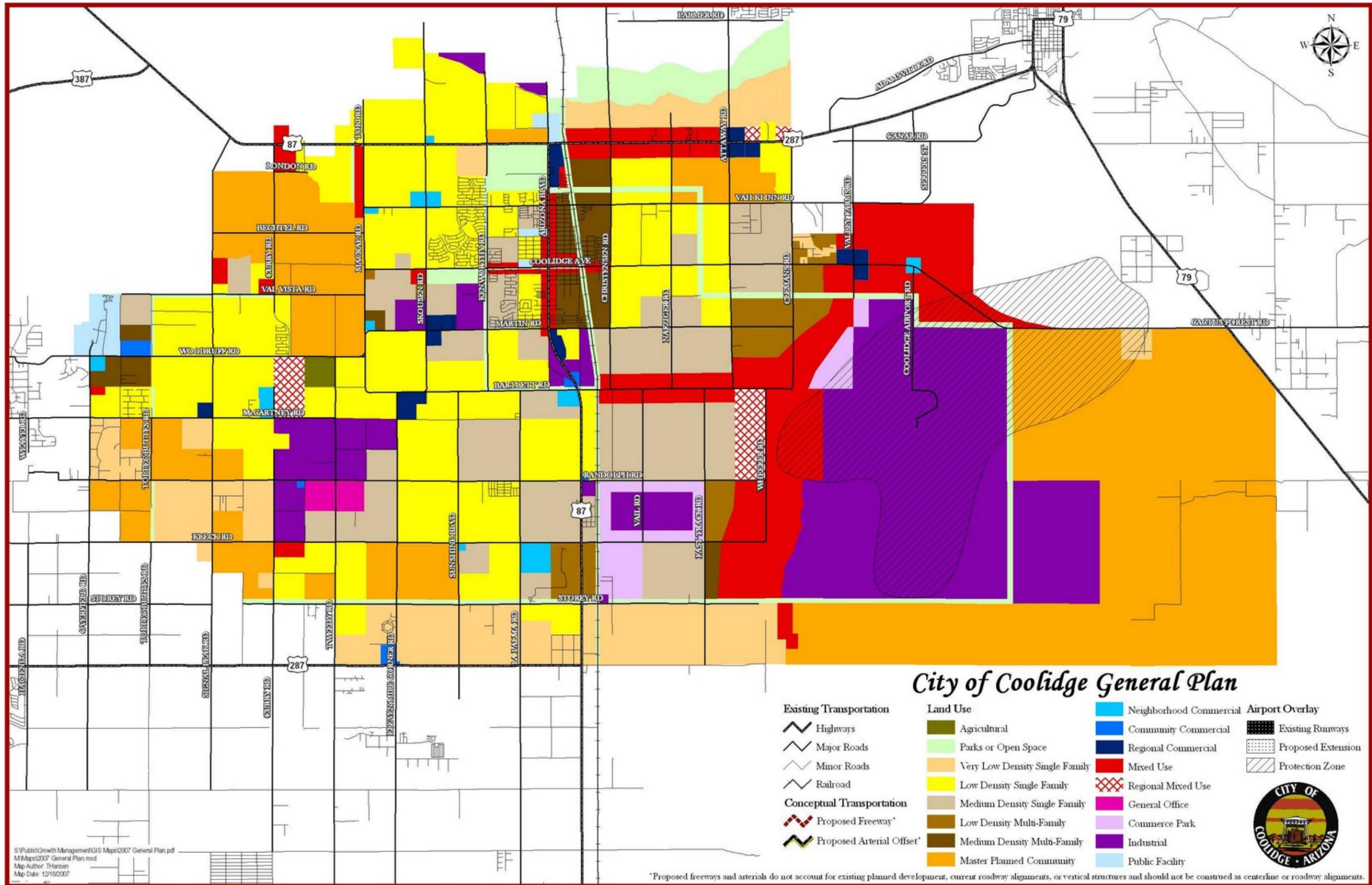
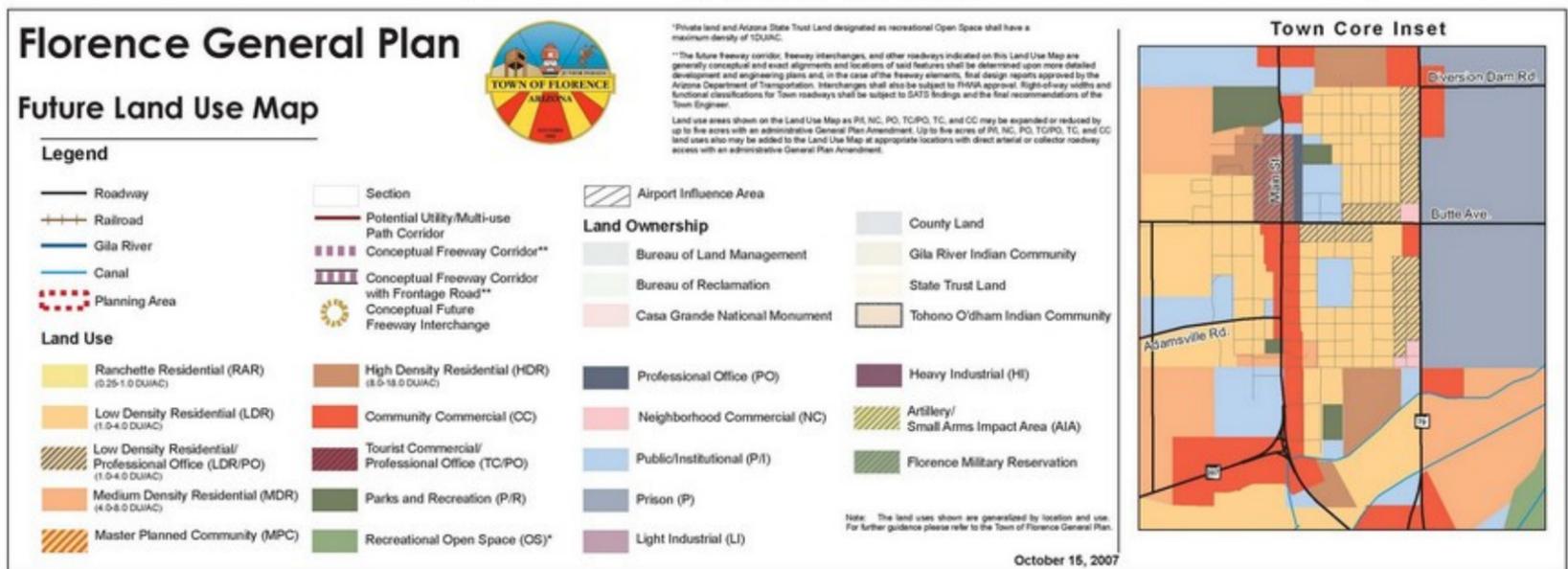
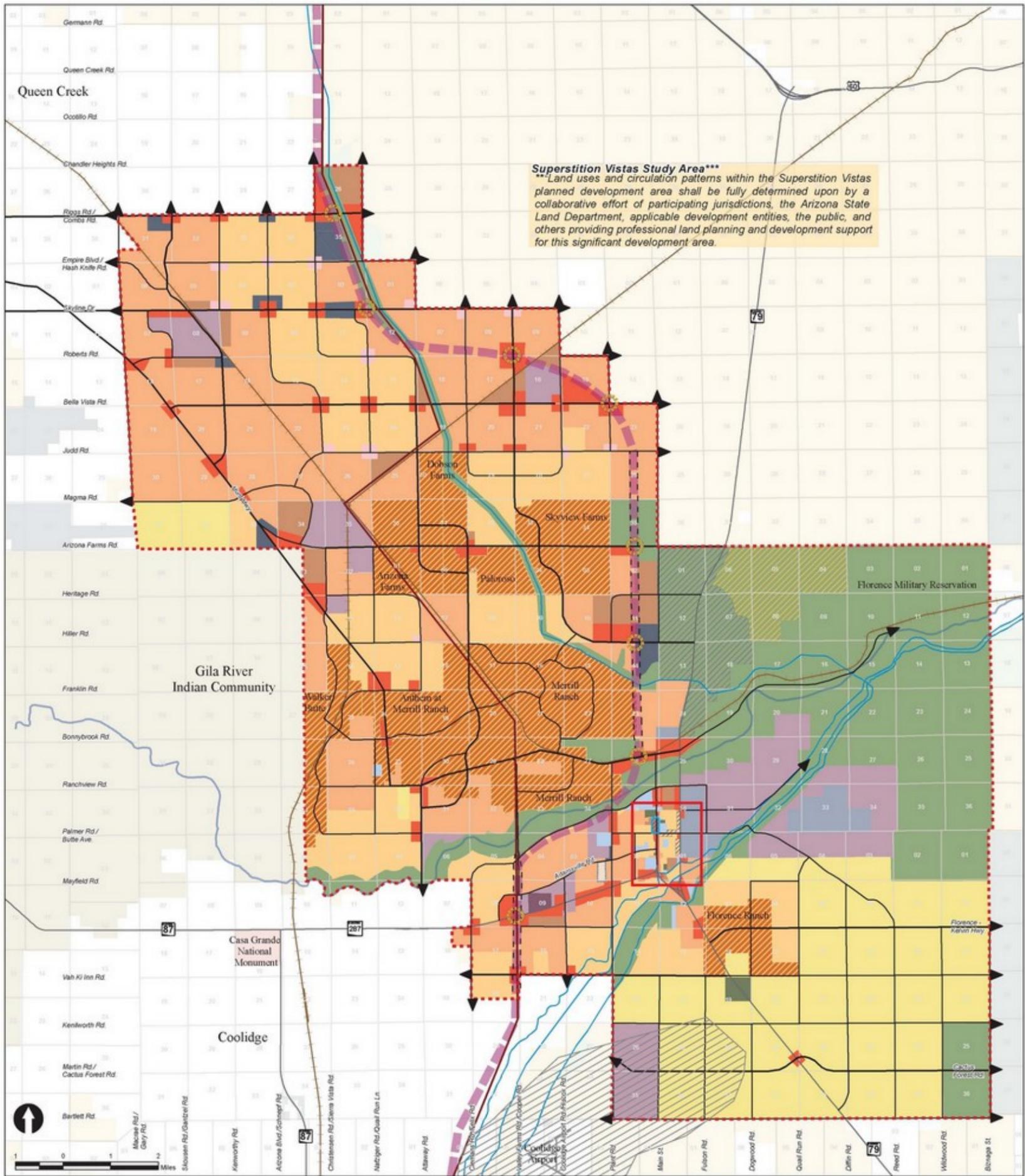
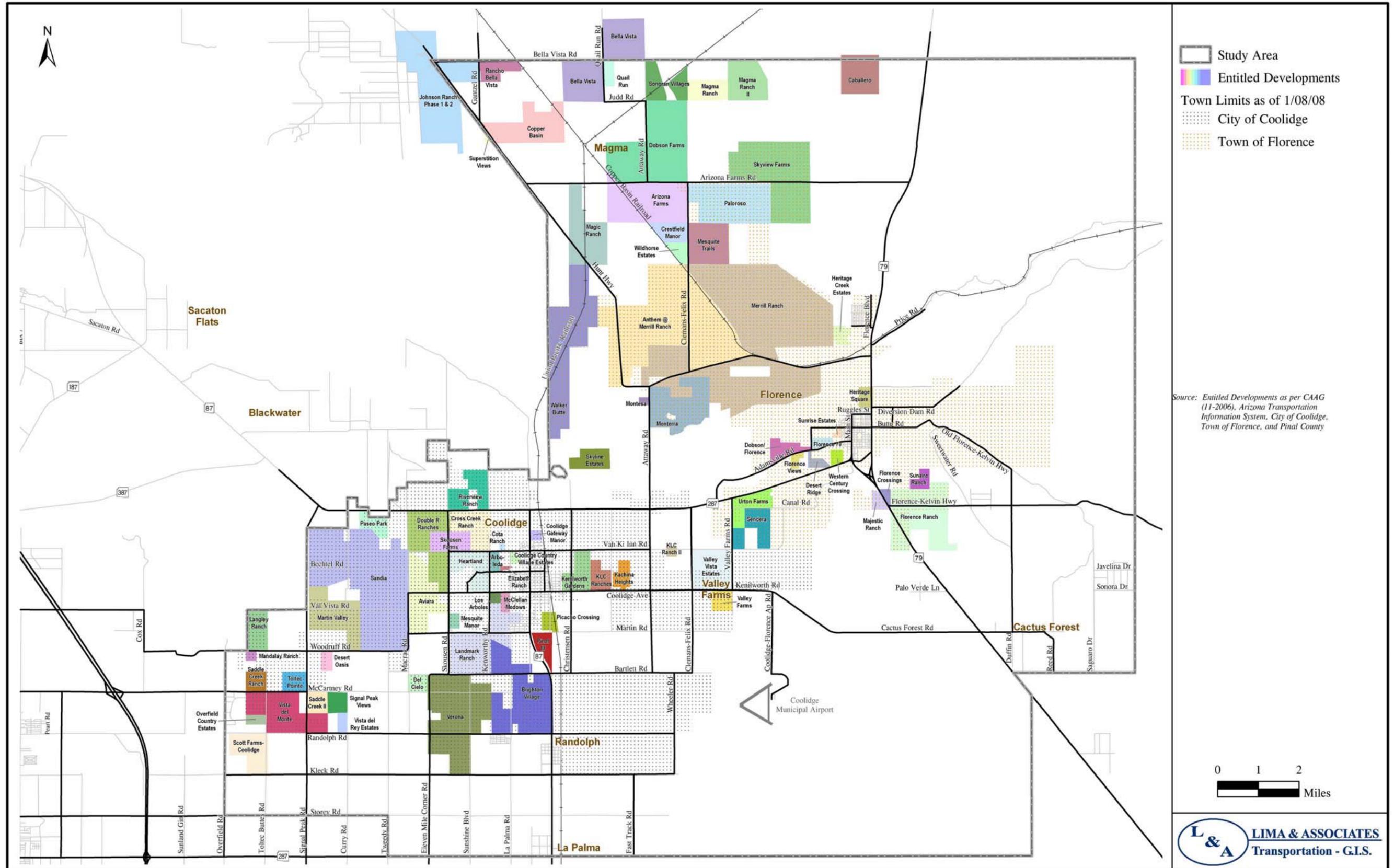


FIGURE 3-9. FLORENCE LAND USE PLAN



Source: Town of Florence General Plan

FIGURE 3-10. PROPOSED AND ENTITLED DEVELOPMENTS



Florence Planned Area Development

Figure 3-10 includes the known developments in the Florence area. About 27 square miles are entitled for development with 78,433 planned dwelling units. A density of roughly 2,905 units per square mile is planned. Actual build out numbers might be as much as 20 percent lower than the planned gross density.

Established residential areas are located primarily between SR 79 and Main Street together with outlying low-density development such as the Cactus Forest community. Other particular residential uses include the Desert Gardens RV Park, a 174 RV lot on 142 acres that is located in the Cactus Forest area; Caliente Casa De Sol RV Park; and the Florence Gardens Mobile Home development. Florence Gardens is an adult community located west of SR 79 approximately 3 miles north of Florence downtown and consists of 857 properties that are owned on an individual basis.

Florence National Guard Military Range

Florence National Guard Military Range (FMR) is located north of Florence, covers over 40 square miles, and is bisected by SR 79. The FMR is managed by the Arizona Army National Guard in cooperation with other state and federal agencies. The military reservation is home to artillery and small-arms training ranges. Camp Florence is the main training site for the Arizona Army National Guard, primarily for weekend and two-week annual training periods. A multiple use policy allows for cattle grazing, hunting, camping, birding, and other outdoor recreation, as well as military training. On-range firing and artillery targets are limited to federal land on the southern part of the military reservation.

CURRENT TRANSPORTATION CONDITIONS

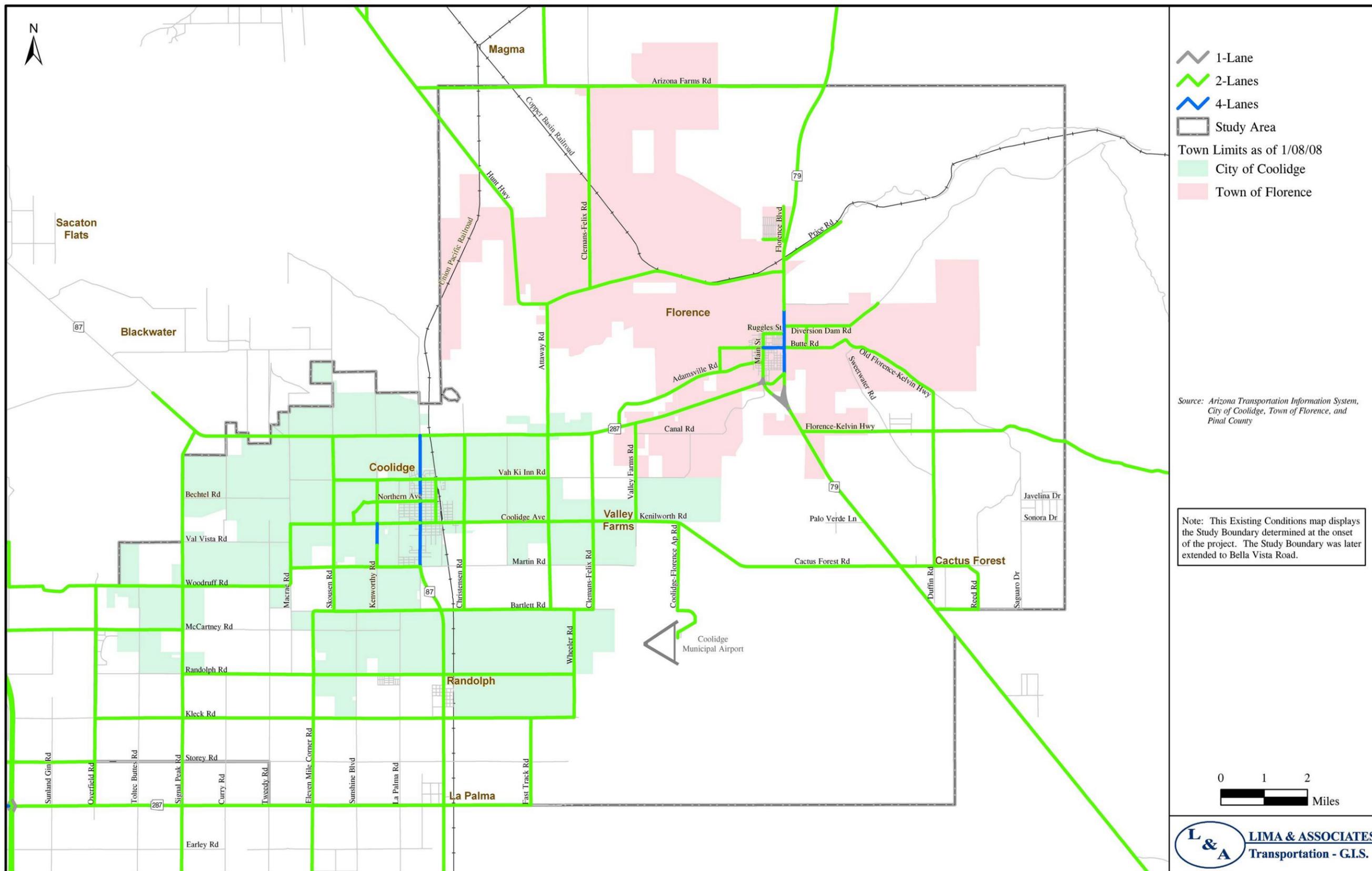
This section presents the current multimodal transportation conditions in the regional study area. Roadway conditions are described first including the road network, road characteristics, road and bridge conditions, traffic characteristics and conditions, and crash history. Next, current multimodal facilities and services are discussed including transit service; rail facilities; airport conditions; and aviation statistics, and bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian facilities.

CURRENT ROADWAY NETWORK

The current regional roadway network is illustrated in Figure 3-11. The study area is served by Interstate 10 and three state routes: SR 87, SR 287, and SR 79.

Interstate 10, which runs north and south to the west of the study area, provides connections to Phoenix and Tucson and to places farther to the east and west.

FIGURE 3-11. STUDY AREA ROADWAY NETWORK WITH NUMBER OF LANES



SR 87 provides a connection from Eloy and I-10 northward through the City of Coolidge. North of the Casa Grande Ruins, SR 87 turns westward into the Gila River Indian Community and provides a link northward to Mesa and the Phoenix Metropolitan Area.

SR 287 Begins in Casa Grande traveling eastward and intersects with SR 87 at the community of La Palma. From La Palma, the route designation is shared with SR 87 to the T intersection north of Coolidge, with SR 87 traveling westward and SR 287 traveling eastward to Florence.

SR 79 connects SR 77 at Oracle Junction with US 60 at Florence Junction. The road is name Pinal Pioneer Parkway between Florence and Oracle Junction. Within Florence, SR 79 is also called Pinal Parkway Avenue.

SR 79B is a business loop within Florence along portions of Main Street and Butte Avenue.

Other regionally significant roadways serving the study area include Hunt Highway, which connects the Town of Florence with Queen Creek to the northwest, Arizona Farms Road, which traverses the northern portion of the study area and connects SR 79 with Hunt Highway, Attaway Road, which runs due south from Hunt Highway through the eastern portion of the City of Coolidge, and Signal Peak Road, which runs south from SR 87 through the western portion of Coolidge.

Existing Roadway Network in Florence

SR 287 and SR 79 provide regional highway access as well as act as arterials for the Town. Business SR 79 links SR 79 to Main Street. Access to I-10 is provided to the west via SR 287/SR 87/SR 387 and to the south via SR 287/SR 87. Collector streets include Main Street, Butte Avenue, and Kenilworth/Cactus Forest Road. Hunt Highway diagonally connects to areas northwest of the Town. Street edges in many locations throughout the Town are not clearly defined. For example, there is often no clear distinction between driveways and streets. Although sidewalks are located in the Town Core and other sections of the Town, sidewalks are often not continuous or wide enough. Traffic signals are located at the intersections of Main Street and Butte Avenue and SR 79 and Butte Avenue. North of Butte, Main Street exhibits a genuine frontier ambiance, with covered sidewalks and a narrow cross-section. This area of Florence contains many historic buildings and sites, including the old and new County Court Houses.

Existing Roadway Network in Coolidge

The City of Coolidge developed as a fairly compact community along State Route 87 with the majority of commercial development and community facilities within a few blocks of the roadway, also known as Arizona Boulevard. North of the core area at a T intersection, SR 87 travels west and north to connections with I-10 and to the Phoenix metropolitan area, and SR 287 travels east to Florence.

The majority of existing development is located between Coolidge Avenue and SR 287 bordered to the west by 9th Street and to the east by the Union Pacific Railroad. Other new developments are being constructed north of Vah Ki Inn Road and new developments are currently being built west of the established town site at Kenilworth and Kenworthy Roads.

Major characteristics of SR 87/Arizona Boulevard are:

- State Route with four lane cross section with center left-turn lane through town
- Traffic signals at intersections with SR 287, Vah Ki Inn Road, Northern Avenue, Central Avenue, Wal-Mart, and Coolidge Avenue
- Sidewalk exists along SR 87, but no bicycle provisions
- Multiple access points provide direct access to individual parcels
- Increasing traffic volumes
- Big box retail development planned for the north-east corner of SR 287 and SR 87

The residential neighborhoods east and west of SR 87 are mostly laid out in a grid pattern of local and collector streets providing connectivity and access to individual properties. Some of the local streets are in need of pavement rehabilitation and/or striping. No connected pedestrian or bicycle system exists within the residential areas and many areas are lacking precautionary safety structures. Sidewalks are not required and are not found in many neighborhoods. Crosswalks are present in several areas surrounding schools and other major intersections, but improvements and additional pedestrian facilities are needed within the city.

Roadway Characteristics

Two lane roads comprise the majority of road mileage in the study area, 206 miles, as shown in Figure 3-11. Table 3-8 summarizes study area road mileage by current characteristics.

TABLE 3-8. SUMMARY OF STUDY AREA ROAD CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Miles	Percent
Two Lane	197.6	95.9
Four Lane	5.4	2.6
Total	206.0	100.0
Paved	168.7	81.9
Unpaved	37.3	18.1
Total	206.0	100.0

BRIDGE CONDITION

For every bridge, a *Sufficiency rating* is provided documenting the condition of each structure. The Sufficiency Rating is based on FHWA’s Recording and Coding Guide for the Structure Inventory and Appraisal of the Nation’s Bridges. ADOT’s bridge rehabilitation program

weighs structural adequacy, safety, serviceability, and essentiality for public use, which is indicative of a bridge's sufficiency to remain in service. Sufficiency Ratings range from zero to 100. Structures with ratings greater than 80 are sufficient. If a bridge has a sufficiency rating between 50 and 80 points the structure is eligible for rehabilitation or replacement if financially justifiable. Bridges with a rating below 50 are eligible for replacement or rehabilitation.

Table 3-9 presents the bridge condition ratings provided by ADOT's Bridge Management system. Bridge structures with a sufficiency rating of 80 or lower are listed.

TABLE 3-9. EXISTING BRIDGES IN STUDY AREA WITH SUFFICIENCY RATING OF 80 OR LOWER

Agency Name	Route MP.	Year Built	Bridge Length Ft.	Bridge Width Ft.	Feature Under Bridge	Feature on Bridge	Location of Bridge	Sufficiency Rating
ADOT	125.03	1940	32	32.4	Wash	SR 79	9.2 mi S Jct SR 287	67.0
ADOT	126.82	1946	37	32.2	Wash	SR 79	7.4 mi S Jct SR 287	65.5
ADOT	127.43	1946	64	32.7	Wash	SR 79	6.8 mi S Jct SR 287	69.3
ADOT	129.17	1946	21	32.6	Wash	SR 79	5.0 mi S Jct SR 287	68.5
ADOT	135.54	1957	1507	35.0	Gila River	SR 79	1.5 mi North Jct SR 287/79	66.4
ADOT	129.80	1931	200	35.2	McClellan Wash	SR 87	03.9 mi N Jct SR 287	77.8
ADOT	133.98	1928	44	76.6	Pima Lateral Canal	SR 87	0.3 mi South of Jct SR 87	60.7
ADOT	138.07	1962	29	0.0	Wash	IRR SR 287	5.9 mi West Jct SR 79	80.0
Coolidge	0.00	1900	43	24.5	Pima Lateral Canal	Christensen Rd.	0.75 mi South of SR 287	S 24.3
Coolidge	0.00	1935	43	23.4	Pima Lateral Canal	Skousen Rd.	100 ft South of SR 87	F 57.5

S - Structurally Obsolete; F = Functionally Obsolete, Shading denotes bridges that are insufficient.

Source: ADOT Bridge Management Section

TRAFFIC CHARACTERISTICS

Average daily traffic volumes for roads in the study area are shown in Figure 3-12. Conducting traffic counts on every segment of every major roadway each year is not feasible. Figure 3-12 displays counts taken for the Arizona Transportation Information System (ATIS) during 2000, 2004, 2005, and 2006. The ADT values shown next to each roadway segment are color-coded by the year the count for that segment was conducted, as shown in the legend.

The highest traffic volumes in the study area occur on portions of the State Highways. For example, the 2004 daily traffic volumes were 10,436 vpd on SR 287 between SR 87 and Attaway Road, 13,785 vpd on SR 87 south of SR 287 in Coolidge, and 5,271 vpd on SR 79 north of Hunt Highway in Florence. In the developed areas of the City of Coolidge, (See Inset 1), traffic volumes ranged from 813 vpd on Northern Avenue in 2005 to 15,763 vpd on SR 87 in 2004. In the Town of Florence (See Inset 2), daily traffic volumes were 9,500 vpd on Main Street and 6,455 vpd on Butte Avenue in 2004, and 2,380 vpd on 5th Street in 2005. Lower traffic volumes occur on the more rural roads in the study area.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Level of service (LOS) is a qualitative measure of traffic operations stated in terms of factors such as speed, travel time, freedom to maneuver, traffic interruptions, comfort, convenience, and safety. Level of service ranges from LOS A to LOS F, where LOS A represents unrestricted traffic flow and LOS F represents a severely congested traffic condition. In an urban area, the acceptable level of service is generally LOS C/D or better. Table 3-10 presents the criteria used for determining level of service based on volume-to-capacity ratio. As the ratio of daily traffic volume increases, the level of service experienced by drivers deteriorates until it exceeds the road capacity and bottlenecks occur.

TABLE 3-10. LEVEL OF SERVICE CRITERIA

LOS	Maximum V/C
A	0.29
B	0.54
C	0.75
D	0.90
E	1.00
F	> 1.00

Source: Transportation Research Board,
Highway Capacity Manual

The LOS was estimated for road segments where traffic volume data was available as shown in Figure 3-13. Currently, most of the road segments are operating at LOS B or better. Road segments with LOS C occur in Coolidge along SR 87/287 north of Gibson Avenue and again north of Northern Avenue.

FIGURE 3-12. AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC VOLUMES

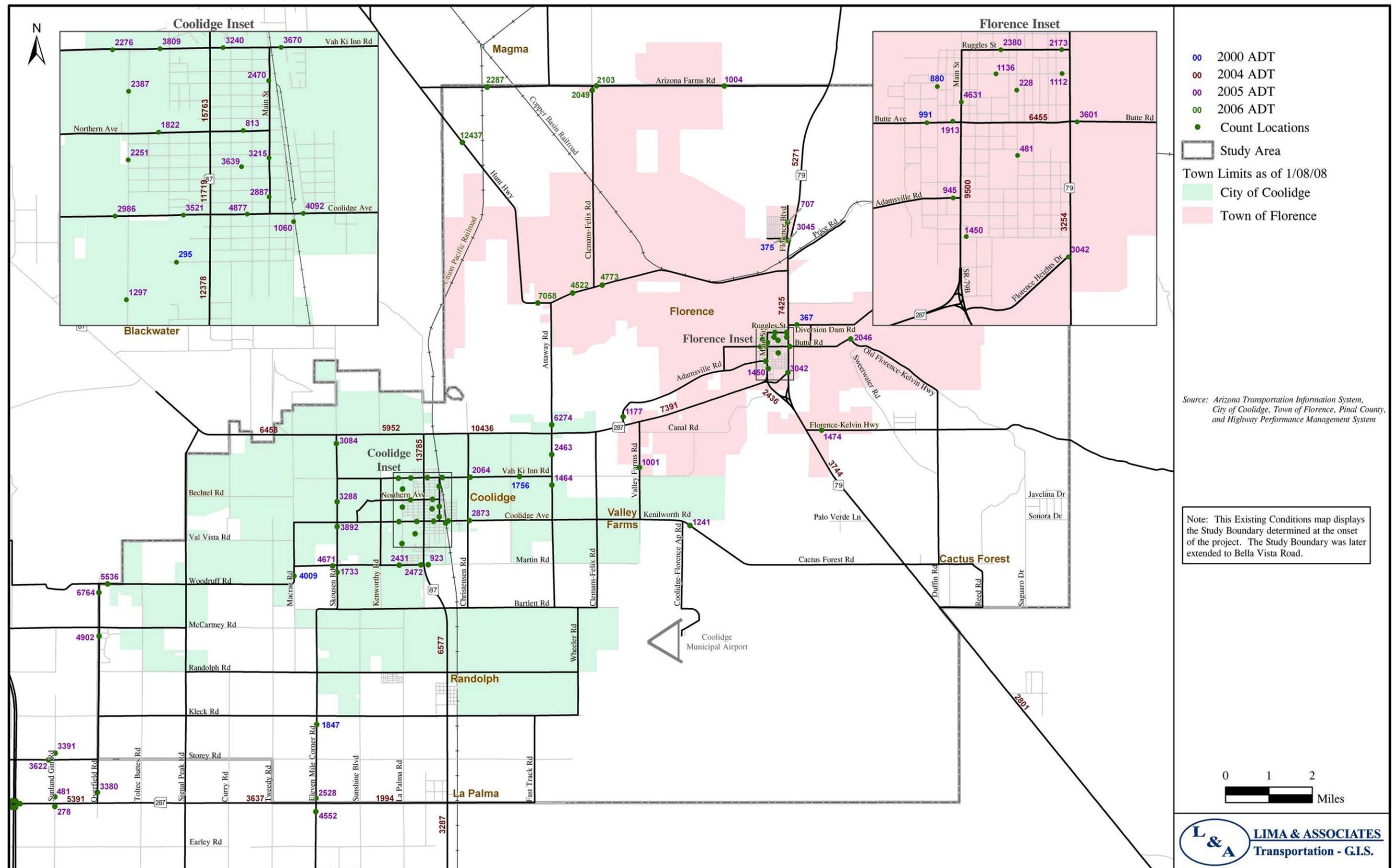
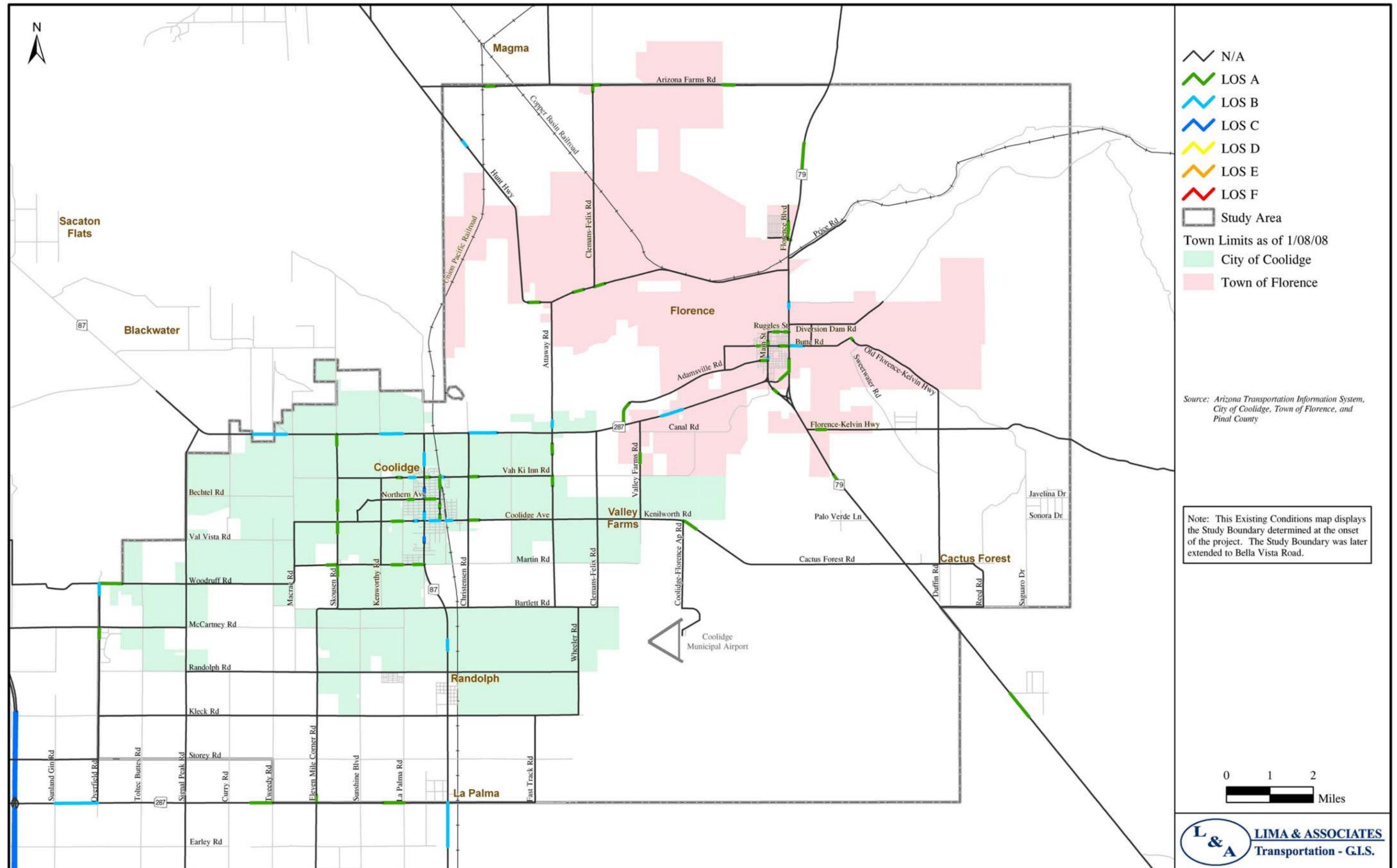


FIGURE 3-13. LEVEL OF SERVICE



CRASH ANALYSIS

Table 3-11 presents a summary of the traffic crashes over a 5-Year history, see Figure 3-14. The first harmful definition is the first action that causes damage to a motor vehicle, its occupants, a pedestrian, or a fixed object. Over a third of the crashes were single vehicle crashes.

Intersection-related Crashes

Note that over half the crashes took place at or near intersections or involved driveway access.

Violations Issued as a Result of Crashes

In over 20 percent of the crashes, a driver was cited for “speed too fast for conditions” or for “failure to yield right-of-way.” Over 17 percent of the drivers were cited for inattention.

MULTIMODAL CONDITIONS

This section presents a summary of existing public transportation services within and in the vicinity of the City of Coolidge and the Town of Florence. Included are intercity bus services, taxicabs, and medical and human services providers as well as pedestrian and bicycle modes.

Area Public Transportation

The City of Coolidge is the only community in Pinal County that currently operates a local transit system. In addition, several taxicab and shuttle services based in Casa Grande serve the area.

Coolidge Cotton Express

The Cotton Express operated by the City of Coolidge provides both deviated fixed route and dial-a-ride services. The deviated fixed route operates Monday through Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., and makes a total of 46 scheduled stops. The stops are strategically placed throughout the City; all stops receive service at least once an hour and major businesses are served twice hourly. The route includes East and West Loops and is designed to pass within two blocks of most homes within Coolidge. However, the bus will deviate from the route to pick up or drop off dial-a-ride eligible passengers.

The dial-a-ride provides curb-to-curb service Monday through Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Dial-a-ride eligible passengers include persons over the age of 55 as well as persons having a disability that precludes their walking more than two blocks to a bus stop.

TABLE 3-11. SUMMARY OF TRAFFIC CRASH DATA

Relationship to Intersection	Crashes	Percentage
Intersection	594	42.76%
Non-Intersection Relation	656	47.23%
Driveway Access	132	9.50%
Alley Intersection	6	0.43%
Not Reported	1	0.07%
Total	1389	100.00%

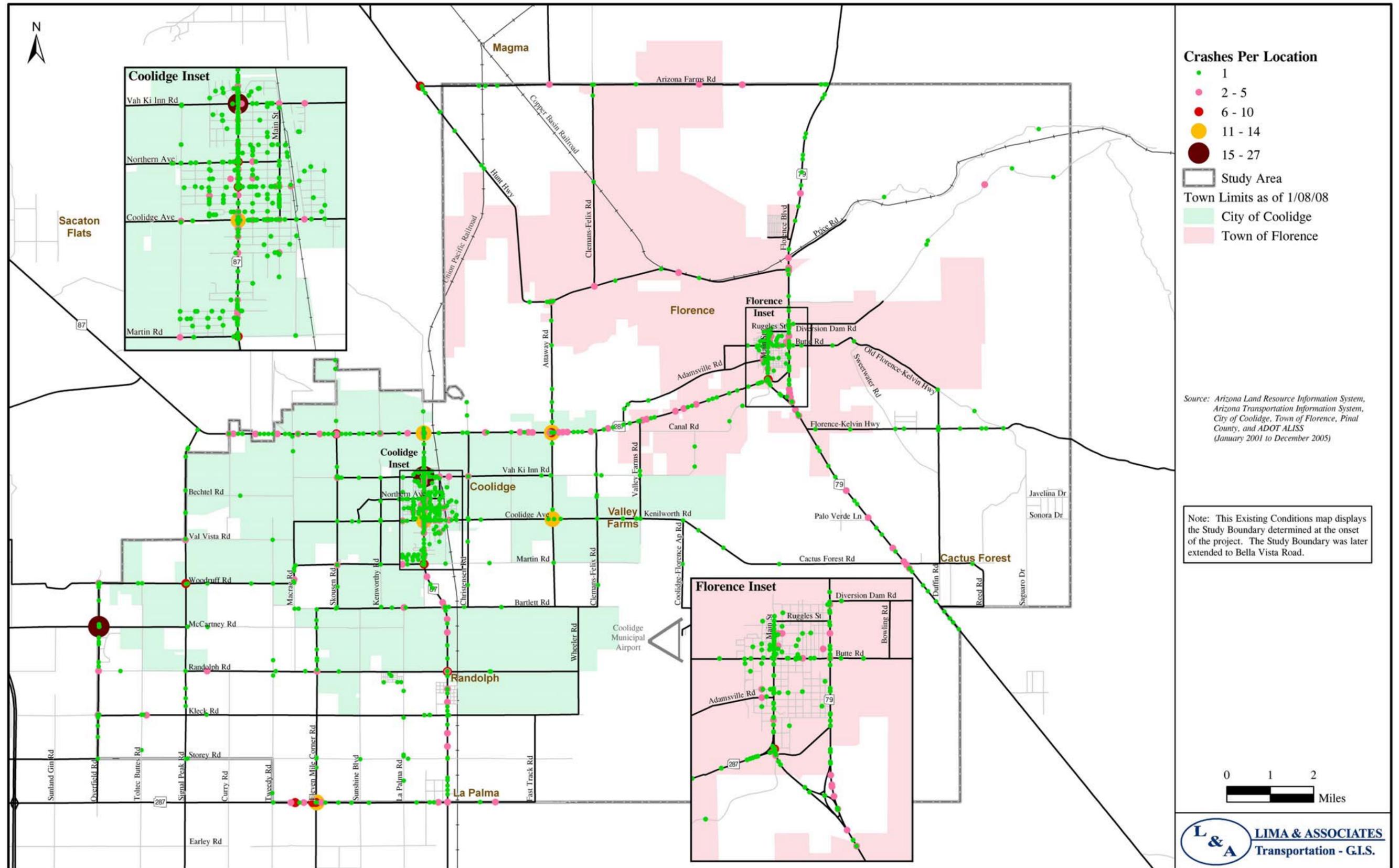
First Harmful Definition	Crashes	Percentage
Overturning	106	7.63%
Collision with other Motor Vehicle	947	68.18%
Collision with Pedestrian	17	1.22%
Collision with Pedalcyclist	10	0.72%
Collision with Animal or Livestock	30	2.16%
Collision with Fixed Object	208	14.97%
Miscellaneous	71	5.11%
Total	1389	100.00%

Crash Type	Crashes	Percentage
Single Vehicle	499	35.93%
Angle	298	21.45%
Backing	75	5.40%
Head-On	11	0.79%
Left Turn	59	4.25%
Non-Contact (mc)	1	0.07%
Non-Contact (not mc)	1	0.07%
Other	44	3.17%
Rear-End	255	18.36%
Sideswipe (Opposite Direction)	22	1.58%
Sideswipe (Same Direction)	108	7.78%
U-Turn	15	1.08%
Not Reported	1	0.07%
Total	1389	100.00%

Injury Severity	Crashes	Percentage
Non-injury Accident	806	58.03%
Non-incapacitating Injury Accident	183	13.17%
Unknown	90	6.48%
Incapacitating Injury Accident	89	6.41%
Possible Injury Accident	191	13.75%
Fatal Accidents	29	2.09%
Not Reported	1	0.07%
Total	1389	100.00%

Source: ALISS Database for ADOT (January 2001 – December 2005).

FIGURE 3-14. CRASHES PER LOCATION



The City of Coolidge encourages dial-a-ride passengers to call at least one-hour ahead of any scheduled appointments.

Fares for the deviated fixed route are \$1.25 per ride for adults, \$.75 for children aged 3 through 11, and free for children aged 2 and under. Dial-a-ride fares are \$1.50 per ride for all. The service is funded in part by matching funds obtained from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311 program for rural and small urban area transit. This program is administered in Arizona by ADOT.

In fiscal 2005—from September 2004 through August of 2005—the Cotton Express carried over 23,000 passengers. The previous year 21,600 persons were carried. The system operates a fleet of five vehicles, one of which is needed to protect the deviated fixed route service and one of which is used for the dial-a-ride pick-ups. The other three are used as back-ups. Schools in Coolidge do not operate school buses, and students comprise 50 percent of the Cotton Express ridership. Four vehicles are needed during the afternoon “after-school” rush between 2:30 pm and 4:00 pm.

The Cotton Express is the only existing transit operation in Pinal County that receives FTA Section 5311. During the course of this study, the feasibility of applying Section 5311 funds to the operation of additional systems within the County, possibly in conjunction with LTAF II funds for which both the County and local jurisdictions are eligible, will be examined.

Casa Grande-Based Taxicabs and Shuttle Services

No taxicab or airport shuttle services are based in Coolidge or Florence. However, four companies are listed in the telephone directory as available to provide either airport shuttle or taxicab service to patrons in both communities. Table 3-12 lists the companies.

TABLE 3-12. CASA GRANDE-BASED TAXICABS AND SHUTTLE SERVICES

Company Name	Location	Phone	Service Provided	
			Taxicab	Shuttle
A-1 Delivery Service	1201 E. Delta Pine Avenue Casa Grande	520-705-0465		■
Casa Grande Cab & Shuttle Service	320 W. 9th Street Casa Grande	520-421-9600	■	
J & M VIP & Shuttle Service, Inc.	110 E. First Street Casa Grande	520-426-3937	■	■
Pinal Connections	320 W. 9th Street Casa Grande	520-426-1914	■	■

Source: Qwest

Special Needs Transit Services

Agencies and commercial operators of special needs transit serving Pinal County are summarized in Table 3-13. Included in this category are services provided to seniors, services provided to persons who are physically or mentally impaired, and services to mobility-limited persons requiring periodic medical treatment such as dialysis. Sources of funding include the FTA Section 5310 funds for special needs services, the Arizona DES, the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), and private health insurance providers.

TABLE 3-13. SPECIAL NEEDS PROVIDERS SUMMARY

Provider	Description of Service	Funding Sources
Non-Profit FTA Section 5310 Participants		
Palm Villa Adult Day Health	Serves seniors and persons with disabilities in Coolidge area Monday through Thursday from 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FTA Section 5310
Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens	Provides a variety of services to seniors in Gila and Pinal Counties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FTA Section 5310
Town of Florence (Dorothy Nolan Senior Center)	Serves seniors in Florence and Coolidge Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town of Florence FTA Section 5310
Horizon Human Services	Serves psychiatric and/or developmentally disabled, some of whom are seniors, within a 45 mile radius of Casa Grande Monday-Friday 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arizona Department of Health Services Pinal-Gila Behavioral Health Association Arizona DES Rehab. Services Administration AZ Long Term Care AHCCCS* FTA Section 5310 Admin. Ofc. of Court
Catholic Community Services	Serves seniors in Eloy/Toltec, Coolidge, Casa Grande, Arizona City Eleven Mile Corner, Valley Farms, Twilight Trails, Florence, and Randolph. Operates Monday-Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 or 2:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pinal-Gila Council for Senior Citizens
Other Non-Profit Providers		
Garnet of Casa Grande Retirement and Assisted Living Community	Serves seniors who are assisted living eligible within a 15 mile radius of Casa Grande Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Sunday 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Residential fees
Central Arizona Council on Developmental Disabilities	Serves seniors and persons with disabilities Monday-Sunday 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.	NA
Casa Grande Community Hospital	Transports hospital patients within a 25-30 miles radius of Casa Grande Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday 8:00 a.m. to noon, and Sunday as needed	NA
Central Arizona College	Provides demand-response service for students and seniors Statewide mostly evening and weekends for athletic events and field trips	Fare revenue
Pinal County Schools	Students Countywide Monday-Friday	

TABLE 3-13. SPECIAL NEEDS PROVIDERS SUMMARY (Continued)

Provider	Description of Service	Funding Sources
Commercial Transportation Operators		
Safe Ride Services	provides non-emergency medical transportation services Countywide Monday-Sunday	AHCCCS, other health insurance providers, patients
Statewide Express	Provides non-emergency medical transportation for AHCCCS or private health maintenance plan clients Countywide Monday-Sunday	AHCCCS, other health insurance providers, patients
J&M Shuttle	Provides countywide taxi service, shuttle service to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, and non-emergency medical services to AHCCCS clients Monday-Sunday	Fare revenue, AHCCCS
Pinal Connections	Provides countywide shuttle service to Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport, and non-emergency medical services to AHCCCS clients Monday-Sunday	Fare revenue, AHCCCS
On the Go Express	Countywide Monday-Sunday	NA
Long Term Care	Countywide Monday-Sunday	NA

*LTAF = Local Transportation Assistance Fund; AHCCCS = Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System
Sources: RAE Consultants, Lima & Associates, and AHCCCS

Pinal County Transportation Coordination Demonstration Project

A Pinal County Transportation Coordination Demonstration Project, “Pinal Rides”, sponsored by ADOT is being conducted to identify ways in which the operations of existing transit service providers in the area can be coordinated to achieve higher levels of service to users. This project is discussed in more detail in the Public Transportation Chapter.

Inter-city Bus Service

Greyhound provides fixed-route bus service through Pinal County along Interstate 10, operating schedules between Phoenix and Tucson. Since 2000, however, the amount of intercity bus service the County receives has been sharply reduced. In 2000, Greyhound operated four northbound trips and three southbound trips per day that served Casa Grande; three trips in each direction also served Eloy.

Currently, Greyhound operates only two trips each way per day that serve Casa Grande, and service to Eloy has been eliminated. As of June 14, 2006, the one-way fare for travel between Casa Grande and Phoenix was \$15.50; the round trip fare was \$31.00. The fare for a one-way trip between Casa Grande and Tucson was \$16.50; the round trip fare was \$33.00. Discount one-way fares are available for seniors and children.

In addition to Greyhound, several bus lines catering to the Hispanic communities in Phoenix and Tucson operate between those cities along I-10. However, none of these operators makes any stops in Pinal County.

Another intercity service is the Douglas Shuttle, which operates six trips daily in each direction between Douglas, Phoenix, and Tucson, that will stop in Casa Grande to pick-up or drop off passengers if arrangements have been made in advance.

Rail Service

The Union Pacific Railroad Phoenix Branch traverses Coolidge from North to South, connecting the metropolitan Phoenix area with the UP main line at Picacho. Approximately seven freight trains per day operate over this line in each direction.

The line through Coolidge was originally constructed by the Southern Pacific as a secondary main line and was opened in 1926. The route originally traveled northwest from Coolidge through Chandler to Mesa, turning due west at Mesa to proceed through Tempe, Phoenix, and Buckeye. At Buckeye, the line curved to the southwest, rejoining the southern main line at Wellton, east of Yuma. In 1962, a portion of the segment between Coolidge and Chandler was removed and a new connection was laid between Coolidge and Magma Junction to the northeast—Phoenix-bound trains now travel through Queen Creek and Gilbert instead of Chandler.

Passenger trains traveled this route until June 2, 1996, when an 80-mile portion of the line between Arlington, west of Buckeye, and Roll, east of Wellton, was taken out of service. Since that time, the line has been operated as a branch. Amtrak was re-routed over the main line and stops at Maricopa.

The UP maintains team tracks at Coolidge where rail cars are spotted so that rail customers may load or unload freight. Union Pacific is experiencing significant growth in the volume of rail freight carried and is currently evaluating the possibility of re-opening the line between Wellton and Phoenix.

The Copper Basin Railway, Inc. (CBRY) operates through the Town of Florence on the North bank of the Gila River. The CBRY provides rail freight service between a connection with the Union Pacific Railroad at Magma Junction, northwest of Florence, and Winkelman, a distance of 54 miles. The Railway is headquartered in Hayden. Rail freight carried by the CBRY includes copper concentrates, refined copper, sulfuric acid, lumber, and military equipment. At Hayden, the CBRY connects with the San Manuel Arizona Railroad (SMA) and has been carrying rail freight traffic from the SMA to the UP at Magma Junction. The smelter at San Manuel was dismantled, and the SMA is not currently operating. However some discussion concerning the establishment of new rail-served industries in the San Manuel area has taken place.

The CBRY operates 12 trains each day, 10 of which operate locally in the Hayden-Ray Junction area east of Florence, and two of which operate through to Magma Junction. Several of the new residential developments in the Florence area abut the Railway, raising some safety and operations issues. The developers have requested the expansion of the two existing highway rail crossings at Felix Road and Arizona Farms Road, both of which are programmed

to be widened to seven lanes. Two new at-grade crossings for roadways yet identified have also been requested. Area residents have also created several unauthorized improvised rail crossings.

Aviation

The closest commercial airport to the study area is Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, 35 miles north, where Vision Airlines implemented passenger service in the spring of 2006 with flights to Downtown Las Vegas. Allegiant Airlines started service to Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport in fall 2007 with trips to 13 destinations throughout the United States. By 2020, the airport forecasts that it will be handling approximately eight percent of all the commercial airline operations in the metropolitan Phoenix area. Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport is 54 miles northwest of Coolidge and 62 miles northwest of Florence. Note that the current drive times between Coolidge and either Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport or Sky Harbor are roughly the same because of the freeways that serve Sky Harbor. However, future freeways are planned to connect the Coolidge area with the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport area. Both Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and Sky Harbor are adjacent to the Union Pacific rail line, and future implementation of commuter rail service could facilitate making connections at either airport.

Coolidge Municipal Airport

The principal general aviation facility in the study area is the Coolidge Municipal Airport, which was originally constructed as an air transport command base in the early 1940s and was used as an auxiliary operating base for Williams Field during World War II. In 1950, the facility was transferred to Pinal County; ownership was transferred to the City in 1959. Military aircraft training was conducted at the airport until 1992. The airport is an active general aviation facility; a fixed-base operator, Coolidge Aviation, LLC, provides fuel and performs minor maintenance for small aircraft. Firefighting planes operate from the airport and training facilities are also located at the airport. Facilities include training of paratroopers by the Department of Defense, as well as private parachute and sky-diving lessons. Key statistics for the airport are shown in Table 3-14.

TABLE 3-14. COOLIDGE AIRPORT STATISTICS

Elevation above sea level	1574 ft.
Runway dimensions (length x width)	
Runway 5/23	5528 x 150 ft.
Runway 17/35	3861 x 75 ft.
Annual aircraft operations:	
Transient general aviation	2,470
Local general aviation	3,970
Military	2,470
Total	6,490

Source: ADOT, Aeronautics Division, Coolidge Aviation, LLC

Non-motorized Transportation – Bicycle, Equestrian Pedestrian

Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Currently no continuous system of pedestrian or bicycle facilities exists within either Coolidge or Florence limits. An issue of concern is; however, the need for safe pedestrian crossings, especially in light of increased traffic volumes. There is no known trail system within the municipalities. Most trails in current developments do not provide any connectivity to community-wide destinations or between neighboring and adjacent developments. Sidewalks are proposed within the new developments and exist in some areas.

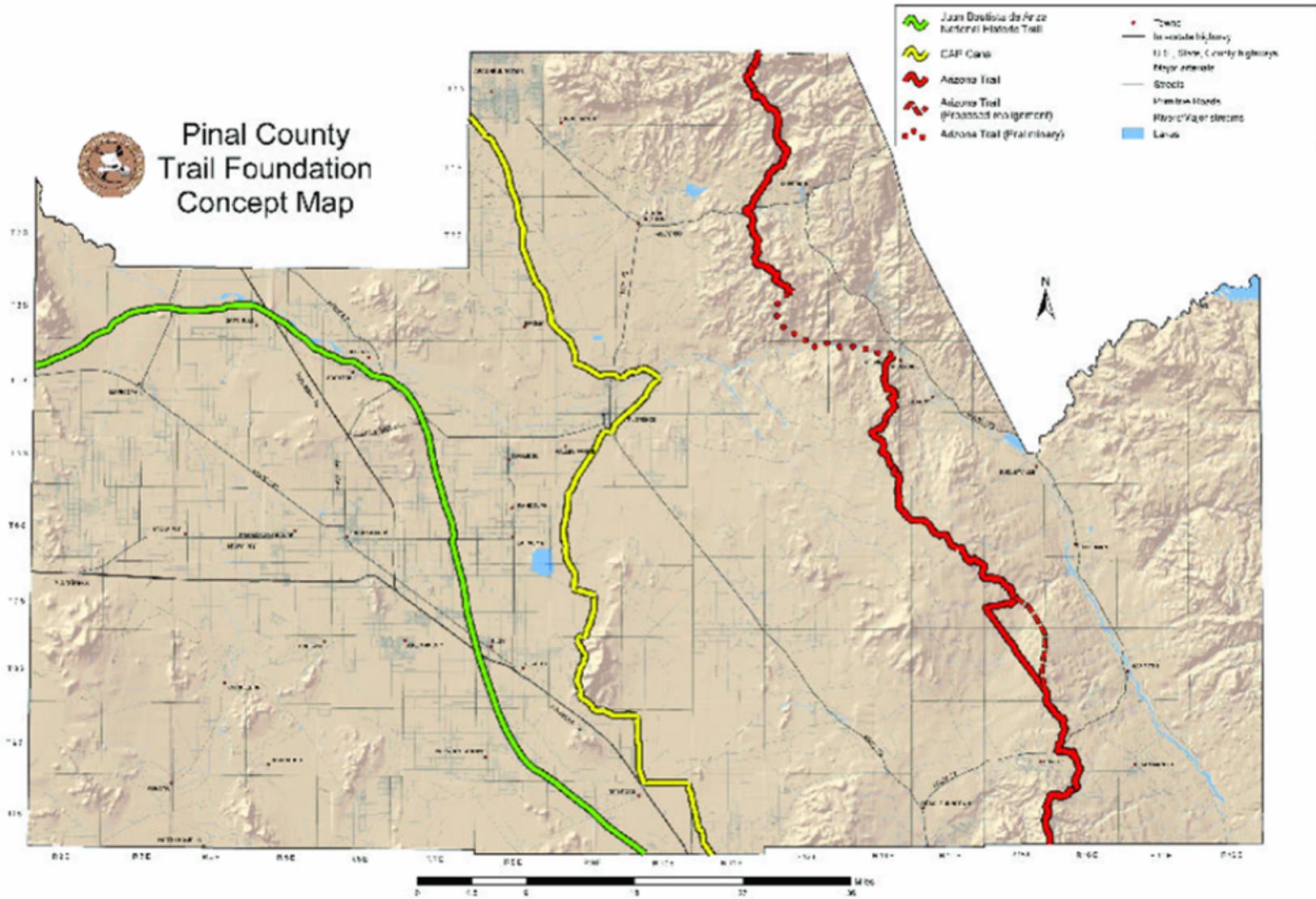
Existing Trails

Three existing trails in the vicinity of the study area include the Arizona Trail, Central Arizona Project Canal, and Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (see Figure 3-15). The Pinal County Trails Plan, May 2005 recommended that the three trail corridors provide the skeletal system from which a more comprehensive trail network will be developed. In addition, The Great Western Trail is a proposed motorized trail that will eventually connect the Mexican and Canadian borders. As noted in Chapter 2, the Pinal County Planning and Development Department has begun work on an Open Space and Trails project to further define the County trail system. The following description of existing and proposed trails in the vicinity of the study area has been taken as written from the Trails Plan.

The Arizona Trail

The Arizona Trail is a 790-mile non-motorized trail that hikers, bikers, and equestrians can use. Through use of existing trails or primitive roads, the Arizona Trail, which connects Utah and Mexico through Arizona, is broken into 43 separate segments. Securing an Arizona State Heritage Fund Trails Grant, working with the Arizona State Land Department to acquire perpetual rights-of-way, and using youth corps crews and volunteers to construct the trail is the primary focus of the County. In partnership with the Arizona Trail Association, Pinal County will soon have all but 3 miles constructed of the approximately 55 miles of trail needed to connect Oracle to the Gila River. The second primary focus will be to complete the approximately 15 miles of trail needed from the Gila River north to the Tonto National Forest. Although primarily located on Bureau of Land Management land, there are several miles that will need to be acquired from State Trust Lands rights-of-way. A statewide Memorandum of Understanding for the Arizona Trail is also being developed that will list Pinal County and all the other contributing counties, agencies, and municipalities as Arizona Trail Partners. This continuing partnership will be beneficial to the County and the communities of Oracle, Dudleyville, Winkelman, Kearny, and Superior as the trail passes through or near these areas. With stopover opportunities being relatively scarce along the long trail, these communities will be critical to trail users as resupply and rest areas.

FIGURE 3-15. EXISTING TRAILS



Source: Pinal County Trails Plan, May 2005

The Central Arizona Project Canal

The CAP canal is a 336-mile-long system of aqueducts, tunnels, pumping plants, and pipelines constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation). As the largest single source of renewable water supplies in the state of Arizona, the CAP canal is designed to bring about 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water per year to municipal and industrial, agricultural, and Native American users. This water delivery system reaches from Lake Havasu to 14 miles south of Tucson.

As part of the planning effort for the CAP canal, Reclamation committed itself to maintaining a 20-foot recreation corridor on the right side of the canal (facing downstream). Reclamation created this corridor by offsetting its security fence 20 feet from the actual property line. Maricopa County has completed a feasibility study along its portion of the CAP canal, which addressed potential alternative alignments and locations of the multiuse path, required additional easements, staging and trailhead access areas, neighborhood access points, wash and street crossings, and linkages to adjacent or nearby recreation areas, open spaces, and/or other trails and pathways. Sections of the trail are being constructed according to this study or as development occur adjacent to the CAP corridor. The 53 miles of CAP canal system located in Maricopa County has also been identified as part of its Regional Trail System. Pima County has established trail development criteria along the CAP canal as well. Its sections of the trail are being constructed by Pima County and by developers of planned communities adjacent to the canal. In 2000, Congress designated the portion of the CAP canal that runs through Pima County as a National Recreational Trail. Pinal County, with over 50 miles of the CAP canal system, can provide not only a quality trail system for the residents of the county, but also an important regional link to both Maricopa and Pima Counties. Conducting a feasibility study and developing trail design standards—before major development occurs along the CAP canal corridor—will help Pinal County eliminate future encroachments, obstacles, crossing barriers, and access issues that currently face Maricopa and Pima Counties.

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

Established by Congress in 1990, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, administered by the National Park Service, preserves the corridor that Juan Bautista de Anza, commander of the Tubac Presidio, used to guide 198 settlers from Mexico to a mission in the San Francisco Bay Area. This 1,200-mile trail followed the Santa Cruz River to Pima Villages along the Gila River and then followed the Gila to its junction with the Colorado River. The trail continues through California before ending around the Bay Area. Over 300 miles of this designated corridor has had the trail reconstructed and signed for nonmotorized use. The majority of the corridor in California has also been established and signed as part of a driving interpretive route, with the Arizona section soon to follow. This concept allows tourist to drive along the corridor on designated roadways while providing interpretive stops along key portions of the historic route. In Arizona, Santa Cruz and Pima Counties are actively securing and constructing portions of the trail within the established corridor. Working with these Counties, the National Park Service, and other interested individuals,