

CHAPTER 5: GROWTH AREAS



Growth Areas Element

The *Growing Smarter/Plus Act* was approved by the Arizona State Legislature and became effective on May 18, 2000. The purpose of the Act is to strengthen the ability of Arizona's communities to plan for growth, acquire and preserve open space, and develop strategies to address growth related pressures. The Act requires cities with populations over 10,000 to include seven elements within the General Plan including a Growth Area Element.

The Growth Area Element of the Plan is used to assist potential developers with an understanding of the current limits of existing City infrastructure, and to help citizens know where to expect future growth.

The City experienced its fastest rate of growth in the last decade when the Phoenix metropolitan area and Pinal County had the second fastest growth rate in the United States. Even though the City went through this period of unprecedented growth, much of the development was a logical extension of the City's infrastructure and the developed part of the City is still somewhat compact and extending outward in a manner that is efficient to service with City programs and resources.

The Growth Areas Element identifies four areas that are defined by suitability for development due to the availability of existing City resources, contrasted by the areas that are less suited for development due to the absence of services and infrastructure. The outer limits of the Growth Area Map is the extent of the City's "Planning Area Boundary". Growth areas are not prohibitive to new development, but simply target development to identified areas that are best served with City infrastructure and programs. In particular, large master planned communities that provide bene-

fits to the City in the form of economic development are encouraged throughout the City planning area with proper planning for important factors such as transportation, infrastructure, schools, and a variety of land uses.

The primary growth area is the area served by the City's existing wastewater collection system. The outer boundary of this growth area is approximately one-quarter of a mile beyond the closest sewer mains serving Coolidge Residents. This area is where the City should encourage near term development to take place due to the proximity of City services. This area of the community will best accommodate growth through the year 2025.



A secondary growth area was defined on the map which encompasses an area that extends approximately one mile beyond the primary boundary. This area lacks City sewer service and is mostly rural/agricultural land. It also includes a significant number of Planned Area Developments that were approved during the height of the real estate boom but never developed. This area may experience isolated development in closer proximity to other major influences like the Central Arizona College and proximity to Interstate 10 and the Southeast Phoenix metro area. Sig-

Table 5a : Population Projections

GROWTH AREA 1						
Designated Neighborhood	5,056 acres	3.4	du/ac =	17,190	Projected Population	
		4.4	du/ac =	22,246		
Designated Rural	61 acres	0.2	du/ac =	12		
		1.0	du/ac =	61		
Area 1 Low End Total =				17,202 x3.0=		51,606
Area 1 High End Total =				22,307 x3.0=		66,921
GROWTH AREA 2						
Designated Neighborhood	10,911 acres	3.4	du/ac =	37,097	Projected Population	
		4.4	du/ac =	48,008		
Designated Rural	1,346 acres	0.2	du/ac =	269		
		1.0	du/ac =	1,346		
Area 2 Low End Total =				37,366 x3.0=		112,098
				9,354 x3.0=		148,062
GROWTH AREA 3						
Designated Neighborhood	13,235 acres	3.4	du/ac =	44,999	Projected Population	
		4.4	du/ac =	58,234		
Designated Rural	7,921 acres	0.2	du/ac =	1,584		
		1.0	du/ac =	7,921		
Area 3 Low End Total =				46,583 x3.0=		139,749
Area 3 High End Total =				66,155 x3.0=		198,465
GROWTH AREA 4						
Designated Neighborhood	28,238 acres	3.4	du/ac =	96,009	Projected Population	
		4.4	du/ac =	124,247		
Designated Rural	17,905 acres	0.2	du/ac =	3,581		
		1.0	du/ac =	17,905		
Area 4 Low End Total =				99,590 x3.0=		298,770
Area 4 High End Total =				142,152 x3.0=		426,456
Low End Grand Total =				200,741 x3.0=	602,223	
High End Grand Total =				279,968 x3.0=	839,904	

nificant development in this area is not expected in the next ten years but possibly ten to twenty years from now.

An area extending two miles beyond the secondary growth boundary represents an outer growth area that is also largely vacant/rural/agricultural property. Similar to the secondary growth area, future development may extend into this area near I-10 with the potential for rail served industrial land along the Highway 87 and Union Pacific Railroad. There are no development timelines predicted within this growth area or the outer growth area.

One additional growth area is featured on the map which involves a large area of State Trust Lands surrounding isolated pockets of private property. There shouldn't be any development within this growth area well into the future unless a funding alternative is found for the proposed North/South Freeway connecting I-10 south of Eloy to the US 60 near Apache Junction.

The City can implement smart growth strategies that encourage the outward expansion of development from those areas where services are readily available. It is economically advantageous to develop residential, commercial and industrial properties where City services are available and have capacity to support the new growth.

In the City's land use assumptions, it is projected that an average of 140 dwelling units per year will be constructed over the next twenty years with 120 dwelling units per year being constructed in the next ten years. The City evaluated build out projections within the planning area in each of the growth boundaries using a moderate (3.4 du/acre) and high (4.4 du/acre) residential density assumptions.

If the assumptions hold true, all of the projected growth in the next twenty years can easily be accommodated within the existing vacant lots in the City's infill area and within the 3,800 vacant lots that were improved for new home construction during the last housing boom in 2006 and 2007. As the Southeast Valley continues to extend south into Pinal County, and a proposed North South Freeway is constructed connecting the US 60 to Interstate 10 near Picacho, the projections for the Coolidge Planning Area must be re-evaluated. Until this occurs, the City should continue to support plans for development within the primary growth area by focusing its capital infrastructure expansion within this area.



Planning for Growth will make automobile, transit and other modes of transportation more efficient, make infrastructure expansion more economical and provide a rational pattern of land development as contrasted with costly "leap frog" development.

As the growth areas develop, the City will identify and conserve any significant natural and cultural resources and plan for open spaces within and connecting to open spaces outside of proposed developments. The City will continue to partner with the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument and the Gila River Tribal Government to discuss the potential impacts from development on important cultural resources.

Spectacular achievement is always preceded by spectacular preparation.
-Robert H. Schuller