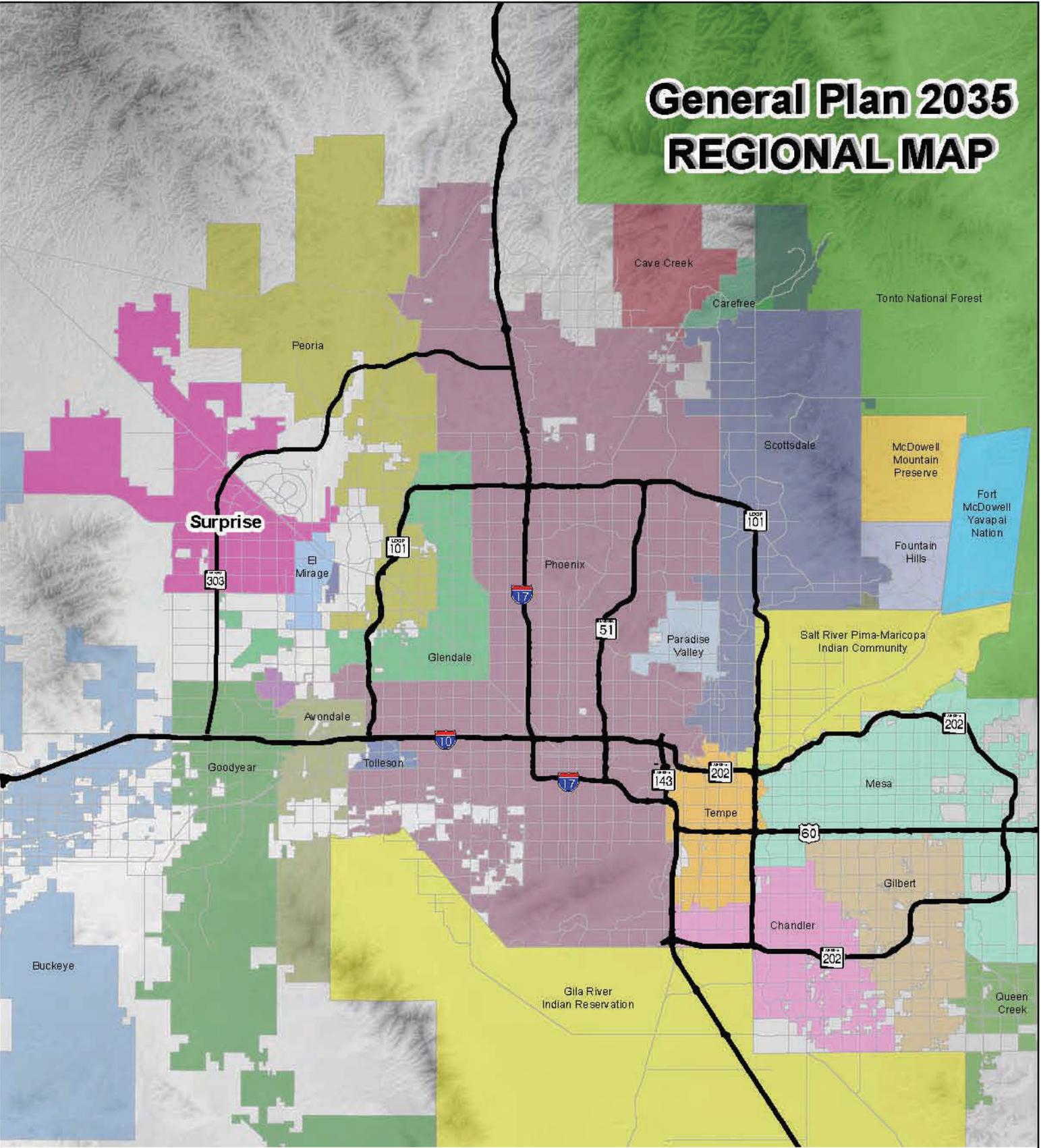


INTRODUCTION



General Plan 2035 REGIONAL MAP



Cities and Jurisdictions

AVONDALE	GILBERT	PHOENIX	TONTO NATIONAL FOREST
BUCKEYE	GLENDALE	QUEEN CREEK	FORT MCDOWELL YAVAPAI NATION
CAREFREE	GOODYEAR	SCOTTSDALE	MCDOWELL MOUNTAIN PRESERVE
CAVE CREEK	LITCHFIELD PARK	SURPRISE	GILA RIVER INDIAN RESERVATION
CHANDLER	MESA	TEMPE	SALT RIVER PIMA-MARICOPA INDIAN COMMUNITY
EL MIRAGE	PARADISE VALLEY	TOLLESON	
FOUNTAIN HILLS	PEORIA	YOUNGTOWN	



Introduction

The Surprise General Plan 2035 is a guide for decision-making that identifies a desired level of commitment toward achieving community goals. The General Plan provides policy guidance related to seventeen mandatory elements required by state law plus four additional elements that are specific to Surprise. Surprise General Plan 2035 is designed for use by all residents, businesses, property owners, developers, staff, and elected and appointed officials.

What you will find in this section:

- **General Plan Purpose**
- **A Guide to Reading the General Plan**
- **Planning Pyramid**
- **General Plan Community Outreach**
- **A Brief History of Surprise**

GENERAL PLAN PURPOSE

The General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future is primarily a set of goals and policies that forms a blueprint for physical development throughout the City of Surprise. The General Plan is a visionary document that is used as a basis for land use decisions and can be a key tool to improve the quality of life for residents. The plan provides the foundation for decision-making on both private development projects and public capital expenditures. The Surprise General Plan 2035 is a comprehensive update of the 2001 document titled, "Surprise General Plan 2020: Imagine the Possibilities." The goals and policies from the original plan have been refined and updated to reflect the changing needs and demographics of the City, as well as the desires of its residents.

Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) §9-461.05 mandates that every city and county adopt "a comprehensive, long-range general plan." The requirements for the general plan are based on Arizona Growing Smarter legislation.

The purpose of the plan is to address important community issues such as new growth, housing needs, and environmental protection. Furthermore, the General Plan is used to project future growth demand services for sewer, water, roadways, parks, and emergency services.

Growing Smarter Legislation

Since 1973, when the state legislators adopted planning legislation, Arizona municipalities have been required to develop plans to consider land use, circulation, housing, public services and facilities, conservation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment issues. During the 1990s when the population of the state increased significantly, citizens once again looked to the state legislators to provide more comprehensive planning tools.

In 1998 the Arizona Legislature passed the Growing Smarter Act, which clarified and strengthened planning elements and added four new elements; Open Space, Growth Areas, Environmental Planning, and Cost of Development. In 2000 the Legislature passed Growing Smarter Plus to further enhance land use planning statutes in Arizona. The two acts were the first significant state-level planning legislation in Arizona since 1973.

Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

The Surprise General Plan 2035 exceeds the general plan requirements outlined in ARS §9-461.05. The plan also takes into account changes from the 2008 and 2011 legislative session and includes those requirements into the document. As other changes are made to the statutes, the Surprise General Plan 2035 will be revised to keep pace with the evolving planning requirements.

A GUIDE TO READING THE GENERAL PLAN

It is important to recognize that the plan elements do not stand alone. They are closely interrelated to provide a comprehensive picture of the community's resources, its needs and desires, and strategies to address future development. As defined by the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS), the plan is general in nature and is intended to provide general development guidance and function as a statement of policy. Therefore, it serves as the guide to local decision-making about the community's future development.

The 21 elements in the General Plan are organized under the following five (5) chapters:



Chapter 1: Development

This chapter includes two state mandated elements — Growth and Land Use, and one additional element — Economic Development. This chapter establishes goals and policies for land use, village planning, and economic development. It also emphasizes the importance of design and the built environment in the Urban Design element.



Chapter 2: Quality of Life

This chapter includes four state mandated elements — Neighborhood Planning; Housing; Conservation, Rehabilitation and Redevelopment; and Recreation and Open Space. This chapter also includes two additional elements — Education and Arts and Culture. The goals and policies established in this chapter are intended to help increase the quality of life for both residents and visitors.



Chapter 3: Transportation

This chapter contains three state mandated elements — Roadway Systems, Transit, and Alternate Modes. This chapter contains goals and policies to promote multiple and efficient ways for the movement of residents and visitors.



Chapter 4: Resources

This chapter includes four state mandated elements — Environmental Planning, Conservation, Energy, and Water Resources. This chapter focuses on preserving and protecting the environment and the natural resources that contribute to the community's quality of life with major emphasis on water conservation.



Chapter 5: Finance, Infrastructure and Services

This chapter contains four state mandated elements — Cost of Development; Public Buildings and Services; Public Utilities; and Health and Safety. In this chapter you will find policies for what types of public services and facilities are needed in Surprise. This chapter also establishes guidelines for funding the major goals and policies in this document.

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Chapter 6: Implementation

The sixth chapter of the General Plan 2035 is the Implementation Chapter. This section describes methods and timelines for the implementation of goals and policies found in the document.

Element Format

Within each element of the Surprise General Plan 2035 is a discussion section that describes the issues, a list of goals related to the element, and policies to provide direction to achieve the goals.

Discussion

A discussion section is provided to explain the context in which goals and policies have been made, reasons for those decisions, and how the goals and policies are related. The discussion portions of the plan do not establish or modify policies, but they may help to interpret policies.

Goals

Each element contains at least one goal statement and related policy statements and implementing programs. A goal in the General Plan is the broadest statement of community values. It is a generalized ideal which provides a sense of direction for action.

Policies

The essence of the General Plan is contained within its policy statements. Policies further refine the goal statements, and guide the course of action the City must take to achieve the goals in the plan. It is important to note that policies are guides for decision makers, not decisions themselves.

PLANNING PYRAMID

Although the General Plan serves as the primary means to help the City implement its vision, several other management and implementation tools are needed to ensure that the goals and policies identified here are fully realized. The General Plan is the top (and most broad) tier in the pyramid.



Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan is a short-term decision making guide that prioritizes the goals and policies set in the General Plan. For each priority, a series of action steps are identified. These steps are the result of input from the City Council, appointed Boards and Commissions, and the general public.

Specific Plans

While the General Plan provides overall guidance for the physical development of the city, specific plans are used to provide more detailed regulatory guidance for special areas or large developments within the City. Specific plans are generally comprised of a Village plan, Transportation plan, design guidelines, infrastructure plan (water, sewer, or drainage), and implementation plan pursuant to ARS

§9-461.08. The following specific plans have been approved by the City of Surprise, which are incorporated herein by reference, are as follows:

1. Approved Village Plans
2. Transportation Master Plan
3. Streetscape Design Guidelines
4. Parks and Trails Master Plan
5. Engineering Development Standards
6. Integrated Water Master Plan - Water Infrastructure
7. Integrated Water Master Plan - Water Resources
8. Standards of Cover - Study and Master Plan for the City of Surprise Fire Department

Village Planning Strategy

Surprise General Plan 2035 has repealed the Village Planning Strategy as adopted by the City Council in 2009. The Character Area strategy focuses on improving the long-term environmental, economic, and social health of the City. It is a strategy where each neighborhood component is carefully planned to create a functional and unique setting that is integrated into the adjoining land uses.

Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance

The City's Municipal Code and Zoning Ordinance are the primary tools used to implement the goals and policies of the General Plan. The Zoning Ordinance provides more detailed direction related to development standards; permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses; and other regulations such as parking standards and sign regulations. The land uses specified in the Zoning Ordinance are based upon and should be consistent with the land use policies set forth in this document. Changes to the Zoning Ordinance may be necessary due to the adoption of provisions in this General Plan and could require changes to the zoning maps and development standards.

GENERAL PLAN COMMUNITY OUTREACH

During the preparation of this document, public involvement was solicited at various stages of the General Plan process using the following methods:

- General Plan Advisory Committee
- General Plan Survey
- Presentations and Public Hearings with City Council and Boards and Commissions
- Open House Public Meetings and other Events (such as Spring Training and Block Parties)

General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

- The GPAC was appointed by the City Council in May 2012 and consisted of residents and

Introduction



business owners who represented the vast spectrum of the Surprise citizenry. The committee met for approximately nine months over the course of drafting the plan, and made a final recommendation to City Council in April 2013. A series of bi-weekly workshops with GPAC members were conducted to review the various elements that make up the General Plan document. The committee provided valuable feedback and each member took an active role in the community by reaching out to the public to get involved with the process. The committee also hosted two open houses as part of public outreach.

General Plan Survey

With the help of the General Plan Advisory Committee and staff, a survey was developed to gather public input about values, priorities and goals that should be included in the General Plan. City staff conducted the survey for five months between June and October 2012. The survey was distributed to the residents and business community of Surprise and was designed to seek community feedback regarding the future focus of Surprise. Outreach efforts for soliciting the survey included attending various city events, boards and commissions, and block parties. Over 2,500 surveys were received. The surveys were compiled into a data set for public review. A summary of the survey results is located in the appendix.

Other outreach methods included advertising on the City of Surprise website, Channel 11, HOA e-mail blasts, presentation to the Surprise Citizens Academy, and local newspaper press releases.



A view of Grand Avenue looking west in the 1970s.
City of Surprise photograph.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SURPRISE

On May 17, 1938 Flora M. Statler purchased a portion of property south of Wickenburg-Phoenix Highway and named it "Surprise", a portion of the current Original Townsite of Surprise. At the time of Statler's purchase, a service station, several dwellings, and two families occupied the land. In the next decade, more families chose Surprise as their home. In 1940, the estimated population of Surprise was 20 people. Over the next decades, the population increased slowly along the bank of the Agua Fria River. The City's location at the edge of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area and prominence along the US 60/Grand Avenue corridor make the city a gateway to the Phoenix metropolitan area for travelers coming from Las Vegas and other northwestern places.



Frog Tanks Dam, now known as Waddell Dam, under construction in 1928. Courtesy of Maricopa Water District.

On December 12, 1960 a 616-acre area of land, the Original Townsite, was incorporated as the Town of Surprise. At the time of incorporation, only 169 acres of the Townsite were developed with a population of 1,574 residents.

The predominant land use of the town during this time was residential, with no parks, inadequate streets, and depended on City of El Mirage for water. County planners projected that the City population would grow to 4,700 by 1980. The existing incorporated area was expanded for the first time on November 14, 1978 when a 10 foot strip of land encircling roughly 26 miles of unincorporated

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land was annexed by the City. The purpose of this strip annexation was to reserve this unincorporated land until future development occurred in the area, at which time the City would annex the land into its City limits.

The 1987 Surprise Comprehensive Development Guide included this area as well as other lands bordered by Perryville Road and US60/Grand Avenue as its planning area boundary.

In 50 years, Surprise grew from 1,547 residents to a city of over 119,530 (MAG-2012) full time residents. The City offers a broad range of lifestyles, from small family subdivisions to secluded ranches. Surprise also offers a significant array of retirement communities that address the needs and lifestyles of active adults. The City provides a wide variety of commercial establishments and recreational opportunities for all ages.

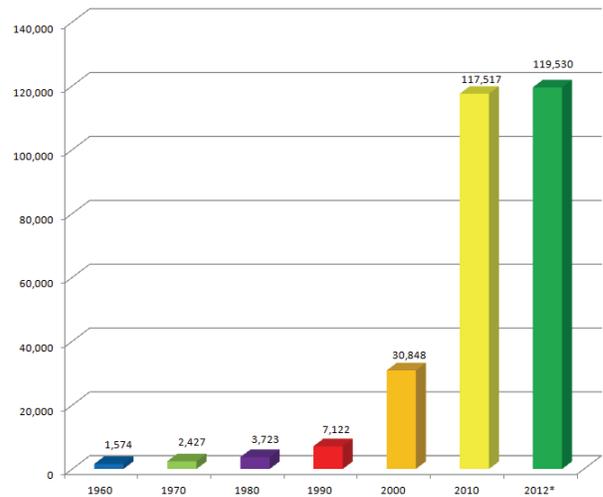
SURPRISE CITY PROFILE

Location

Surprise lies in the northern section of the Sonoran Desert in the Salt River Valley on the west bank of the Agua Fria River. The City's location at the edge of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area, and prominence along the US 60/Grand Avenue corridor, make the City a gateway to the greater metropolitan area for travelers coming from Las Vegas and other northwestern places.

The Surprise Planning Area is bordered on the east by the cities of Peoria and El Mirage, on the west by the Town of Buckeye, on the south by the City of Glendale, and on the northwest by the Town of Wickenburg. Sun City and Sun City West, both unincorporated, are adjacent to the eastern boundary of the planning area. Located within the Surprise Planning Area are the unincorporated communities of Wittmann, Morristown, and Circle City.

City of Surprise Population Growth (1960-2012)



US Census population numbers
* Office of Employment & Population Statistics, Arizona Department of Administration

Desert Facts

Size of Sonoran Desert: 120,000 square miles	Average annual rainfall: 7 inches
Size of the Phoenix Basin: 4,000 square miles	Average annual number of frost-free days: 304
Size of Surprise: 69.5 square miles	Average annual number of 100 degree days: 90
Original size of Surprise: 1 square mile	

