



## CHAPTER 2: QUALITY OF LIFE







For many years, Surprise remained unknown to many Arizonans. That changed dramatically when the City became one of the fastest-growing communities in the state. People flocked to the area to buy affordable homes in neighborhoods with new schools, nice parks, and convenient shopping. The addition of Cactus League baseball and professional tennis added to the City's allure. The 2008 economic crisis brought home buying and building to a standstill, but City leaders continued to look to the future, hoping to keep a small-town feel while creating a city for the twenty-first century.

# Chapter 2: Quality of Life

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.

The Neighborhood Planning element emphasizes the importance of neighborhoods to our community and the need to further empower residents to be actively engaged with planning activities and programs, services and joint communications with the City and other organizations that assist neighborhoods.

The Arizona Legislature requires that General Plans include a Housing Element so as to adopt land use plans and regulatory systems that provide opportunities for, and do not unduly constrain, housing development.

The Conservation, Rehabilitation, and Redevelopment element recommends strategies to protect stable areas, to rehabilitate those with moderate levels of deterioration and to redevelop those areas that are deteriorated or transitioning from their present land uses.

The Recreation and Open Space Element provides general guidelines to enhance the provision of parks, recreation, and open space within the City of Surprise and its planning area.

The Education Element provides for not only a higher standard for elementary and secondary education, but continuing education in the form of trade schools, colleges, and universities, as well as lifelong education within the community.

Beyond celebrations of community and culture, Surprise will look to increase both performance art and physical art pieces through goals and policies found in the Arts and Culture element.

## Neighborhood Planning Element

### INTRODUCTION

Neighborhoods are fundamental to the foundation of Surprise and they define a “sense of place” and “quality of life” for many residents. The neighborhood planning element emphasizes the importance of neighborhoods to our community and the need to further empower residents to be actively engaged with planning activities and programs, services and joint communications with the City and other organizations that assist neighborhoods.

The overall goal of the neighborhood planning element is:

- To build social capital or the ability of the neighborhood to organize itself to identify problems and solve them in partnership with elected officials, businesses and the City
- Create a policy foundation for the revitalization of neighborhoods
- Improve neighborhood safety and security and
- Improve home ownership

### DISCUSSION

A typical neighborhood is an area within a 10 minute walk of one’s home or the area encompassing all of a resident’s key nodes of activity near homes. Surprise has a variety of neighborhoods that range in size, age, housing type and amenities. Surprise neighborhoods are permeated in diversity, civic life and social interaction. The City is committed to learn from, build relationships with and facilitate citizen participation to identify needs, address challenges and affect changes in our community.

#### Neighborhood Wellness

Neighborhood wellness is a topic of increasing concern in communities across the nation. This term is deliberately used as concepts associated with wellness such as health, well-being, and stability describe the ideal conditions that should exist in every city neighborhood. Neighborhood is defined by safe, sound, and affordable housing; well-maintained private yards and public spaces; a safe environment; and sound public infrastructure. Neighborhood wellness also aims to preserve neighborhood character and promote resident involvement in neighborhood affairs.

#### City of Surprise Neighborhoods

Many of Surprise’s neighborhoods are comprised of single family homes developed within the past 10 to 15 years. Most of these neighborhoods were developed based on typical suburban patterns including cul-de-sac design with homes surrounding amenities such as parks. The suburban development pattern resulted from the desire of residents to leave more congested areas to find less expensive homes with large yards and more space for the enjoyment of families. While this development pattern provides for secluded and quiet neighborhoods, it also poses a challenge to develop good connectivity and access for emergency services.

The medium and high density residential neighborhoods are located in areas of the city that are close to major roads and transportation routes and some serve as transition areas between low density residential neighborhoods and commercial districts. High density development can be accommodated with more cost efficient public services but because these neighborhoods are usually located adjacent or close to busy streets, moving residents between their neighborhoods and parks, employment and shopping areas can be difficult unless

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there is care in locating and designing safe, efficient and convenient pedestrian crossings and transit service stops.

The Original Town Site (OTS) is the recognized historic core of Surprise. As with all older urban communities, this neighborhood has faced growing pains and strong competition from newer communities and large shopping centers. The area contains a mix of development including older homes with scattered employment and commercial areas. Most properties are well cared for although some properties suffer from the lack of maintenance. The OTS is also not served by transit. Lack of income in this area reduces vehicle ownership and places more reliance on public bus services. In recent years the city has invested in the area with a new recreation center, parks and other public services. Although this section of the city is faced with serious deficiencies, it also contains substantial cultural and social assets. Landscaping, new lighting and improved pedestrian access can dramatically improve older residential and commercial areas in competing with more established business communities and shopping centers.

All of Surprise's neighborhoods are unique in what they have to offer. The barriers and opportunities to supporting and maintaining viable and healthy neighborhoods vary considerably from the older OTS to the newer areas being developed in the city's outlying areas. The city recognizes the inherent differences between neighborhoods and the requirement of different strategies for the neighborhoods to stay healthy. Strengthening neighborhoods through organization, communication, coordination and education is instrumental in maintaining and improving a livable neighborhood environment. It is critical to ensure that homes and neighborhoods maintain the quality residents have come to expect.

## Preserving Neighborhoods

Surprise is made up of a number of distinct neighborhood areas, each with somewhat different physical characteristics such as the age of housing, street configuration and the size of structures and lots. Established, stable neighborhoods must be preserved and protected from encroaching incompatible development while new neighborhoods are developed in a sustainable manner. Neighborhoods that are declining need a joint effort between the City and residents to rehabilitate the public infrastructure as well as private property investments.

### ***Maintenance and Preservation***

Property conditions and the adequacy and quality of an area's public infrastructure provide an indication of a neighborhood's ability to maintain its character, quality, and value. Good property conditions make for more livable, attractive, and identifiable neighborhoods, better able to support private reinvestment. Spaces that are maintained and managed for their intended purpose and condition reinforce a feeling of safety and encourage people to use those spaces for productive purposes. Appearance of a neighborhood is a reflection of the level neighbors care about where they live. Unkempt buildings, tall grasses and weeds and junk and debris are evidence of a deteriorating area. The longer the disrepair of a neighborhood, the less likely residents will take action to intervene to make changes in the physical and social environment. A deterrent to crime is having people to engage in positive activities with a watchful eye toward unacceptable behavior.

The City of Surprise Code Enforcement section enforces property maintenance ordinances city-wide, in conjunction with the maintenance provisions of the International Building Code. The ordinances apply to both undeveloped and developed private properties. Common property violations include accumulations of trash or junk, inoperable vehicles on private property

## Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

and graffiti on private property. In addition to enforcing code, the City provides monetary help in the form of loans for minor and major home repairs as well as grants to perform exterior improvements to owner-occupied homes of income eligible families.

### ***Neighborhood revitalization***

As areas within the City age, neighborhoods may fray from disinvestment in the community. It is very important to identify and capitalize on the assets of the neighborhood to address the deficiencies in other areas of the community. The goal is to improve the neighborhood in a variety of efforts – commercial, institutional, and recreational – to improve the neighborhoods in a broad-based way. Improved neighborhood conditions lead to higher levels of residential satisfaction and ultimately to greater neighborhood stability, as defined by longer lengths of tenure, stable property values, improved property upkeep and stable social conditions. Older neighborhoods require concentrated revitalization efforts in order to maintain a strong community presence.

### **Housing programs**

There have been several studies on the relation between the neighborhood stability and home ownership. There is considerable support for an association between home ownership and both improved property maintenance and longer lengths of tenure. Studies indicate less residential mobility and greater property value appreciation in areas with greater home ownership. At least four aspects of neighborhoods might be stabilized by home ownership:

- Lengthy tenure of the current residents.
- Property values.
- Physical condition of properties.
- Social conditions in the neighborhood.

Promoting home ownership in partnership with other factors achieves the goal of supporting neighborhood health. The city has a variety of housing programs through federal and state community development funds. Most of the housing programs require that families meet

income eligibility guidelines and many are recipients of the housing programs that have been provided over the years.

### **Safe Neighborhoods**

Safety-related issues are often at the top of the list of concerns by neighborhood residents. Stable, sociable neighborhoods are the building blocks of a sustainable city, offering attractive living choices for households of all kinds and broadening the civic life of residents by getting them involved in community-based activities.

### ***Partnerships for Safety***

Surprise places a great deal of value on public safety and the City's actions will continue to strengthen these community connections and build an ever-stronger commitment to place. Community based crime prevention efforts, combined with citywide policing efforts have drawn strength from this commitment to safety. Programs and services can help build a sense of community and also often encourage residents to get to know each other, become familiar with the children living in the neighborhood and encourage participation in community events/celebrations. Engagement in the block projects is also the best way to build momentum for community change. The city organized "Block Party Trailer" was established to help bring neighbors together and assist in the formation of neighborhood association and block watches, as well as to bring the neighborhoods together.

Visibility of the police force, decrease in illegal activities, and a sense of personal safety in one's home, streets and public and private places must be achieved.

The Surprise Police Department operates a number of programs and provides a variety of services to the Surprise community. From the Teen leadership Academy to Vacation Watch, records requests to victim advocacy, the focus is on crime prevention, education and empowerment. Some of the programs include: beat teams, citizens police academy, crime-free

# Neighborhood Planning Element



multi-housing, crime-free storage and RAP (Risk Assessment Program). The City's continued commitment to delivering excellent policing and public safety facilities and services lays a foundation for community activities that focus on developing a sense of belonging and a responsibility to protect the safety and stability of neighborhoods.

## ***Designing for safe neighborhoods***

Neighborhoods are the fundamental building blocks that comprise the physical city and define its form and character. Since residents spend a great deal of time in their individual neighborhoods and identify more strongly with those areas than with the city as a whole, the physical design of these individual communities determines to a rather considerable extent the residents' quality of life. Land use mixes that are compatible, combined with human-centered design, create environments that are safer for people. The following paragraphs describe the basic building blocks that help create a real neighborhood, give it a strong identity, and help make it a place to care about.

## ***Diversity and Mix***

An authentic neighborhood mixes together the full range of human activities: living, learning, working, playing, creating and worshipping. In order to support this concept, housing should be kept affordable with a range of different types including small and large single family homes, duplexes, multiple-unit buildings, businesses with apartments above, and community-based residential facilities.

## ***Edges and Gateways***

Clear edges make well defined places with character in addition to connecting the neighborhoods. Gateways define the entry into the neighborhood.

## ***Walk-able size and density***

Size and density together are crucial factors for a neighborhood to work well. A walk-able

neighborhood allows children, older people, and non-drivers to be active and independent.

## ***Institutions***

It is difficult to imagine a long-lasting, cohesive neighborhood without institutions such as schools, community centers or places of worship. In fact, the location of schools often serves to define neighborhoods. An active neighborhood will also have several active religious institutions and community centers.

## ***Parks and Community Places***

It is shared common places that most clearly show the character of the community. Not only do parks and other open spaces contribute to the aesthetic and physical quality of the neighborhoods, they also contribute greatly to public health, job opportunities, social and cultural exchange and community building.

## ***Business Core***

Healthy businesses are vital to the health of the neighborhood. Investing in neighborhood business and commercial areas is more critical than ever to Surprise's economic future.

## ***Street pattern***

Suburban streets are laid out as cul-de-sacs that feed wide, fast collector streets. The result too often is congestion and unsafe streets for bicyclists and pedestrians. The grid street pattern works better since there are alternative routes to take, where vehicles are accommodated without being dominating.

## ***Public Realm***

Neighborhood design also plays an important role in neighborhood safety. To enhance overall public safety, the public realm must provide opportunities for people to interact comfortably and build community. Private property and public space that is well maintained and allows individual expression, contributes to a positive image, a feeling of safety and a sense of community.

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Defensible space is created when pedestrians have a clear sense of spatial definition, and when natural surveillance potential is used to its best advantage. Natural surveillance in development takes the form of placing public spaces or high activity areas where they provide a visual overview or line of sight to potentially unsafe areas. Clearly defined and observable spaces create a perception of risk for potential offenders while giving pedestrians a sense of security. A compact neighborhood with many eyes on the street is the foundation of an effective community policing program.

### Connected Neighborhood

An important function of any neighborhood is the movement of people to places where they want to go. Key nodes of activity or an active gathering place in the community provides essential goods and services within walking distance. Neighborhood nodes of activity can contribute to overall neighborhood quality, reduce the need to drive, offer opportunities for greater social interaction and put more eyes on the street. Safe pedestrian and cyclist routes to the nodes are important to help ensure connectivity. Ease and frequency of bus service to regional employment areas, shopping centers, and community programs will make basic services more accessible to populations without access to a vehicle.

Good neighborhood design must accommodate for human factors to increase neighborliness and social cohesion. Well planned neighborhoods have local variety in housing, small scale retail in neighborhoods, complete and diverse networks and memorable places. Key nodes of activity are placed in and around the neighborhood to encourage walking. A deterrent to crime is having people engage in positive activities with a watchful eye towards unacceptable behavior. Opportunities for individuals to interact across different ages, race, income and cultural heritage also break down barriers.

The physical environment of the neighborhood strongly affects the social environment of the

neighborhood. The current suburban development pattern is unsustainable, both technically and culturally. The most successful neighborhood plans, in terms of carrying out the strategies within the plan, are contingent upon what is most important to the people that live in the area. Another important function of any neighborhood is the movement of people to places where they want to go. Neighborhoods should overlap at their edges to form larger developed areas, interconnected by streets, public transit, and bicycle and footpaths. Neighborhoods that balance vehicular & pedestrian needs increase residents' familiarity & interaction with one another.

### Neighborhood Strategies and Recommendations

#### ***Surprise Neighborhood Services***

As Surprise has grown from a small community to a city, residents and business owners alike have felt less connected to their neighbors and to the City itself. A common sense of community pride is created by encouraging strong neighborhoods through community building activities, community safety, neighborhoods having a consolidated voice, promoting neighbors knowing one another, and working together on neighborhood improvement projects.

Issues such as neighborhood housing conditions, safety and coordinated services are tackled through a partnership with the residents and business owners of the area. The City has a range of programs designed to address issues and provide enhancement mechanisms to maintain and improve neighborhood vitality. The programs include loans for major and minor home repairs, beautification programs, and block party trailers. The City also assists with the formation of a neighborhood group with the intent of organizing to educate the neighborhood, promote safety and community bonding as well as serve as a focal point for information to be brought into and out of the community. The City's objective is to empower its citizens to enhance the vitality of their neighborhoods which in turn benefits the entire community.

# Neighborhood Planning Element



## GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 1: Quality of Life

The quality of life in Surprise's neighborhoods should be protected and improved.

#### Policies

1. Develop a wellness indicator for neighborhoods.
2. Improve pedestrian safety throughout the neighborhood, especially in areas where the children play and walk to school.
3. Encourage proper design and effective use of the built environment to help increase personal safety at all times of the day.
4. Encourage community interaction and participation through methods that strengthen the neighborhood communications process.
5. Coordinate neighborhood and family support systems to emphasize and maintain a healthy, stable and balanced social and physical environment within the community.
6. Create and maintain a safe neighborhood environment that emphasizes safety and comfort for all members of the community.

### Goal 2: Property Conditions

The maintenance and preservation of property is encouraged and enforced to ensure the quality, safety and livability of Surprise is sustained.

#### Policies

1. Enhance education efforts for neighborhood groups to learn about property maintenance issues, property standards, enforcement procedures and zoning.
2. Strengthen compliance with zoning ordinances and other codes to enhance neighborhood livability.
3. Promote actions that keep neighborhoods clean and free of graffiti and debris.
4. Minimize illegal dumping and encourage and support neighborhood cleanup activity.
5. Assist neighborhoods and lower income households through programs and actions

that improve property maintenance and eliminate illegal issues.

6. Improve neighborhoods by rehabilitating sound but aging housing and improving obsolete or absent infrastructure.

### Goal 3: Revitalization Efforts

Comprehensive revitalization efforts should be focused in targeted areas to maximize the impact of scarce resources.

#### Policies

1. Install public improvements in targeted areas, where needed, to encourage and strengthen rehabilitation and redevelopment activity.
2. Develop program measurements and evaluation as part of an area's revitalization planning process.
3. Continue the City's commitment to revitalize and redevelop the Original Town Site area.
4. Support economic development efforts in targeted areas with public improvements to community facilities when needed.

### Goal 4: Communication

Effective communications and constructive relationships should be developed among the City and neighborhoods.

#### Policies

1. Communications with residents are increased by creating marketing and educational materials describing available programs and services to promote neighborhood vitality.
2. Promote strong city public relations with the community and effective communication among property owners.
3. Citizen-driven neighborhood planning, consistent with the general plan is encouraged.
4. Promote youth involvement in the community through activities that encourage participation and responsible behavior.

# Housing Element

## INTRODUCTION

Housing in the City of Surprise traditionally has been shaped by market factors, including consumer preferences, land availability, and household size. Since the mid-1990s the City, like many other communities throughout the nation, has experienced phenomenal growth in residential development. In the future, the same housing issues which historically have concerned the nation will present both a challenge and opportunity for the City. The need to plan effectively for housing with quality neighborhoods is, and will continue to be, a priority since residential land uses are predominant within the planning area. Surprise's responsibility is to provide an opportunity for an ample mixture of market rate housing and responsibly serve those residents requiring special housing needs; such as the elderly, people with physical and emotional disabilities, the homeless, and individuals requiring group or foster care. Serving these diverse needs will shape the amount, type, and location of the City's housing stock within both the Neighborhood and the Commerce and Business character areas. The purpose of the Housing Element is to:

- Create a policy foundation for housing strategies that considers each community's character.
- Guide zoning and other regulations.
- Address changing needs in the City.
- Preserve and improve existing neighborhoods.
- Identify reinvestment/ preservation opportunities.
- Identify connections among neighborhood units and the necessary accessory uses that support the neighborhoods.
- Comply with state law requirements.
- Address affordable housing as a critical need.

## DISCUSSION

The Housing Element of the General Plan provides a key component upon which to guide future residential revitalization and development within the City. The Land Use Element contains a substantial amount of land recommended for Neighborhoods, leading the character "feel" and intensity of the community. The Housing Element guides the balance in housing products with market-rate housing offering a range of choices, locations, and price. Public supported and assisted housing provides a responsible approach for those residents in need of shelter or are members of the special needs population within the City.

In 1990, the federal government adopted the National Affordable Housing Act. This legislation created some new federal housing programs and consolidated planning and reporting requirements for several programs which are administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban development (HUD). Beginning in 1995, cities, counties, and states were required to develop a five-year Consolidated Plan and update it each year with an annual strategy for investing funds. The five-year plan contains a description of community needs, goals, and priorities in the areas of affordable housing, human services, public facilities, and other programs designed to improve the quality of life for low and moderate income residents of the community.

# Housing Element



The City of Surprise has developed and updated the Consolidated Plan (currently 2015-2019), to determine priorities, establish strategic goals, and allocate resources for the HUD funded programs administered by the City, namely the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) and the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME). The City's lead agency responsible for the Consolidated Plan's development and implementation is the Neighborhood Services Division of the Human Service & Community Vitality Department.

The Consolidated Plan affirms the objectives of Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, the National Affordable Housing Act of 1990, the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing Act (HEARTH) of 2009 (which reauthorized the 1987 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act) and addresses the needs of persons living with HIV/AIDS.

## Existing Conditions

The Surprise vision promotes and encourages healthy, identifiable neighborhoods whose character and lifestyle are strengthened by infill and rehabilitation measures and by the preservation of its existing housing stock. Housing measures are good indicators of the state of housing in the community, especially when compared to each other. Key housing measures (as identified below) are based on the availability of secondary source data elements with a focus on either the physical housing stock or on the characteristics of housing occupants. Measures include:

**Housing Form and Characteristics:** What kind of housing is in our community (single-family, multi-unit, number of rooms, floor area)?

**Housing Condition:** What is the condition, state of repair, or level of maintenance of the housing in our community?

**Value and /or Investment in Housing:** What are the economic impacts of housing in our community?

**Development:** Where are new units being built, what kind of units, and what is the impact on the existing stock (i.e. conversions, demolition)?

**Amenity:** What services are provided with housing (example: daycare) or nearby (schools, shopping, parks)?

**Supply:** How many of each type of housing is available in the community (single family, executive, seniors)?

**Income:** What are the ranges of income among the residents in our community?

**Cost/Affordability:** How does the cost of housing compare to the ability of our community residents to pay for it?

**Jobs-Housing Balance:** How should Surprise face the critical challenges of providing and locating housing and jobs in proximity to one another?

**Tenure:** Who owns the housing (rental, ownership, life-lease, condominium)?

**Stability:** Are our residents staying within a single neighborhood, or are they transient? Are our neighborhoods growing or declining in population?

**Target Populations:** Are the special needs of some of our residents being met in the housing market (people with disabilities, the homeless)?

**Housing Resources:** Are there pre-purchase and post-purchase educational services, housing counseling services, and opportunities for community revitalization available?

**Market Forces:** How strong is the impact of the national and regional economic conditions on the home ownership rate?

### Housing Stock

While the City's housing supply is large enough to meet demand, there is a significant disconnect between the supply of housing units and their location, price, and quality. In 2010, the City contained a total stock of 52,586 housing units, of which 65 percent were owner occupied, 17 percent were renter occupied, and 18 percent were vacant. These housing units consist of single-family units, multi-family units and mobile homes. Approximately 83 percent of the City's housing is single family detached, 11 percent is attached or multi-family, and 6 percent consist of mobile homes. Less than 110 units of the housing stock were built prior to 1940 and only 10 percent were built prior to 1990. The majority (65 percent) of the City's housing stock was developed between 1990 and 2005. The remaining 25 percent has been developed over the past 10 years.

The 2010 rate of home ownership was nearly 76 percent and the median value of owner occupied units (between 2009-2013) was \$172,000. In comparison, the same rates in Maricopa County were 64 percent and \$165,000, respectively. Slightly more than eight percent of the City's stock consists of multi-family units while more than 20 percent exists in the County. In 2010, the City's average household size was 2.73 persons per household (pph), which is higher than the County at 2.67 pph.

### ***Housing Form and Characteristics***

The housing stock in the region has been heavily influenced by Spanish, Craftsman, Bungalow, Prairie, and Ranch styles, each adding its own flavor to the local architecture. The guidelines for home building focus on architectural design elements, such as quality, scale, volume, height, materials, visual axes, roof profiles and proportion. While architectural aspects are important, social-cultural context is also an important element of housing. Keeping in mind the architectural aspects as well as the sociocultural context, the design guidelines encourage high quality design which evokes a

sense of place, displays an appropriate scale and intensity, and creates a positive visual identity and image for each community.

The three most important aspects of individual housing units include:

1. Location
2. Site
  1. Visual impact, layout and landscaping
  2. Open space
  3. Routes and movement
3. Unit
  - Size and layout
  - Noise, light, and services
  - Accessibility and visitability
  - Energy, green building, and sustainability
  - Lifecycle issues
  - Performance in use

Builders are also encouraged to be cognizant of the changing needs of a person's life. A lifecycle house includes fixed accessible features (wider doors and halls, open floor spaces, clear traffic patterns, etc.) and adaptable features such as wall reinforcement for grab bars and removable base cabinets for future knee space.

### ***Housing Condition***

Most of the City's housing stock is less than 10 years old. However as Surprise ages, neighborhoods and homes also continue to age. It is critical to ensure that homes and neighborhoods maintain the quality residents have come to expect. Deterioration is determined by homes in need of paint and new roofs, landscape trimming and upkeep, and documented building code violations. All of these indicators provide evidence that proper maintenance is needed.

Today Surprise prides itself in its quality neighborhoods requiring consistent vigilance to maintain them over the long term. Due to the economic downturn, the presence of many vacant homes and the availability of foreclosed homes within neighborhoods brought a decline in the rate of new built homes. As the older portions of the community continue to age,

# Housing Element



conservation and revitalization policies will be necessary to help sustain positive neighborhood characteristics. These policies should include the need for an aggressive infill initiative in order to assure continued neighborhood vitality.

## ***Value and/or Investment in Housing Development***

Housing contributes to the local economy in two ways: through private investment and consumption spending on housing services. Residential investment includes construction of new single-family and multifamily structures, residential remodeling, production of manufactured homes, and broker's fees. Consumption spending on housing services includes the amount of rent paid by tenants and the imputed value that housing serves to its home owners. Homebuilding generates income and jobs for local residents, as well as revenue for local governments. Home building also imposes costs on local governments that typically supply police and fire protection, potable water supply and service, sewer collection and treatment, solid waste collection and other public services to support the new homes. Therefore, the economic benefits of home building not only include the effect of the construction activity itself, but the impact that occurs when the new home is occupied and provides the demand for commercial services and goods

## ***Supply***

The City of Surprise's housing mix is deficient in housing that contains amenities and conveniences that support the full range of housing stock. Surprise has not been able to attract developers to build higher-end housing. Providing the full range of housing is critical for the City's economic development effort in retaining and attracting a higher income workforce.

## ***Income***

According to the 2010 American Community Survey, the median household income in the

City of Surprise was \$57,708, an increase of approximately 30 percent over that of 2000 (\$44,156). Surprise enjoys a median household income that is 11.3% higher than the median household income (\$51,204) exhibited within Maricopa County in 2010.

## ***Cost/Affordability***

Surprise is recognized for its affordability. First time homebuyers have been able to purchase quality homes in master planned neighborhoods. Monitoring housing affordability as the City matures will be an important activity to ensuring housing choice to meet the needs of a growing city.

## ***Jobs/Housing Balance***

Jobs/housing balance is a measure of the harmony between employment and dwelling units in a specific area. A low jobs/housing ratio (below 1) indicates a housing rich community while a high jobs/housing ratio (above 1) indicates an employment center. Theoretically, in a balanced community most residents work relatively close to home. Even though many residents would still commute out of the area by choice or necessity, research indicates that in areas where jobs and housing are in balance, people on average do in fact commute shorter distances and spend less time in their cars, reducing transportation related environmental impacts and providing an improved quality of life. Surprise does not appear to be in balance, with an overall existing jobs/housing ratio of 0.42 (MAG 2010).

## **Household Tenure and Composition**

As of January 1, 2013, there were 43,079 households in Surprise. Of that number, 75.8 percent of the households were owner occupied, 24.1 percent were renter occupied. Family households represented 76 percent of all households, including: 62 percent married couple families; four percent male-headed households; and 10 percent female-headed households. Non-family households comprised

24 percent of all households.

### **Stability**

As a family matures, its members have different housing needs. The concept of lifecycle housing provides residents with the option of staying in Surprise after they have outgrown the traditional single family home. The concept identifies a number of phases:

- pre-marriage,
- married,
- pre-child,
- child-bearing,
- child-rearing, and
- post child.

The census data presented previously illustrates that a majority of Surprise households fall under the “child bearing” and “child rearing” phase. As these households mature, the children begin their own households while the parents move into the ‘post baby’ phase. The children of Surprise residents entering into their own phase (typically pre-marriage, married and/or pre-child/child bearing) should have affordable rental or ownership opportunities available to them when they are ready to leave home.

Older residents, moving into and through the ‘post baby’ phase, commonly find themselves with a long-tenured home in an active market. Looking to transition from a large home with a large yard, this homeowner often wants to downsize and relocate to a home that will allow them to age in place for as long as possible. This new home would also incorporate senior friendly design elements, i.e. landscape maintenance, one floor, laundry adjacent to the bedroom, door handles-not knobs, raised dishwasher, etc. While senior living communities provide an assemblage of homes and amenities, older residents should be able to find low maintenance and/or specially designed housing throughout Surprise when the single family home becomes an inappropriate choice. The presence of “lifecycle” housing conditions promotes stability within the City.

### **Special Needs Populations**

It is the City’s goal to ensure that the community offers a mix of housing choices for a variety of family types and sizes. The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) identifies seven groups of people who are characterized as special needs: the elderly, the frail elderly, persons with severe mental illness, the developmentally disabled, physically disabled, persons that are alcohol/drug addicted, and persons with HIV/AIDS and their families. In a manner to quantify the segment of the City’s population that exhibits these characteristics, the Consolidated Plan (2015-2019) illustrates these existing conditions in the City and how it will assist 131 residents over the next 5 years.

### **Elderly**

The Census Bureau reports that the United States population 65 years and older is expected to double within 25 years. The elderly in Surprise approximate 16,000 residents (US Census, 2010). The elderly are defined as those individuals who are more than 62 years of age (24 CFR 91.5 and 24 CFR 5.100).

In recent years, several age-restricted neighborhoods have been developed in Surprise. The City has supported these developments as a way of meeting another segment of the housing market. While golf was the primary amenity in the past, the inclusion of active recreation (i.e. gyms, swimming, hiking, pickleball, etc.) has been growing.

Even though the trend has changed and now includes more conventional housing for any age, this segment of the City’s population will continue to be significant. Homebuilders are incorporating more features in homes to make them appeal to the elderly including universal design, which minimizes access barriers, creative floor plans and the inclusion of guest houses to provide the ability to house a relative on the same lot as the primary residence of a younger relative.

### **Frail Elderly**

The frail elderly in Surprise are estimated to

# Housing Element



total approximately 2,700 residents (Area of Agency on Aging, 2013). The frail elderly are defined as those individuals who are over 65 years of age, dependent on others for activities of daily living, and are often in institutional care. The Consolidated Plan intends to assist 23 of these residents over the next five years.

## ***Severe Mental Illness***

Persons with Severe Mental Illness are estimated to total 4,000 residents (Mental Health: Health Service Executive). The Consolidated Plan intends to assist 4 of these residents over the next five years.

## ***Developmentally Disabled***

The developmentally disabled as well as the aging population, creates an increasing need for housing that is accessible for occupants as well as visitors. Accessibility can be improved with the concept of Visitability and universal design. Design principles of Visitability can include at least one zero-step entrance on an accessible route leading from a driveway or public sidewalk, all interior doors providing at least 31 3/4 inches (81 cm) of unobstructed passage space, and at least a half bathroom on the main floor for residential projects. Universal design incorporates features that make homes adaptable to persons who require barrier-free access without negatively impacting curb appeal or value. Many universal design features make a home more convenient and mitigate common household safety hazards. The developmentally disabled are estimated to total 700 residents (Bethesda Institute, 2006) in the City. The Consolidated Plan intends to assist 13 of these residents over the next five years.

## ***Physically Disabled***

The physically disabled are estimated to total 14,000 residents (disabilitystatistics.org, 2012). The Consolidated Plan intends to assist 18 of these residents over the next five years.

## ***Drug/Alcohol Addicted***

Persons with alcohol/drug addictions are

estimated to total 12,000 residents (Closing the Addiction Treatment Gap (CATG), 2010). The Consolidated Plan intends to assist 5 of these residents over the next five years.

## ***Persons with HIV/AIDS***

Persons with HIV/AIDS and their families are estimated to total 300 residents in the City (Arizona Department of Health Services Annual Report, 2012). The Consolidated Plan intends to assist 2 of these residents over the next five years.

## ***Homelessness***

Although the causes and factors associated with homelessness are complex, there are consistent, identifiable contributing factors for both individuals and families in urban and rural communities in Surprise. This includes poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse, health, and general mental health issues-any one of which can and do exacerbate the downward spiral to homelessness. According to the 'Regional Plan to End Homelessness' published by the Maricopa Association of Governments Continuum of Care Subcommittee (MAG CoC) in March 2009, there are no homeless persons in Surprise. However, the City conducted a Point in Time Homeless Street Count (February 2014) in conjunction with MAG and interviewed two homeless persons.

Strategies focusing on housing and housing supportive services are necessary to prevent and end homelessness, and to reestablish homeless persons within a community. In the Valley, the MAG CoC manages the collaborative efforts of communities and agencies in Maricopa County to plan for the needs of the homeless. It also serves as the conduit for federal funding on behalf of agencies organized to address the needs of the homeless.

## **Housing Resources**

As federal resources for affordable and supportive housing shrink, the remaining federal

## Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

resources such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the HOME investment partner- ships program, Housing Choice Vouchers, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), and USDA rural housing programs become critical and need to be protected. Regional and local governments are increasingly dependent on resources such as housing trust funds and housing bonds to support affordable housing development.

### Market Forces

No plan is complete if it fails to consider the external forces that support or constrain success. Owner-occupied homes constitute the nation's and the City of Surprise's largest form of privately held capital. Therefore, national and regional economic conditions have a strong impact on the homeownership rate. Market interest rates have had an important role in the affordability of homeownership as evident in the early 2000s. Counteracting the positive effect of affordable credit were the substantial increases in home prices in some regions. The housing boom in turn led to predatory lending practices and the Federal Bureau of Investigation reported a sharp increase in mortgage fraud during 2004. After years of stellar growth, residential housing, and housing finance markedly slowed in 2007. Regular reports on significant increases in mortgage foreclosures, especially among borrowers who financed with sub-prime mortgages were prevalent in 2007. These widespread foreclosures have repercussions not only for borrowers and lenders but also for neighborhoods, credit availability, and even financial markets.

### Housing Strategies

Providing safe, decent housing that is not overcrowded and will not overburden a household financially is critical for the well-being of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and the community.

The Housing Element emphasizes strategies that collectively address the availability,

affordability, condition, and access to housing by the general population as well as special needs groups. Strategies include:

- Adequate supply of land for housing.
- Preservation of existing housing and neighborhoods.
- Improvement of housing opportunities for special needs groups.
- Provision of affordable housing.
- Awareness of market forces.

### Future Needs

The Housing Element provides guidance for safe, affordable housing which meets the needs of the communities within the region. These communities are committed to accomplishing all they reasonably can to ensure an ample mixture of available housing and to address special housing needs. The local governments, in partnership with the private sector, will work toward the provision of assisted housing for persons and families of low and moderate income within the region. The future need for housing is determined primarily by the forecasted growth in households in a community. Each new household created by a child moving out of a parent's home or by a family moving to a community for employment creates the need for a housing unit. The anticipated housing needed for new households is then adjusted to account for an ideal level of vacancy needed to promote housing choice, moderate cost increase, avoid the concentration of lower income households, and to provide for replacement housing.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 1: Housing Stock

Safeguard the condition and quality of housing stock in order to maintain attractive and livable neighborhoods.

### Policies

# Housing Element



## Goal 2: Housing Variety

Seek a variety of housing options that meet the socioeconomic needs of people who live and work in the City.

### Policies

1. The City shall review and consider updating its development standards to incorporate new housing product types.
2. Promote physical design, building structure, lot layout relationships, and landscaping opportunities between existing and new housing construction to help the new developments complement the surrounding neighborhoods.
3. Integrate sustainable building practices (i.e. solar orientation and/or energy production, dual pane windows, low flush toilets, Energy Star appliances, drought tolerant landscaping and water conservation and reclamation) into new housing design and housing renovations.
4. Seek appropriate resources to revitalize and maintain single- and multi-family housing developments.
5. Support the inclusion of accessory dwelling units on appropriately sized lots that are well designed and compatible with the primary residence.
6. Explore other creative housing opportunities such as live-work spaces in suburban, urban, and residential mixed use areas, where appropriate to the character of the area.
7. Locate higher density housing along transit corridors to maximize direct patron access and buffer proximate lower density housing neighborhoods
8. Promote and facilitate the build out of vacant and underutilized land through infill, reuse, revitalization and redevelopment activities for appropriate rural, suburban or urban housing development.
9. The City shall continue to work with for-profit and non-profit home builders, other community development corporations, and health and human services providers to maintain existing public housing and provide affordable housing on infill, revitalization and redevelopment parcels.

1. Update City ordinances and policies to proactively support housing diversity.
2. Establish appropriate incentives for the development of quality housing that accommodates a variety of income levels.
3. Promote various residential options that provide amenities and conveniences within the residence and surrounding community that is above the median housing mix.
4. Consider incentives for the development of diverse housing types, including smaller, more affordable units.
5. Maintain a communitywide housing mix to serve the evolving demographic and economic needs of its residents.
6. Leverage state and federal funding opportunities for the preservation of safe and affordable housing.
7. Preserve and expand quality, affordable rental options within various areas of the community.
8. Integrate housing and employment through mixed-use projects in more urban areas, as a means to increase housing supply while promoting diversity and neighborhood vitality.
9. Improve infrastructure in the OTS to enhance existing housing, housing rehabilitation efforts and targeted housing infill opportunities.
10. Preserve neighborhoods by working with HUD to continue operating and funding its Major Housing Rehabilitation Assistance Program for qualified home buyers.
11. The City shall enhance the habitability of owner-occupied housing by working with HUD to continue operating and funding its Emergency Housing Rehabilitation

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Assistance Program.

12. Seek appropriate funding to implement the objectives of the Consolidated Plan.
13. On an annual basis, review and confirm those residents that are part of its homeless and special needs populations.
14. The City shall consider executing an intergovernmental agreement with the Housing Authority of Maricopa County (HAMC) to continue ensuring the housing needs of low and moderate income households of City residents in a high quality manner.
15. The City shall work with the HAMC to preserve the affordability of quality rental housing through the continued administration of the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) Program.
16. The City shall support the efforts of for and non-profit housing developers who are committed to construct tax credit assisted rental housing for families and the elderly.

into neighborhoods and create non-vehicular connections between residential developments to promote opportunities for aging in place and continuum of care for the elderly.

6. Seek opportunities to locate housing for those citizens with special needs near transportation services and facilities that will reduce their reliance on the automobile, without diminishing their community mobility.
7. Support agencies and organizations that provide shelter, housing, and services to vulnerable populations.
8. Support affordable housing development that includes supportive uses, services, and facilities to meet a variety of household needs.
9. Participate actively in identifying regional partners and solutions for those special needs that may be most appropriately addressed at the regional level.

### Goal 3: Housing For All Ages

Increase housing choices that serve all age groups and needs.

#### Policies

1. Support policies and techniques, including but not limited to, universal/barrier free home design that provides housing opportunities to meet the unique needs of the elderly and dis-abled.
2. Encourage design standards set by Americans with Disabilities Act (28 CFR Part 36) for all residential projects.
3. Encourage design principles of visitability, for residential projects.
4. Create non-vehicular connections between housing and adjacent uses; including but not limited to, senior centers, childcare centers, preschools, youth centers, and other community facilities to provide opportunities for intergenerational connections
5. Integrate elderly and assisted care facilities

### Goal 4: Federal Housing Requirements

Facilitate compliance with federal, state, and county fair housing requirements regarding the sale or rental of housing.

#### Policies

1. Update City policies to support regional, state, and federal efforts that prohibit discrimination in the sale or rental of housing and other prohibited practices towards any person because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin.
2. Provide access to education and training for the development community and property owners in how they can meet fair housing requirements for those properties covered by federal, state, and local regulations.



# Conservation, Rehabilitation & Redevelopment Element

## INTRODUCTION

The conservation, rehabilitation, and redevelopment element recommends strategies to protect stable areas, to rehabilitate those with moderate levels of deterioration, and to redevelop those areas that are deteriorated or transitioning from their present land uses.

Redevelopment improves the quality of the built environment, encourages appreciation for the city's history and culture, maintains the character and identity of communities, and contributes to the City's economic vitality. Several factors create the pressure for rehabilitation and new development: among them are population increases, economic activity, the degradation of existing building stock, and the demand for higher living standards.

Another aspect of the element is to guide the preservation, protection and restoration of historic and cultural resources so that a clear sense of how the City gained its present form and substance can be maintained. The barriers and opportunities to supporting and maintaining viable and healthy neighborhoods and commercial and employment centers vary considerably, from the oldest central city neighborhoods to the newer areas being developed in the City's five outlying growth areas. Most of Surprise's housing stock is less than 10 years old. However as the City ages, the neighborhoods and homes also continue to age. It is critical to ensure that homes and neighborhoods maintain the quality residents have come to expect.

## DISCUSSION

### Historic and Cultural Preservation

Historic and cultural resources include elements from the built environment such as structures, districts, landscape features, including significant trees and plantings, and other natural or designed features, interior elements and fixtures designated in conjunction with a property, significant archaeological sites, and traditional cultural properties. By tracing and preserving its past a city can gain a clear sense of the process by which it achieved its present form and substance. Surprise is a relatively new city, yet there are examples of boom and bust periods of development of the City's core, early infrastructure and transportation routes, the spread of development outward, and continued military

presence. The identification, evaluation, registration and protection of these resources, and the preservation of Surprise's past for its current and future residents are the essential components of this section.

### ***Legal basis for Historic preservation***

Federal law: The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), enacted in 1966, established the National Register of Historic Places, authorized funding for state programs with participation by local governments, created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and established a review process for protecting cultural resources. The NHPA provides the legal framework for most state and local preservation laws. The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of pres-

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ervation. It is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect historic and archeological resources.

The NHPA was amended in 1980 to create the Certified Local Government (CLG) participation and integration in a comprehensive statewide historic preservation planning process. Cities and counties with CLG status may compete for preservation funds allocated by Congress and awarded to each state.

### ***Arizona Register of Historical Places***

The Arizona Register of Historic Places is the state's list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. Arizona has adopted the National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluating eligibility for the state register. The Arizona Historic Sites Review Committee is Arizona's official State and National Register of Historic Places review board as mandated by state law and federal regulations. A listing on the Arizona Register of Historic Places protects and preserves a property by recognizing and appreciating historic properties and their importance, but does not prevent demolition of the property.

### **Surprise Planning Area History**

Early history of the region has a strong correlation to the Santa Fe, Prescott and Phoenix Railroad (SF&PPR), built in the 1890s by an entrepreneur named Frank Murphy. It connected the northern part of Arizona with Phoenix and

speeded Phoenix's rise to economic supremacy in the state. There has been some mention about a development in the Bell Road-Grand Avenue area known as Beardsley. Beardsley was originally a station which honored Will H. Beardsley. For years it served as a sheep shearing point on the SF&PPR. Until the 1940s there were still corrals and residences. Expansion of the railroad right-of-way required the site to be bulldozed out of existence. The post office operated only in the year 1936. Beardsley was also the original junction of the branch of the SF&PPR (Railroads of Arizona, Vol.5 by David F Myrick, submitted by Paul S Hodson.) to McMicken. The junction was later relocated to Ennis 4.5 miles east of Beardsley. William Beardsley's name is also associated with an irrigation project in the 1880s. His company, the Agua Fria Construction Company built a canal named the Beardsley Canal, from Lake Pleasant to ranches as far as 30 miles away.

The Beardsley Canal that dates back to 1888 has been assigned an Arizona Site Museum (ASM) site number and is eligible for inclusion into the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). There are also a few prehistoric Hohokam sites recommended as eligible for listing in the NRHP for their potential yield of information on Hohokam subsistence and settlement strategies in the lower Agua Fria River drainage. The Surprise Planning Area was also home to three of the Luke Air Force Base (AFB) airfields, Luke AFB Auxiliary Airfield #1, Beardsley Auxiliary Army Airfield #2, and the Beardsley Auxiliary Army Airfield #3. The Beardsley Auxiliary Army



## Conservation, Rehabilitation, & Redevelopment Element



Airfields #2 and #3 were built during World War II as part of a large number of satellite airfields for Luke AFB, which was the largest single-engine advanced training base in the world during World War II. According to the history of Luke AFB, the origination date of Beardsley Field #2 is lost to history.

According to an Army Corps of Engineers Report, the 656 acre property for Luke Auxiliary Airfield #3 was originally acquired in 1942. The airfield property was conveyed to the City of Phoenix in 1949. However, the entire property was leased again from the City of Phoenix in 1949 and the airfield was reestablished for military use. Luke Auxiliary Airfield #3 was depicted as an active airfield on the 1956 Phoenix Sectional Chart (courtesy of John Voss), which described the longest runway as being a 3,800' hard-surfaced strip. The military lease was once again terminated in 1957. The lease release documentation contained a clause prohibiting use of the land as an air field as long as Luke AFB is used as an air field. Luke Auxiliary Airfield #3 was depicted as a closed airfield on the December 1976 Phoenix Sectional Chart (courtesy of Chris Kennedy). The City of Phoenix in 2002 exchanged the Luke Auxiliary Airfield #3 property for another parcel of nearby land.

Other unincorporated areas located within the Surprise Planning Area also have historic documentation, especially development related to mining and homesteading activities. Additional historical information about Surprise can be found in the Introduction chapter.

**Waddell** – Waddell found its roots in 1910s primarily as an agricultural town. Donald Waddell, the founder, was originally from New York and, along with other farmers in the area, was instrumental in getting the Lake Pleasant Dam established. Mr. Waddell was also highly active in getting the rail spur to run along Cotton Lane up to Indian School Road. A post office and a store were located at the corner of Cotton Lane and

Waddell Road along with a cotton gin. The rail spur came through there and often acted as a focal point for the labor camp that housed farm workers from Mexico.

**Morristown** – The first known name for Morristown was Vulture Siding. In 1897 after the importance of Vulture Mine faded, the name of the place was changed to Hot Springs Junction because at this station passengers disembarked from the train to take a stage to Castle Hot Springs. The name was later changed to Morristown to honor the first inhabitant at the place, George Morris, the discoverer of the Mack Morris Mine in Gila County. A post office was established on December 30, 1897, Lee H. Landis postmaster, Wells Fargo Station, 1903, (Hot Springs Junction). The Morristown store, formerly the Morristown Hotel also located within the area and is listed on the National Register of Historical Places. Reference: Barnes, Arizona Journal Mining, November 4, 1897, 4:2, 16, p.356; P. O. Records, Maps: C-9, C-12 (Hot Springs Junction)

**Wittmann** – Former and merged names for the Wittmann area include Nadaburg. Lore has it that a lone rider was looking for a town between Phoenix and Wickenburg and he came across a local resident. When he asked if there was a town nearby, he was told Nada, Nada burg. Nada is Spanish for no or nothing, burg refers to a town. By the early 1900s the Santa Fe Railroad ran west out of Phoenix and there was a mail drop called Nadaburg. William Hovey Griffin filed a homestead claim on the section of land known as Nadaburg. The community was named after an investor who financed rebuilding of the Walnut Grove Dam, a dam that collapsed in the winter of 1889/90 killing several dozen workers. In November 1929 Joseph Wittmann filed the Wittmann Irrigation Project in an effort to bring water to the area. In the 1930s by mutual agreement, the settlement's name was officially changed to Wittmann to honor Joseph Wittmann and his promise of irrigation water.

### Redevelopment

#### ***Adaptive reuse of obsolete development***

The identification of land with reuse potential is a key element of the rehabilitation and redevelopment strategy. Infill opportunities however are useful for exploiting obsolete uses and buildings to meet the needs and aspirations of the City. Redeveloping obsolete industrial, commercial, or residential sites or redeveloping brownfield sites reduces urban sprawl and enhances the inner city environment. Planning for sustainable uses can help regenerate rundown areas at a number of levels, from neighborhood to region.

#### ***Elimination of Deterioration and Blight***

Redevelopment generally involves the improvement of an area that was developed at some time in the past but presently suffers from real or perceived physical deficiencies such as deterioration or blight or as a result of changing social and market conditions. Deterioration and blighted areas generally have physical and economic conditions, which constitute a danger to the health, safety, and general welfare of the people of the community. Blight is an area-wide concept. Where conditions of blight predominate an area, individual properties that may be in good condition can be included if they are part of the area.

Redevelopment may include, in addition to blighted areas, lands, buildings, or improvements which are not detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare, but whose inclusion is found necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area of which they are a part. However, these parcels are threatened by other parcels which exhibit a variety of conditions of blight including deterioration, safety hazards, crime, economic maladjustment, depreciating property values, stagnant population, and the unproductive use of the land.

#### ***Public/private Partnerships***

It is becoming increasingly popular for governments to act in concert with private developers to effectively take advantage of the best that both have to offer. These consortiums have become

an important vehicle by which redevelopment is implemented.

#### **Public Improvements and Community Facilities**

Although most frequently associated with older central cities, public actions to promote reuse and development of underused and vacant sites may also be critical to the continued economic viability of maturing suburban cities and towns and even rural communities. Redevelopment and revitalization may be the best options available to cities trying to respond to new market demands, and population growth can help older urban and suburban areas to maintain their desirability as places to live and conduct business. For an area to be designated a redevelopment area, a number of factors must be considered. These factors include the following:

Unsafe conditions—These factors can be imposed by environmental (i.e. subsidence, floodplain) and man-made characteristics (i.e. existing uses, presence of crime, lack of public safety services);

Unhealthful conditions—These factors can be imposed by the water, air, and land of the area as well as existing uses;

Obsolete layout of lots, blocks, and streets—Previous lot layouts or platting may not match existing market conditions for development;

Land ownership—Extensive private ownership, as well as the number of absentee owners, may make assemblage difficult;

Incompatible land uses—The existing pattern of development has created negative impacts on the health, safety and welfare of the public;

Structural deterioration—The existing exterior and interior building conditions require significant levels of major rehabilitation or clearance

# Conservation, Rehabilitation, & Redevelopment Element



The Surprise General Plan 2035 recognizes the need to promote and implement redevelopment in the following areas:

Original Town Site (OTS): OTS is faced with issues such as property maintenance and underutilized land, limited transit service, infrastructure impediments, limited park improvements, and sub-par street lighting.

Section 10: Section 10 is a one square mile area of land near Happy Valley Road, west of Grand Avenue, that was annexed into the City of Surprise in 1988. The area is faced with issues relating to street lighting, infrastructure, lack of transit services, flooding, and limited recreational amenities such as parks.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 1: Safe and Clean Neighborhoods

Enhance and promote city programs that provide for safe and clean neighborhoods.

#### Policies

1. Continue and promote the City's proactive approach to code enforcement which preserves, enhances, and promotes safe neighborhoods.
2. Utilize community policing techniques such as neighborhood watch groups to discourage criminal activity in neighborhoods.
3. Train citizens through emergency preparedness programs.
4. Enhance response efforts to graffiti damage by involving communities.
5. Provide education regarding renter rights concerning housing and property maintenance standards.
6. Promote public-private partnerships to monitor the condition of abandoned or vacant buildings to mitigate negative effects on a neighborhood.

### Goal 2: Existing Dwellings

Preserve the quality of existing dwellings and neighborhoods so that people will find our community a healthy, safe, and attractive place to live.

#### Policies

1. Support policies and programs that provide opportunities for residential and commercial property owners to update or renovate their properties and examine existing regulations that may be barriers to adaptation of existing homes or businesses.
2. Foster long-term housing and neighborhood vitality through preservation and revitalization of mature neighborhoods.
3. Coordinate city programs dealing with neighborhood enhancement and support activities that work to revitalize neighborhoods.
4. Educate property owners on the value of maintaining and improving their properties.
5. Identify and promote the preservation of neighborhoods that exhibit unique cultural or architectural attributes.

### Goal 3: Home Ownership

Support homeownership as a way to strengthen the sense of community and encourage investment in housing.

#### Policies

1. Support programs that will increase home ownership among entry level and moderate income households.
2. Support home buyer assistance programs to qualified persons.
3. Provide educational programs for home buyers to understand their financial obligations and loss prevention options.

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### Goal 4: Diverse Neighborhoods

Preserve and enhance the diverse neighborhoods in the City with neighborhood plans.

#### Policies

1. Develop methods to help promote key sites within the Original Townsite to residents and visitors.
2. Utilize neighborhood plans to improve the availability of resources for programs that preserve or revitalize mature neighborhoods.
3. Guide new development to be sustainable, well-designed, and respectful of existing neighborhoods through neighborhood planning initiatives.

### Goal 5: Community Interaction

Build strong neighborhoods through community interaction.

#### Policies

1. Create opportunities for community interaction through block parties, neighborhood cleanup events, farmers markets, and other neighborhood events.
2. Provide technical assistance and education to neighborhood groups seeking to explore neighborhood opportunities or resolve neighborhood problems.

### Goal 6: Redevelopment

Use redevelopment to provide for the long-term stability of maturing residential and commercial neighborhoods.

#### Policies

1. Identify and pursue federal, state, and private grant programs to accomplish this goal.
2. Identify and inventory distressed residential and commercial neighborhoods in the City and create suitable redevelopment plans.
3. Use redevelopment tools to help maintain the community's mature areas and sustain

quality of life.

4. Continue the City's strategic and proactive policy of redevelopment intervention efforts in areas that show signs of decline.
5. Provide, maintain, and support the legal tools that allow redevelopment to occur in the community.
6. Support proactive communication with affected residents and business owners during the planning and implementation of redevelopment projects.
7. Strive to replace affordable housing removed by redevelopment projects to maintain long-term housing affordability.
8. Support redevelopment activities that provide opportunities to address housing affordability challenges.
9. Encourage the redevelopment of blighted, distressed, or underutilized properties.
10. Upgrade substandard infrastructure during redevelopment projects.

### Goal 7: Economic Benefits

Sustain the long-term economic well-being of the City and its citizens through redevelopment, rehabilitation, and conservation efforts.

#### Policies

1. Support and encourage appropriate public and private economic reinvestment in mature, physically and economically declining areas.
2. Use redevelopment and rehabilitation techniques to positively impact the visitor, resident, and business communities' visual and aesthetic impressions of the overall City.
3. Promote the adaptive reuse of existing structures through conservation and/or rehabilitation, where feasible and context appropriate.
4. Offer incentives for rehabilitation of historic neighborhoods.
5. Strive for the use of green building techniques in design, construction, and remodeling associated with rehabilitation, conservation, and redevelopment efforts.

# Conservation, Rehabilitation, & Redevelopment Element



## Goal 8: Vacant Buildings

Appropriate reuse and rehabilitation of vacant and obsolete buildings is encouraged.

### Policies

1. Update zoning ordinances to promote retrofitting of historic properties for economically viable projects.
2. Consider programs to promote the adaptive reuse and modernization of outdated commercial centers.
3. Develop incentive programs and provide technical assistance for area compatible reuse of commercial centers.
4. Encourage the redesign of strip centers to pedestrian-friendly, mixed use development compatible with adjacent neighborhoods.
5. Prepare market studies and marketing materials for targeted areas experiencing a concentration of redevelopment sites.
6. Create an inventory of vacant structures and inform potential users and the real estate community of their redevelopment potential.

# Recreation and Open Space Element

## INTRODUCTION

The Recreation and Open Space Element provides general guidelines to enhance the provision of parks, recreation, and open space within the City of Surprise and its planning area. The element identifies the City's philosophy relative to the desired level of facilities and their interrelationship with land use, transportation, and public facilities programming.

## DISCUSSION

As Surprise continues to grow, there are priorities to improve the quality of life through the addition of new parks, reinvestment in our existing parks, and our programming. The Community and Recreation Services department is the primary provider of recreation and cultural services for the City.

The City's programs include aquatics, youth and adult sports, tennis programming, library services, special interest classes, teen programming, and adaptive programming totaling over 1,700 programs and 190,000 participants annually. In addition, special event and sports tourism includes spring training, regional and national tennis tournaments, as well as community and signature events such as annual Surprise Party event and performances in the park. Overall, the Community and Recreation Services Department delivers over 2,000 recreation and special event programs, servicing over 490,000 participants annually.

With a renewed energy and focus on our resident's health, recreational experience and cultural amenities, the Parks Department has recently updated the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that establishes a vision for the City of Surprise Park System.

Through a combination of surveys and work sessions with the citizens and the Community and Recreation Service Advisory Commission members identified four goals for the development of the City's Parks, Recreation and

Open Space System:

- Improve City Residents' Quality of Life by Reinvesting in our Existing Parks
- Promote Active Recreation, Sports and Tourism
- Provide a Connected Park Experience Through the Development of an Overall Park System
- Pursue Opportunities to Create New Community Parks and Open Space

### Parks

The City of Surprise prides itself on accommodating the needs of families and the overall community. Whether a park is provided and cared for by the City or by a community Home Owner Association (HOA), it is important to plan their location, amenities, and accessibility to the community.

### **Locations**

All residents of Surprise should live within walking distance of an active recreation space in the form of a park or other public recreation amenities. These parks, whether maintained by public or private funds, should be open to public uses and linked by a combination of walking, trail, and park systems. Maps showing existing and proposed Community, City and Regional parks can be found on pages 113-117.

### **Uses**

The uses programmed into each park and recreation area must be carefully considered to provide an equitable distribution of all interests. When a recreation space is proposed, consideration should be given to the type and

# Recreation and Open Space Element



diversity of the use in each neighborhood. The programming of uses that complement the neighborhood must be weighed in the creation of park plans. For example, a rural neighborhood may prefer equestrian and hiking activities where an urban setting may not have space or interest in those activities. Some neighborhoods may have a more dominant recreational activity to help form its unique identity while others may be more balanced to all interests.

In areas that are adjacent to open space it may be appropriate to introduce region-specific activities such as picnic grounds that take advantage of views or camping areas that are located away from the main city areas. The size of recreation areas should be appropriate for the uses programmed for the location. In suburban settings a traditional park, including soccer field, basketball court, and other popular sports, may be encouraged with the number provided dependent on those uses. In a more urban setting a better use may include a plaza or common area with little or no playground or sports facilities, but programmed with flexibility to meet changing needs.

## ***Public/Private Recreation Space***

The development pattern of Surprise is primarily structured around master planned communities providing private neighborhood level parks that are less than 5-acres (and many less than 1-acre) in size. These smaller parks provide an important level of play associated with a neighborhood setting, but yield a very small programmable space and location not able to support use by the larger community. The City will evaluate future park development opportunities and acquisitions based on their ability to meet Community Park level (25+ acres) programming, including lighted sport fields, skate parks, dog runs, etc. Parks are a civic treasure and should be the focal points within neighborhoods and our community.

## ***Maintenance***

One of the most pressing issues with maintaining recreation space is the cost associated with regular care. The City's maintenance, operations and programming efforts are most efficient in the larger parks. Homeowner's Associations are best suited to manage and maintain smaller parks as they can directly respond to their residents' needs and expectations. The City may elect to take over the maintenance of a park, only if a private entity is no longer able to care for it and is willing to convey the property to the City. It is important that recreational places in the City should be preserved as amenities for community residents.

## **Open Space**

Open space can take on many forms, shapes, purposes, and functions. Every city values different types of open space within the community. Open space should be defined as either natural or developed. Natural open space is land that is preserved in its natural ecological state, while developed open space has been created or restored by human activity to convey a sense of openness. Developed open space may contain passive or active recreation activities such as walking, wildlife viewing, etc., as well as golf courses, landscape tracts and retention basins for storm water.

There are at least five types of open space that perform very different but important functions. The five categories are:

## ***Hazardous Critical Areas***

These open space lands are set aside from intensive development and at times, from public access to protect people and property from hazard. They are not suitable for open space development because hazardous conditions or public health and safety constraints exist. These include flood prone areas, earth fissure or land settlement zones, landfills and airport public safety zones surrounding the Luke Auxiliary

Field One.

### ***Ecological Critical Areas***

Unlike hazardous critical areas, which seek to reduce hazards to people, ecological critical areas seek to set aside land to protect natural resources and environmental processes from human disturbance. Land in its natural state can perform a number of useful functions, called ecosystem services, which include wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities in the form of photography and nature watching. In many communities, natural landscapes and wildlife attracts eco-tourism that contributes substantially to the local economy. Examples of these areas include McMicken Dam water impoundment area, hillsides, major washes and wildlife corridors.

### ***Agriculturally Significant Resource Lands***

Often overlooked is the protection of lands that are used to provide important resources. Many farms in the southern part of the City have already been lost to development. In order to protect important agricultural areas that remain, the City will have to consider enacting regulations or using innovative techniques such as creating agricultural lands for “farm to table” opportunities and as buffers within airport public safety zones.

### ***Conservation Areas***

Natural areas and open spaces offer places to exercise, socialize with others, and space for people to get away from development and experience the natural environment. Conservation areas provide opportunities for a Nature Center and trails that promote education, hands on learning and exploration.

### ***Greenbelts***

Open space can be used to define natural boundaries between urban and rural areas. The separation they provide serves to buffer more urban uses and activities from rural and resource-based uses. Similarly, they can separate different land uses which might otherwise be incompatible. These lands can provide a break or gap between developments

to reinforce distinct community identities. They can also facilitate access between areas when foot or bike paths and trails are included. These trails can provide fitness and recreation opportunities and non-motorized access to natural areas, schools, or even commercial and employment centers. A linked system greatly expands opportunities for engagement in both urban life and the enjoyment of natural beauty.

Other considerations regarding open space include the following:

### ***Natural Resources***

Washes, mountains, and other environmentally sensitive lands can form the framework for a premier, natural open space network in the City of Surprise. Large tracts of open space and regional parks can be linked together through a system of natural and man-made open space, active recreation areas and trails.

### ***Property Acquisition***

Major washes and environmentally sensitive lands can be difficult to acquire without the assistance of the development community. As development occurs, the City can actively look to partner with developers to preserve open space (washes, hillsides, etc.) land during the entitlement process. In other cases, natural areas might be preserved through zoning entitlements if they are unsuitable for development. Another method of acquiring open space for preservation is through direct land purchase.

### ***Use***

Use of open space areas is intentionally limited to low impact recreation uses and education. The most common form of recreation appropriate in open space areas is an interconnected trail system. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan map (page 113) shows a hierarchy of connected trails, including major trails, and minor trails with limited access to other areas. The design of these trails will vary depending on context and use, but should consider a range of uses including hiking, bicycling, and equestrian use. As trails travel

# Recreation and Open Space Element



through open space, trail-related development should be limited to trailheads with minor amenities such as lighting signage, and occasional rest areas with shade shelters and water.

## **Regional Cooperation**

When looking at preserving open space and creating interconnected trail systems, the City must consider regional opportunities. As nearby cities and both Maricopa and Yavapai Counties plan for open space and trails, Surprise should coordinate to ensure a complement of uses and economies of scale. The City already recognizes the Maricopa County Regional Trails System Plan as an important recreational amenity that connects the larger area. Key locations with regional significance that are identified in the Plan include White Tanks Regional Park, the West Valley Recreation Corridor, the Bradshaw Mountains, Beardsley Canal, and McMicken Dam. These locations will provide routes through the City to connect with the rest of the Valley. In the case of the White Tanks and Bradshaw Mountains they can create spectacular destinations for outdoor enthusiasts. Regional cooperation will also be important in order to develop trails along private and public corridors such as canals, major washes and utility easements. With cooperation of landowners and a public use easement, trails can be developed so that they have little or no impact on the existing uses of the property.

## **Recreation Centers**

The City is the primary provider of Recreation Centers in the City. As the City grows, as with any recreation use, it will be necessary to determine a desired level of service for residents. In meeting the demand for Recreation Centers, the City will determine the programs required to meet the user need and plan the number and size of the recreation centers accordingly, recognizing that a City-level recreation center will have a broader offering of programs than that of a smaller Community-

level center. For example, the Surprise Stadium is large enough to support a large population and area of the City. Smaller facilities like the aquatics center occur more frequently due to the smaller service area and the number of people they can serve.

## **Types**

The City of Surprise has several recreation centers including a spring training stadium complex, aquatics centers, a tennis and racquet facility, and a fully accessible athletic facility. As community needs and interests change relative to recreational trends and resident demographics, the City should determine what is feasible to be built versus what activities may be short lived trends. The City should also look at other municipalities across the Valley and the nation to compare what recreation opportunities Surprise to capitalize on to meet current and future needs and attract visitors.

## **Locations**

In determining the location of Recreation Centers the City must consider:

- Demand from the residents based on public input and surveys
- Distance they must travel to use it
- Number of other recreational opportunities in the area
- Cost of construction
- Funding timeframe to build the facility
- Competition from private run facilities

## **Public/Private Partnerships**

When analyzing level of service for recreational centers it is important to consider the potential for partnerships with private, not-for-profit and other entities such as Charter Schools and School Districts. There is also the potential to turn over the recreation center service entirely to a non-profit or private partner. Common examples of this are fitness centers built by the YMCA and Boys and Girls Club.

These partnerships may provide operational support of a City owned facility or a separately

## Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

owned and operated facility. When considering partnerships or private provisions of services, the City must ensure the service is provided at a reasonable cost to the residents. The City should determine if operational costs will be sustainable, whether the City will subsidize initial construction costs and/or operational costs, and determine if there are competing facilities and timing concerns for when the facility and recreational service can be provided.

Equally, the City should determine if the private or non-profit provider will be able to consistently provide the service at the level desired by residents. If the level of service cannot be met, it is in the best interest of the residents, that the City should provide and operate the Recreation Center.

### Future Considerations

#### ***Inclusion and Diversity***

Surprise is becoming more diverse. Language barriers and cultural differences contribute to the challenge of being inclusive in providing recreation services. Differing values associated with cultural backgrounds, age demographics, income levels, single parents, racial and ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities, must be considered in the development of the Plan.

People with disabilities should have similar opportunities to independently use, enjoy, and participate in park programs. A great example is the City's Dreamcatcher Park, which incorporates the principles of Universal Design to create places where all feel welcome. Creating accessible places will be a goal for all future parks and open space facilities.

#### ***Health of the Citizens***

Communities should provide adequate facilities so everyone has the opportunity to access the outdoors and exercise near their home. Almost two-thirds of American adults do not get the recommended level of physical activity and the number of overweight youth is also growing at record levels. The City will continue to research and diversify their program offerings so that

residents have a variety of opportunities to increase their activity level and physical well-being.

#### ***Planning for the Future***

Recent trends in urban growth, financially challenged public agencies, changing land use patterns, etc. strongly suggest that decisions should be made early enough to identify and protect adequate open space before it is threatened by development and when it can be acquired at a much lower cost to the public.

These trends suggest that we cannot simply view open space as the land left over after other uses have been planned and developed. Open space lands are disappearing at an increasingly rapid rate. The City of Surprise, with its natural setting between mountains and rivers, has a unique opportunity to provide a diversity of activities and preserve quality open space for future generations. Land for open space, parks and civic uses should be planned as if it were infrastructure; establishing a framework that balances quality of life with economic development and community needs for the foreseeable future.

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 1: Opportunities

Create and maintain a high quality of life for Surprise residents by providing adequate open space and recreational opportunities.

#### **Policies**

1. Develop distinctive parks for the City of Surprise, with high quality facilities and design, unique character and uses, attractive safe, comfortable and sustainable
2. Periodically update the Surprise Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan to adapt to population growth, land use, recreational trends and community needs in determining the specific size, facilities, and locations for new parks; revitalization activities for existing parks; and programs/enhancements for

# Recreation and Open Space Element



existing public and private recreation programs.

3. Utilize park classifications (e.g., Neighborhood Park, Community park, City Parkland urban park/sports complex) and LOS requirements to increase recreational acreage within the City to meet specific park and open space targets.
4. Ensure parks and recreation facilities are designed to accommodate persons of all ages and abilities.
5. Locate Community level parks to complement private HOA neighborhood parks so that a wider diversity of activities and opportunities for organized sports can be provided to the residents. Develop distinctive parks for the City of Surprise, with high quality facilities and design, unique character and uses, attractive safe, comfortable and sustainable
6. Develop parks in conjunction with schools so that shared facilities meet both the school and residents' needs.
7. Utilize floodplains and storm water management areas to develop compatible passive and active recreational areas and open space.
8. Develop parks that contain a mix of active and passive recreation facilities, potentially including tot lots, defined and improved play field and/or sport court areas, and picnic/seating/shade areas that are landscaped/hardscaped in a pleasing manner. Parks should generally be located in the center of their service area and can be developed jointly with schools and private development.
9. Establish a standard of 8.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 population allocated as:
  - 3.0 acres for City owned developed parks
  - 3.5 acres for City owned open space
  - 1.5 acres for private, open parks
10. Overall parkland acreage will be measured by size requirements for park types and open space types.
11. Continue to improve, expand, and construct

parks in conjunction with housing growth, demographic composition, and user desires.

## Goal 2: Parks

Provide high quality, safe, sustainable and distinctive parks that meet community needs.

### Policies

1. Periodically review and update the Parks, Recreation and Trails Master Plan in the City's as it applies to development proposals to determine if they are meeting the need for new City and Community level parks.
2. Increase the amount of park and open space identified in the City's developments to total 13 percent (i.e., equally divided between parks and open space areas) of the net project area.
3. Ensure all City parks have adequate facilities and personnel to manage, maintain and operate an attractive, safe and effective park system.
4. Regularly evaluate and update the requirements for impact fees and dedication of land in-lieu of impact fees as needed to assemble land and fund park design, development and maintenance.
5. Identify and acquire Community Parks (greater than 25-acres in size) for city ownership, that are not constrained by more than 50% of land area utilized for storm water management.
6. The minimum park size dedicated donated to the City or offered to the City through development agreements will be 15-acres in size, with no more than 50% of the land area utilized for storm water management.
7. Privately developed neighborhood (HOA) parks will have meaningful playgrounds and neighborhood amenities provided for the residents, with storm water management limited to a maximum of 70% of land area.
8. Maintain a Capital Improvements Program (CIP) that includes, land costs, infrastructure,

## Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

design, construction, and revitalization of parks utilizing available resources over a ten-year timeframe.

9. Community level parks should be developed when the residential designated land within its service area is 50 percent built-out.
10. Private HOA neighborhood parks and school recreational facilities proposed as an amenity in a subdivision shall be developed in conjunction with the first phase of the proposed development.

### Goal 3: Greenway and Signature Trail

Create a system of Signature Greenways throughout the City that utilizes existing natural and constructed features to connect the City together and to other parts of the valley.

#### Policies

1. Protect and secure Trilby Wash, 2 West Wash and Whitman Wash as continuous Greenbelt corridors that create the City's signature trail and linear park system.
2. Evaluate the appropriate impact fee or dedication of in-lieu land to assemble major wash corridors as part of the City's signature Greenway and linear park system.
3. Work with The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Lands and other conservancies to identify and secure open space from public use.
4. Provide a connected parkway road system that provides continuous open space and trails access along at least one side of roadways as part of the Greenway system.
5. Provide grade separated crossings along the Greenway at major arterials, canals, washes and railroads, and provide safe roadway crossings at intersections so that multiuse trail corridors are integrated into contiguous open space.

### Goal 4: Sports Tourism

Continue to promote Surprise as a sports destination that attracts visitors and supports

economic development.

#### Policies

1. Continue to develop facilities and signature events that attract both amateur and professional sport tournaments at the local, regional and national level.
2. Develop facilities and a sports complex to host soccer, lacrosse and field sport signature events while providing expanded recreational facilities for the residents.
3. Develop an indoor Fieldhouse Facility to host volleyball, basketball and court signature events while providing expanded recreational facilities for the residents.

### Goal 5: Regional Planning

Coordinate park planning and capital improvements with other jurisdictions to support open space and recreation needs in the larger region.

#### Policies

1. Coordinate with the Maricopa County Parks Department to utilize county land to buffer adjacent uses, provide trail connections, and potentially add a trailhead at the north edge of the White Tank Mountain Regional Park.
2. Coordinate with Maricopa County Planning and Development Department to incorporate adopted park and open space standards within proposed projects developed inside the planning area.
3. Coordinate with the Cities of Buckeye and Peoria to establish and maintain appropriate trail connections where common jurisdictional boundaries exist.
4. Communicate regularly with the Arizona State Land Department and other public agencies to gain their consent for the appropriate designation, disposition, or acquisition of land classified as parks or open space under their control within the Surprise planning area.
5. Ensure that any development in the

# Recreation and Open Space Element



floodplain is processed through appropriate regulatory agencies and meets all necessary requirements.

## Goal 6: Variety of Activities

Enhance the quantity, variety and value of recreational activities available to City residents.

### Policies

1. Evaluate the need for multi-purpose Recreation Center(s) to serve all age groups and abilities.
2. Survey City residents every three years to determine their desires for new recreational activities and programs.
3. Initiate and maintain partnerships with school districts, charter schools, and other educational providers within the planning area to utilize their facilities for City sponsored recreation programs.
4. Continue to develop city-wide events and celebrations that build community civic pride and attract visitors to the City for signature events.

## Goal 7: Natural Open Space

Expand the City's Open Space System to protect valued resources and meet the future needs of City residents.

### Policies

1. Identify appropriate locations for natural open space areas and Greenway corridors within the Surprise planning area.
2. Create an open space zoning classification within the City's municipal code to implement the designation of open space in the general plan.
3. Ensure that property owners provide approval, in writing, prior to rezoning lands for open space per State of Arizona Revised

Statutes.

4. Designate and zone areas identified as "Conservation Areas" on the MAG Desert Spaces Plan as open space.
5. Achieve an open space standard of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents through partnerships, conservation easements and acquisitions.
6. Monitor the planning and design process of the West Valley Recreation Corridor that focuses on the connectivity of the Agua Fria/ New River Corridor from Estrella Regional Park to north of Lake Pleasant Regional Park for pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.
7. Work with the Town of Buckeye, Maricopa County and the Arizona Game and Fish Department to identify and implement wildlife open space corridors between White Tank Mountain Regional Park, the Hassayampa River, Agua Fria River and McMicken Dam.
8. Utilize natural washes as part of a connected trail system throughout the planning area. Washes should also be considered as natural drainage conveyances, as part of the community's stormwater management system.
9. Establish a White Tank Mountain North Trailhead Park. Pursue partnerships with the Maricopa County Parks Department to secure and develop a trailhead park on the northern boundary of the White Tank Mountains.
10. Pursue the establishment of a Hassayampa Preserve with the BLM as a continuation of The Nature Conservancy's Hassayampa River Preserve.
11. Pursue the establishment of a Bradshaw Mountain Park trailhead with the United States Forest Service. The opportunity would establish a park at the boundary of the USFS land providing controlled access, trails and open space to the residents of Surprise.
12. Protect scenic resources such as ridgelines, steep-slopes (greater than 10 percent), and Palo Verde-Saguaro foothill vegetation areas as open space through the use of density

## Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

transfer or purchase of development rights, acquisition, donation, or other acceptable methods

### Goal 8: Man-made Open Space

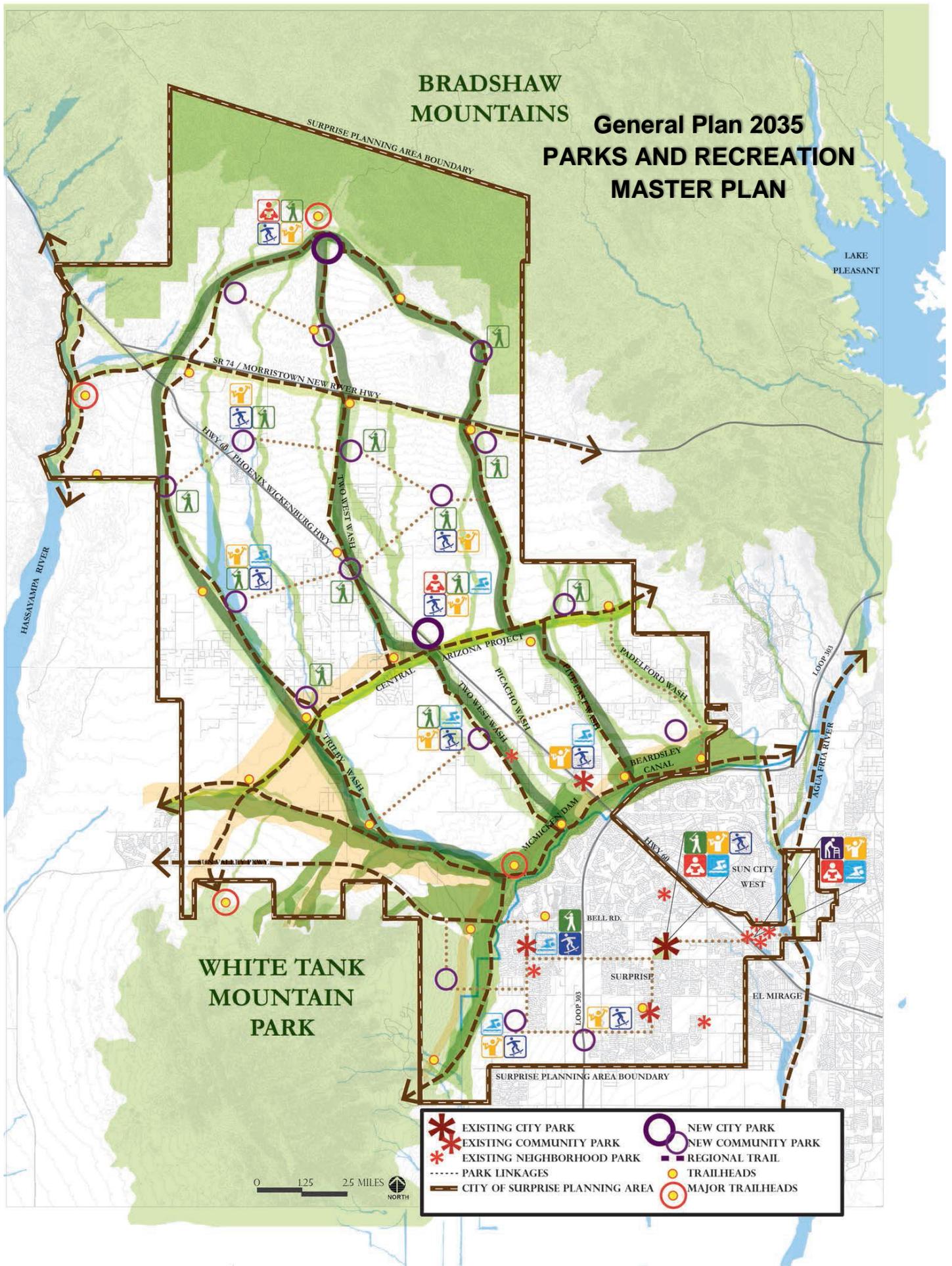
Identify the appropriate locations for created open space areas and corridors within the Surprise planning area.

#### Policies

1. Work with the Cities of Buckeye, Peoria, El Mirage, Maricopa County, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management and Maricopa Water District to utilize McMicken Dam, Central Arizona Project canal, Beardsley Canal, and Agua Fria River as the primary open space linkages between White Tank Mountain Regional Park, Lake Pleasant Regional Park, and Estrella Mountain Regional Park.
2. Discourage development within the boundaries of 100-year floodplain and wash corridors and encourage the dedication of a continuous 50-foot minimum setback on both sides of the 100-year floodplain boundary as a recreational buffer and trail corridor.
3. Ensure that natural drainage channels are protected and where feasible used as part of a connected trails system that links open space, parks, recreational facilities, schools and other public facilities.

# BRADSHAW MOUNTAINS

## General Plan 2035 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

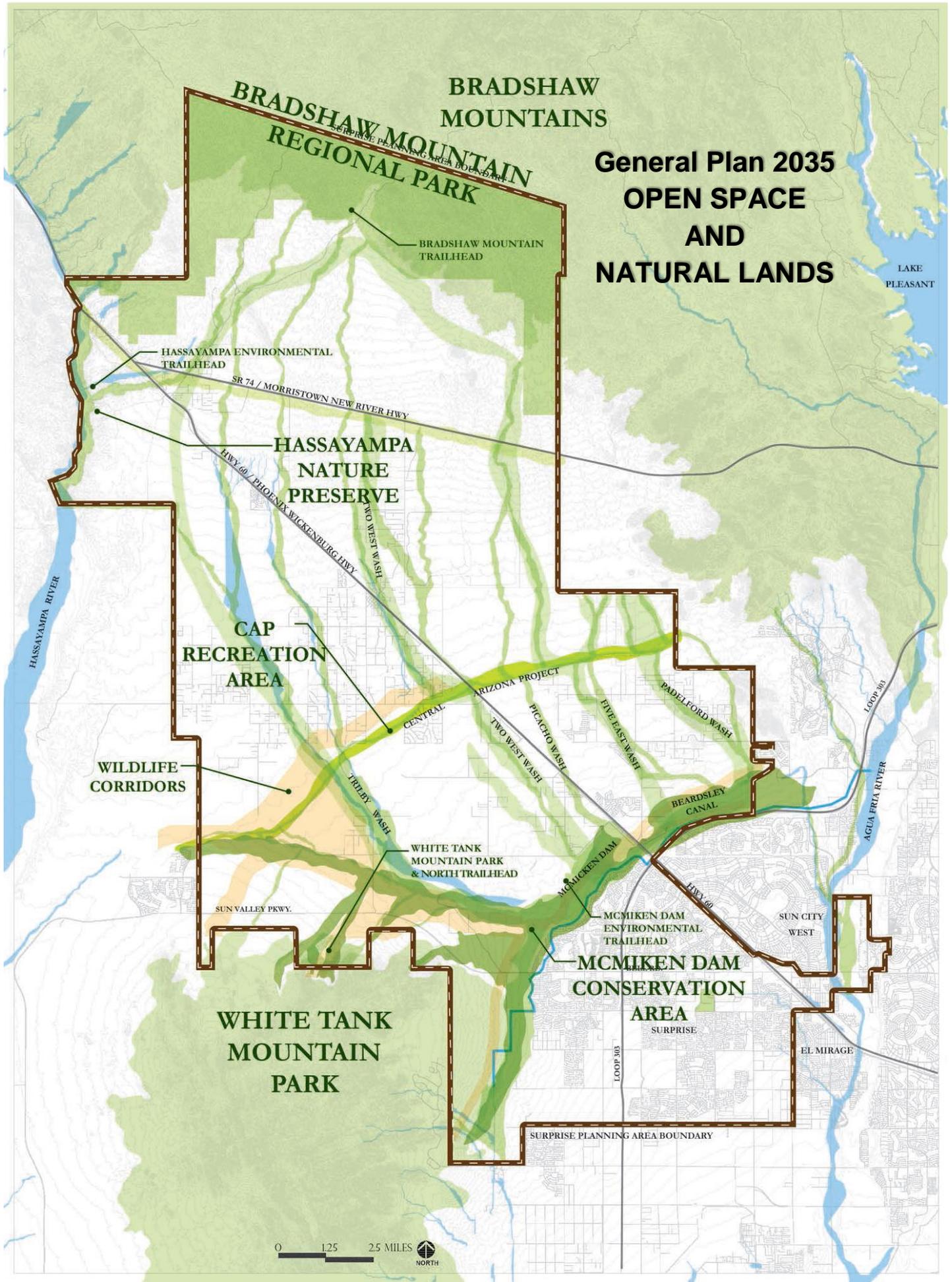


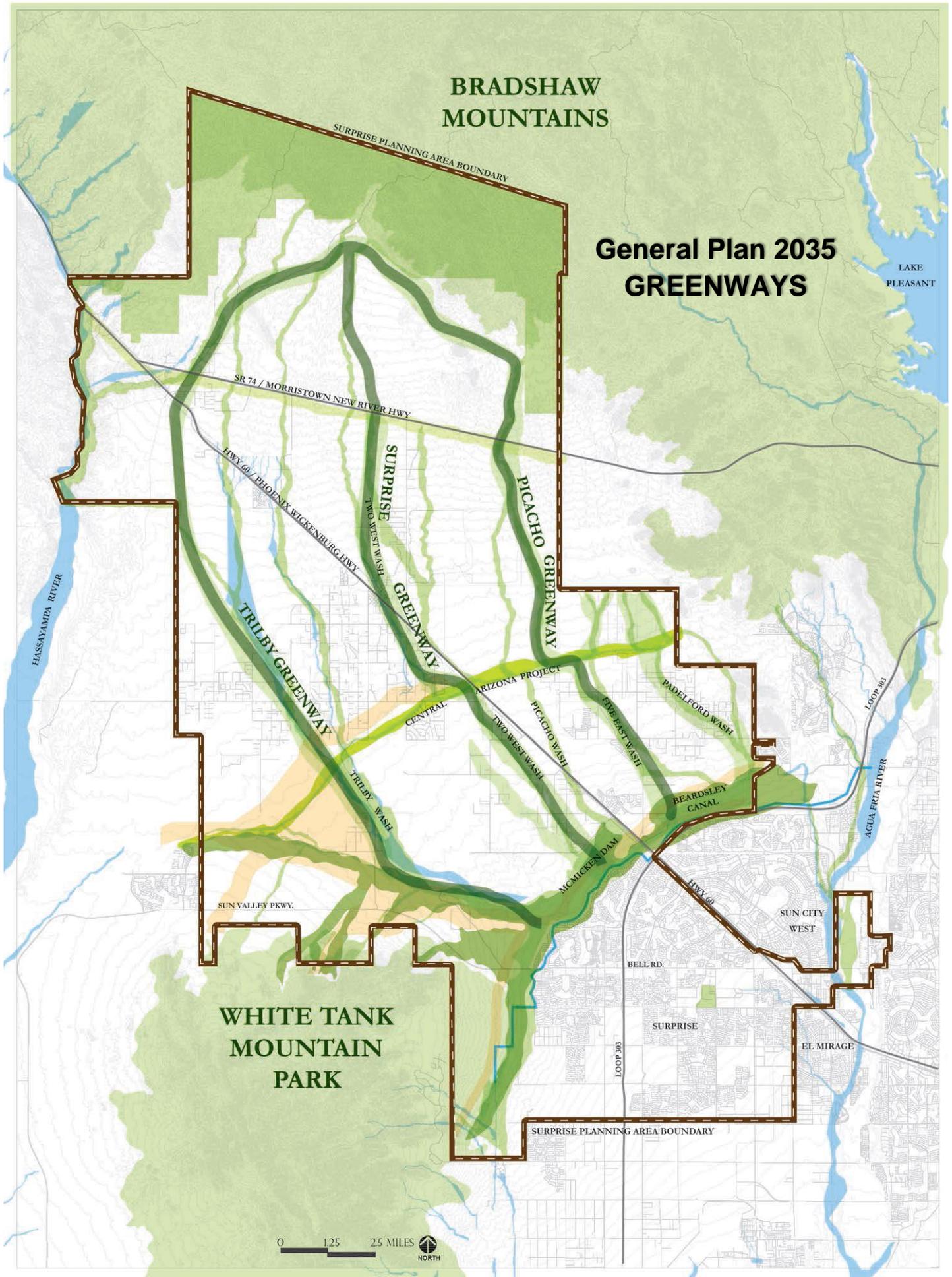
WHITE TANK MOUNTAIN PARK

0 1.25 2.5 MILES



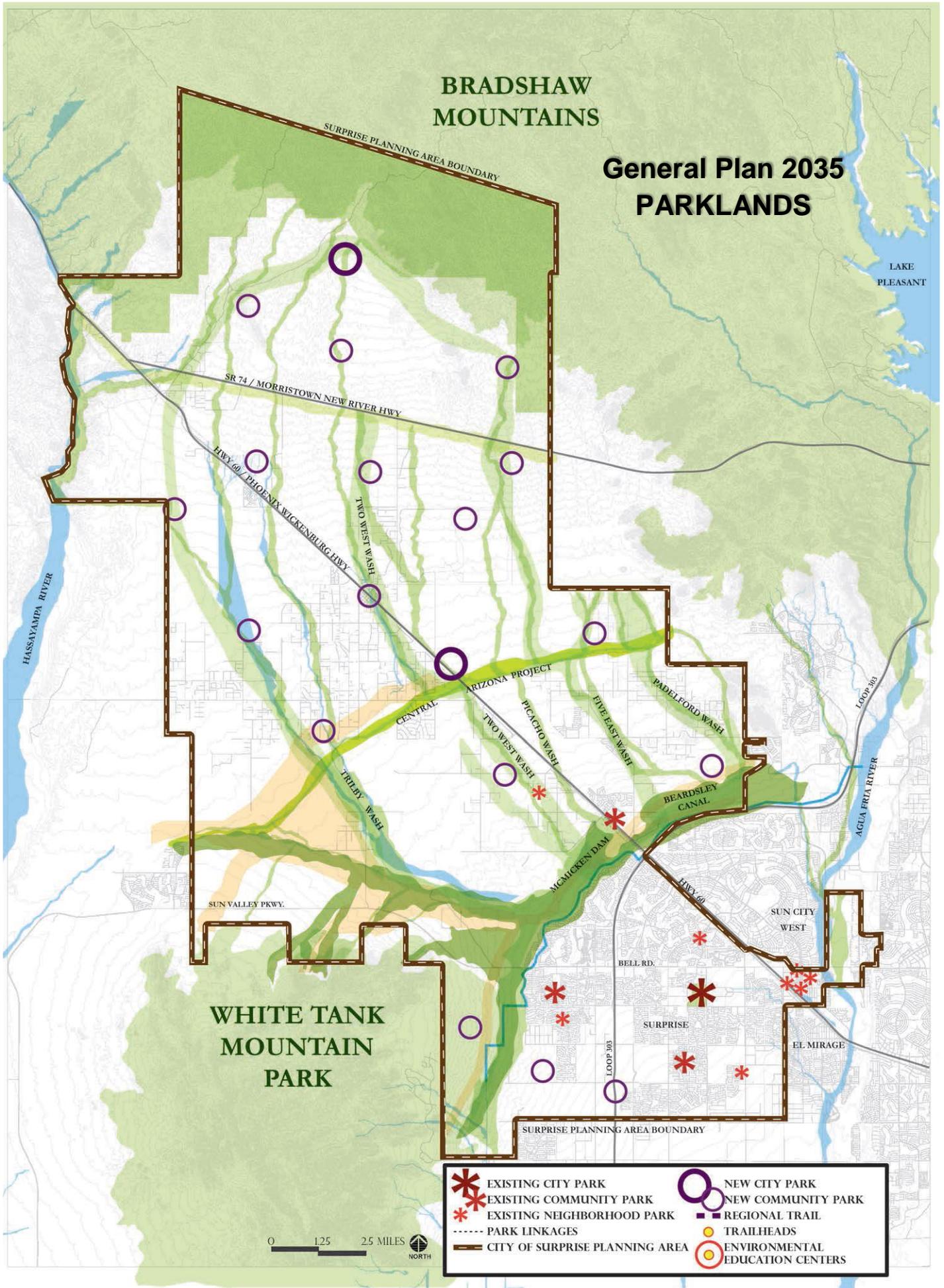
- EXISTING CITY PARK
- EXISTING COMMUNITY PARK
- EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD PARK
- PARK LINKAGES
- CITY OF SURPRISE PLANNING AREA
- NEW CITY PARK
- NEW COMMUNITY PARK
- REGIONAL TRAIL
- TRAILHEADS
- MAJOR TRAILHEADS

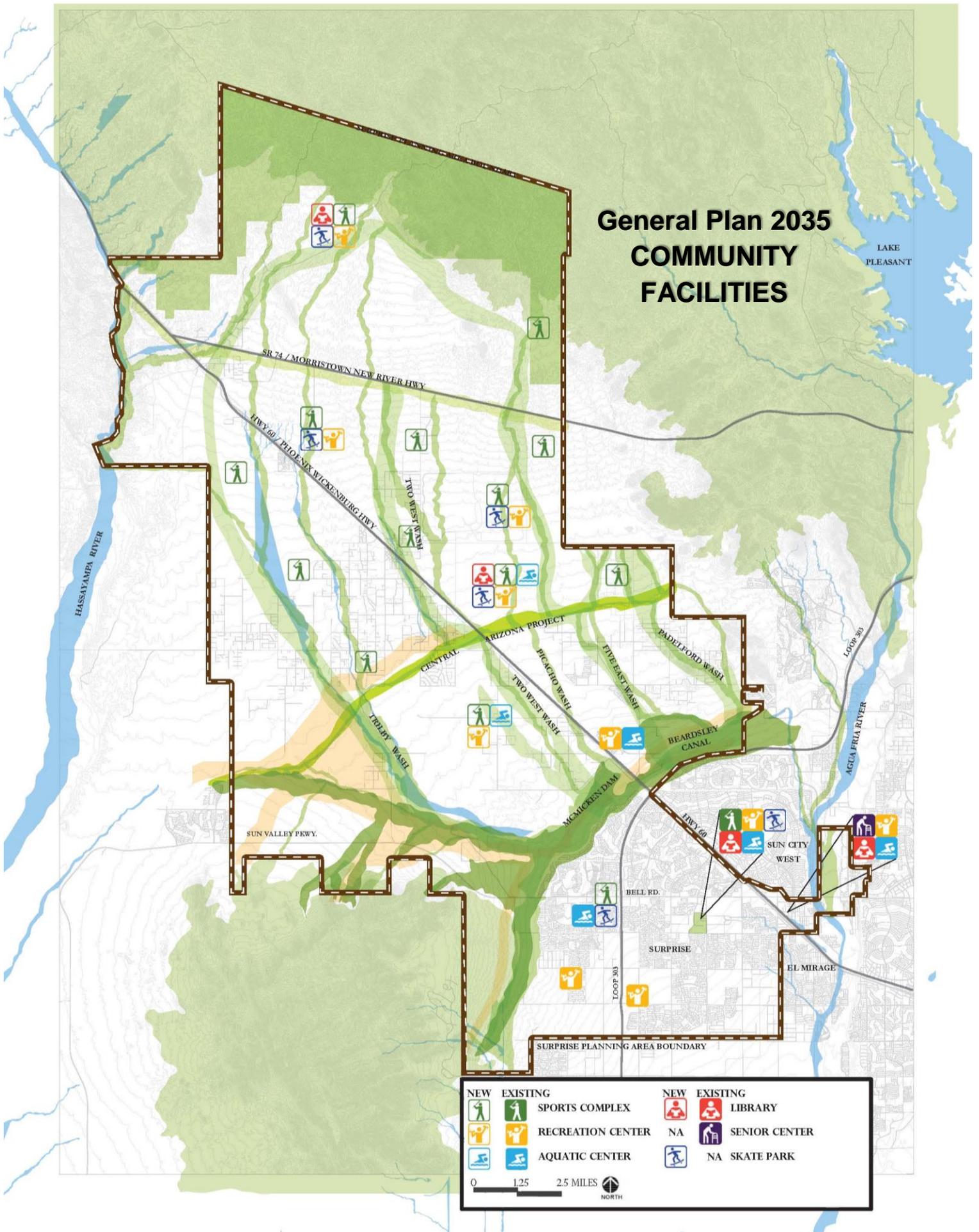




# BRADSHAW MOUNTAINS

## General Plan 2035 PARKLANDS





## Education Element

### INTRODUCTION

The education element provides for not only a higher standard for elementary and secondary education, but continuing education in the form of trade schools, colleges, and universities, as well as lifelong education within the community.

Although school districts are separate political jurisdictions, the actions of the City can have a profound impact on the ability of the schools to provide a quality educational environment. Unless coupled with cooperative planning between the school districts and the City, a high rate of residential growth could lead to over-crowding at existing school sites.

The City of Surprise, both within the incorporated City limits and Surprise Planning Area, is presently served by five school districts: Dysart, Morristown, Nadaburg, Peoria, and Wickenburg (see map on page 121). In addition to the school districts, Surprise has a number of charter schools that provide alternate educational opportunities.

### DISCUSSION

#### Primary Education

Primary education within the City of Surprise is conducted by public school districts, charter schools, and private schools. School locations are shown on the Schools and School Districts Map on page 121. Even though the City cannot directly increase the level of education for our residents, it can be aided indirectly through support and constant collaboration with all education providers.

#### *Partnership*

The City has created intergovernmental agreements with Dysart School District for mutual aid. As the City grows and more school districts work with Surprise, agreements should be reached to continue effective support to provide the highest quality of life and education for residents.

#### *Growth*

As Surprise continues to grow, more schools will be needed to accommodate the increase in population. This increase in student population will require the construction of new schools.

The construction of these schools will be led by responsible school districts, but the City can assist in providing the best possible locations and work with developers to coordinate donation agreements.

#### *Community*

Schools have always been an important part of our communities. They educate our children, host neighborhood events, and provide recreational opportunities. Surprise will work to place schools central to neighborhoods to encourage walking to school safely. This can reduce the amount of traffic on our roads as well as the number of buses that must serve each school providing a benefit to the City, residents, and school districts.

#### *Youth Involvement*

The input of younger generations should not be overlooked during City planning processes, but instead the youth should be engaged and their opinions should be incorporated into the fabric of our community. Youth involvement will not only benefit the community, but it will provide a practical educational experience into how a community functions and develops.

# Education Element



## Post Secondary Education

Continuing education is pivotal to the advancement of residents and economic opportunities. To raise the educational opportunities the city of Surprise strives to bring universities, trade schools, and colleges to the region. The presence of excelling educational and occupational training facilities convenient for the Surprise workforce is regarded as one of the community's greatest assets in attracting industries. The Communiversity at Surprise provides educational experience and graduates for local job growth. An educated population with excelling job skills allows for greater earning potential.

Arizona will experience a 51 percent increase in the number of high school graduates by 2018 according to the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). For Arizona this equates to over 80,000 students who deserve the opportunity to attend an institution of higher learning. This creates an open market for public and private post secondary education to fill. With the increase in the number of students seeking education, the Arizona public university system will not be able to accommodate the projected increase in student enrollment as shown by Figure 2.5A without expanding services.

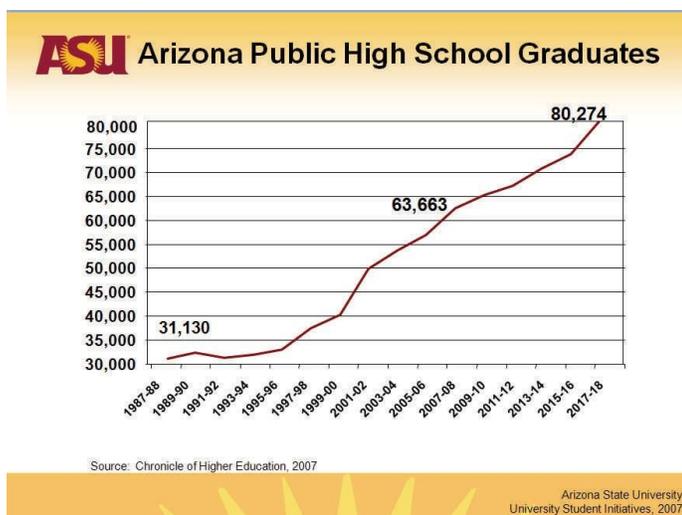


Figure 2.5A

### Underserved Market

The Surprise area is underserved by educational opportunities. The Communiversity at Surprise is the city's only higher education institution. Communiversity, located adjacent to City Hall, is a partnership of higher education institutions dedicated to providing students with the opportunity to continue their education and earn progressive degrees.

The market for educational opportunities in Surprise can be expanded by targeting facilities that tailor their education to take advantage of the unique demographics and resources available in the region.

### Lifelong Learning

Education is a primary factor to attaining to a higher quality of life by residents. The city of Surprise provides communities with the tools needed to impart lifelong learning. This can be done through private and public education facilities, support of museums, historic landmarks, and static educational displays such as wildlife and botanical displays.

### Educational Opportunities Types

Surprise currently has two facilities for lifelong learning; the Surprise Senior Center and the Rio Salado Life Long Learning Center. The city supports future opportunities as they present themselves. Typical lifelong learning facilities include botanical gardens, zoos, museums, and libraries.

Educational opportunities should also provide residents with knowledge about events and how to become more involved with their neighborhood, the city, or other organizations. Currently Surprise provides the "Surprise University" that offers the residents an understanding of city government and operations as well as training to become effective community leaders.

# Surprise General Plan 2035: Foundation for the Future

## GOALS AND POLICIES

### Goal 1: Improve Facilities

Support efforts by public and private educational institutions to improve educational facilities and services in the City.

#### Policies

1. Collaborate with schools and identify opportunities to help implement their goals.
2. Expand public, public-private, community, and school partnerships.
3. Promote and encourage opportunities for lifelong learning.
4. Work to identify strategies to share facilities and develop shared use agreements.
5. Attract an institute of higher education to enhance educational opportunities for Surprise residents.

### Goal 2: Additional Facilities

Plan for educational facility locations as development and redevelopment occurs.

#### Policies

1. Maintain a good working relationship with schools in order to ensure that all new development is adequately served by existing or new school sites.
2. Strategically locate school sites so that they serve as the nucleus of new neighborhoods and master planned communities.
3. Enhance visibility of educational providers in the City and access of residents to the providers.
4. Work closely with each of the schools within the Surprise Planning Area to ensure that educational facility needs are met when new development occurs.
5. All developers requesting project approval must work with the local school districts to determine the impact on the school system,

and implement strategies agreed on by both parties to address the impact.

### Goal 3: Workforce

Surprise should have a well-educated workforce-prepared citizenry.

#### Policies

1. Maintain a variety of educational and training institutions.
2. Locate and site an appropriate mix of high quality primary, secondary, and post-secondary educational facilities in the city to support the population growth.
3. Support effective education, training, and workforce development to build a labor force able to perform “knowledge work.”
4. Surprise students, teachers, and parents are provided with access to affordable broadband communications as a critical element for advancing education.

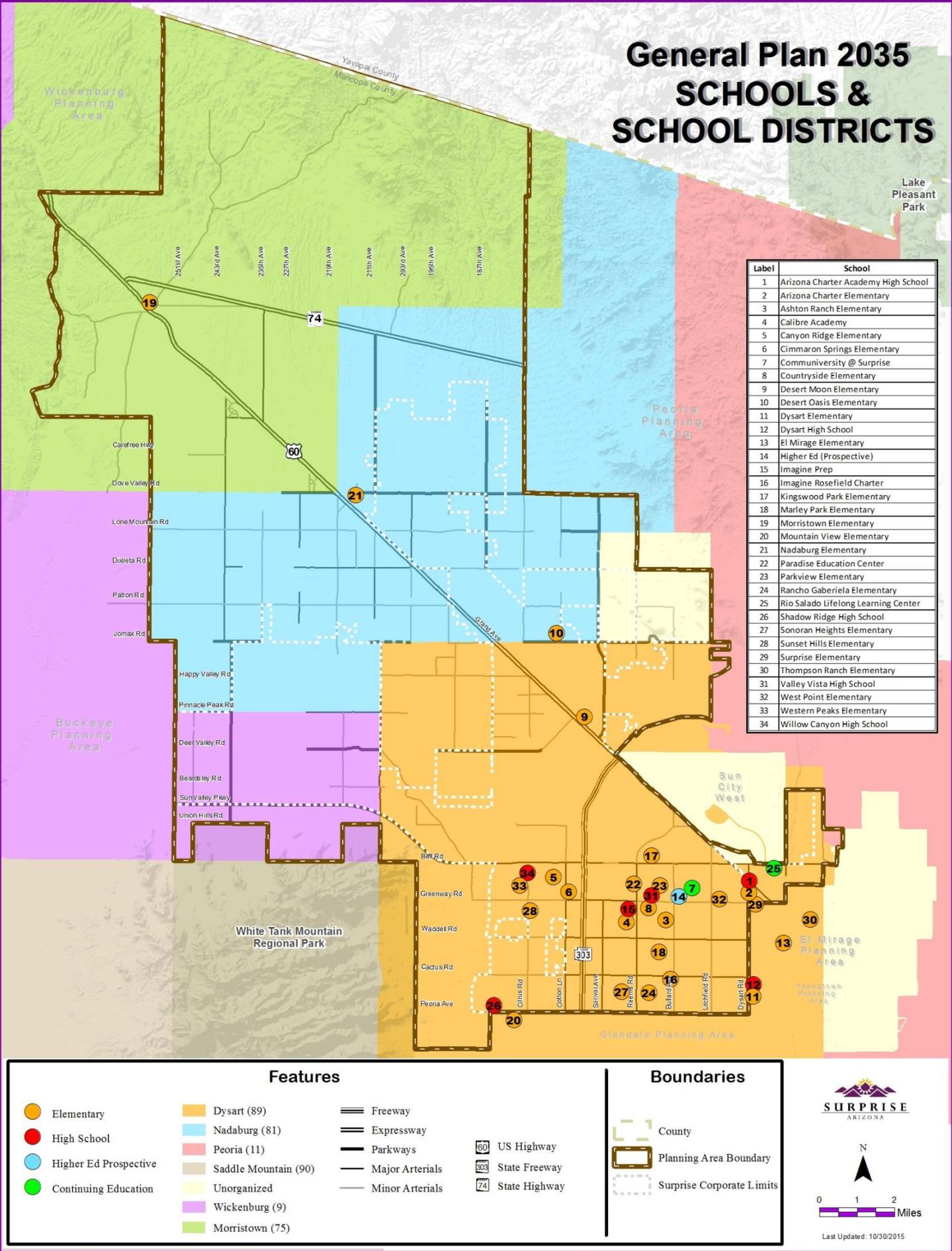
### Goal 4: Learning Environment

Encourage a Citywide learning environment for residents of all ages.

#### Policies

1. Support education based facilities such as museums, libraries, conference centers, science centers, gardens, etc.
2. Take advantage of public spaces such as city hall, fire stations, and parks as a place to educate the public on native plants, water and energy conservation methods, career opportunities, and other public issues through static displays or special events.
3. The City of Surprise should continue to promote efforts related to youth education and their involvement in the community.
4. Create and adopt a Youth Master Plan to address the needs and desires of the City’s younger generations.

# General Plan 2035 SCHOOLS & SCHOOL DISTRICTS



Label	School
1	Arizona Charter Academy High School
2	Arizona Charter Elementary
3	Ashton Ranch Elementary
4	Calibre Academy
5	Canyon Ridge Elementary
6	Cimmaron Springs Elementary
7	Community @ Surprise
8	Countryside Elementary
9	Desert Moon Elementary
10	Desert Oasis Elementary
11	Dysart Elementary
12	Dysart High School
13	El Mirage Elementary
14	Higher Ed (Prospective)
15	Imagine Prep
16	Imagine Rosefield Charter
17	Kingswood Park Elementary
18	Marley Park Elementary
19	Morristown Elementary
20	Mountain View Elementary
21	Nadaburg Elementary
22	Paradise Education Center
23	Parkview Elementary
24	Rancho Gabriela Elementary
25	Rio Salado Lifelong Learning Center
26	Shadow Ridge High School
27	Sonoran Heights Elementary
28	Sunset Hills Elementary
29	Surprise Elementary
30	Thompson Ranch Elementary
31	Valley Vista High School
32	West Point Elementary
33	Western Peaks Elementary
34	Willow Canyon High School

### Features

- Elementary
- High School
- Higher Ed Prospective
- Continuing Education
- Dysart (89)
- Nadaburg (81)
- Peoria (11)
- Saddle Mountain (90)
- Unorganized
- Wickenburg (9)
- Morristown (75)
- Freeway
- Expressway
- Parkway
- Major Arterials
- Minor Arterials
- US Highway
- State Freeway
- State Highway

### Boundaries

- County
- Planning Area Boundary
- Surprise Corporate Limits

N

0 1 2 Miles

Last Updated: 10/30/2015

## Arts and Culture Element

### INTRODUCTION

Active celebration of a community's art, culture, and heritage is an essential tool for the continued growth and revitalization of a city. Even as a relatively young city, Surprise has strong ties to the past with farming, housing, the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad built in 1892, and US 60/Grand Avenue placing Surprise as the northwest gateway to the Valley of the Sun. Surprise can build on this as well as the long gone native tribes, growing Hispanic culture, and the existing retirement communities. Beyond celebrations of community and culture, Surprise will look to increase both performance art and physical art pieces. Utilizing the transformative potential of the arts for community enhancement will provide a celebration of the community, and instill pride throughout the City. Major guiding principles in this chapter are:

- The Arts as catalyst for community investment and development.
- Community driven identity.
- Allowing an evolving and accumulating expression toward a comprehensible sense of place.

### DISCUSSION

#### Art and Culture Programs

Access to art and cultural events has become a widely recognized boost in the quality of life in any City. Surprise has sponsored art programs through various public/private partnerships, and is looking to provide more access to a wider variety of programs. Some of the programs that are to be supported include art in public places, art walks, civic art projects, and cultural and holiday celebrations.

**Places That Support Art and Cultural Activities**  
Public art and cultural events cannot exist without a place for people to gather and experience them. These spaces can come in the shape of formal concert halls or more intimate outdoor amphitheaters built into City parks or commercial centers. Art can be applied throughout the City on our streets and sidewalks, in public parks, and in civic buildings. It can be as little as a distinctive street sign or a truly original neighborhood monument.

#### ***Making Art Visible***

Many cities have adopted policies to make art more visible in the design of public and private buildings and infrastructure improvements. Emphasis is also placed on using art to create a sense of neighborhood identity and to provide a connection to local history and culture rather than as an architectural decoration. Art projects serve to document, celebrate, and define communities whose stories may once have been overlooked.

Public art strengthens a community's identity. Transit stations, streets, sidewalks, and parks all benefit from the addition of art. Art can also be used to tie together landscaping, lighting, paving, and signage and create gateways for neighborhoods and communities.

#### ***Arts Districts***

Arts Districts are generally located in mixed-use areas that have a high concentration of arts and cultural facilities. Often creative work is enhanced with the energy and excitement that is generated when there is more than one activity occurring in an area. It is natural that arts districts would form in these mixed-use, diverse

# Arts & Culture Element



clusters. Theater, music, and visual arts audiences also grow when the opportunity for exposure to various cultures and cultural events is present.

Promoting the formation of such creativity clusters by creating Arts Districts not only provides value to art patrons, it also spurs creative collaboration among arts organizations and artists. It can result in inventive artistic products as well as cost savings through shared facilities.

Arts Districts also have an economic development value. Retail shops, restaurants, and hotels find a market for their goods and services in Arts Districts. Many cities have already planned or implemented such districts, positioning the arts at the center of their urban areas. Surprise has a sufficiently large population and tourist base so such an effort may be feasible.

## ***Revitalization through Arts***

A revitalization plan can take many forms to change the existing conditions within a community. The plan may focus on issues including: improving infrastructure, housing, economic viability, transportation, historic preservation, or perhaps a combination of all of the factors. However, arts and cultural activities may serve as an agent of change as well, but unlike the others (except for historic preservation) arts and cultural activities have the ability to give the community a sense of place. The arts revitalize neighborhoods and promote economic prosperity. Participation in the arts improves physical and psychological well-being. The arts provide a catalyst for the creation of social capital and the attainment of important community goals.

## ***Partnerships***

Support for the arts is increasingly relying on partnerships with business. Typically, the audiences for the arts are often the same markets that businesses are trying to reach. The trend toward partnerships has provided the arts with new resources for programs and operations. These include both funding and contributions of

in-kind goods and services.

Volunteerism is another way to partner and support the arts. The City of Surprise can play a stronger role in by working with non-profits and other agencies. Collaboration among these organizations is crucial. In addition, the City of Surprise may look to neighboring cities to maximize resources and broaden the reach of the arts community.

## **GOALS AND POLICIES**

### **Goal 1: Historic and Cultural Resources**

Identify and preserve historic and cultural resources in the City of Surprise..

#### **Policies**

1. Create and adopt an Arts and Culture Master Plan to guide art program and projects in the City.
2. Create and adopt a Historic Preservation Master Plan to guide preservation efforts in the City.
3. Identify opportunities to partner with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office and similar organizations to enhance the City's historic preservation program.
4. Identify opportunities to partner with schools and various art groups to enhance the City's art program.
5. Continue to develop interpretive and informational materials to promote City's arts, heritage and cultural resources such as self-guided walking tour brochures.
6. Encourage, continue, and expand cultural arts and cultural events and festivals in the City to promote tourism.

### **Goal 2: Public and Private Projects**

Increase access to arts and culture for residents and visitors and incorporate art into public and private projects.

### Policies

1. Make efforts to include art in capital improvement projects including more art at City Hall.
2. Provide incentives to developers that include art in their projects through public art donations, working with local artists, students, and community groups to create public art projects.
3. Integrate art into redevelopment and revitalization projects, where appropriate.
4. Integrate arts into the development of the downtown area.
5. Continue to recruit theaters, museums, art galleries, recreation attractions, and civic-oriented uses in the City.
6. Identify permanent funding sources to promote arts and cultural programs in the City.
7. Encourage development and revitalization of the Original Townsite through arts.
8. Encourage recreation, and civic-oriented development through arts in the Original Townsite.
9. Find ways to promote key sites of interest in the Original Townsite to residents and visitors.