

5.0 Growth Areas

The Growth Areas Element identifies the specific areas served by multi-modal access and mobility where the City will strategically invest public resources to foster enhanced community development, viable economic retention, expansion, and growth. These areas should be capable of supporting concentrated development comprised of a variety of land uses in accordance with this plan.



5.1 Background

5.1.1 Purpose of the Growth Areas Element

As summarized in Section 1.1 of this General Plan, the City of Mesa has experienced rapid growth from its beginning in 1880 to the present. According to the 2000 census, Mesa is the 43rd largest city in the country and second largest in the Phoenix metropolitan area. This growth is expected to continue in the future. The Growing Smarter statute enacted by the Arizona Legislature directed that communities in the state include targeted development areas in their General Plans. Sound planning principles would then be applied to these areas to create positive development patterns. The statute provides that the Growth Areas Element include policies and implementation strategies that are designed to accomplish the following:

- Make automobile, transit, and other multi-modal circulation efficient, make infrastructure expansion economical, and provide for a rational pattern of land development.
- Conserve natural resources and open space areas in the growth areas and coordinate their location to similar areas outside the growth area boundaries
- Promote the public and private construction of infrastructure that is coordinated with development activity.

5.1.2 Catalysts for Change

There are several factors that could significantly impact the pace and type of development that will occur in future growth areas. These factors are not only the changing technology of the world but the way in which we live, work and play. These factors include:

Vacant Land

Within the planning area boundaries 22 percent of the land is vacant. Additionally, underutilized land will become more attractive, with freeway access and visibility or mass transit service.

Financing of Infrastructure

The City has typically floated general obligation and revenue bonds to finance its infrastructure needs. While there is a fiscal impact fee mechanism in place, the substantial requirements for utilities and services may prompt the City to establish special improvement districts or other funding mechanisms to support growth areas.

Vehicular Commute

Historically, one could live anywhere in the Phoenix Metropolitan Area and reach work within a reasonable commute time. Now, with the substantial growth of the region, drivers are reaching their threshold for cross-valley commutes. The provision of proximate jobs and housing provides an attractive element for expanding or relocating businesses.

Quality of Life

While the past model of suburban expansion at the fringe of development was successful for many communities, the new focus is on a sustainable community that provides the elements of working, living and playing within close proximity. The attraction of the mature neighborhoods has taken hold in several parts of the Phoenix metropolitan area and has the opportunity to do the same for Mesa. The challenge is to provide the investment and attention necessary for the private sector to see the opportunities and potential for success.

5.2 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal GA-1

Create a sustainable urban environment in the City's designated growth areas in a manner compatible with the remainder of the planning area.

Objective GA-1.1

To strategically guide new growth to create a compatible, well functioning community.

Policy GA-1.1a

Utilize the adopted Land Use Plan to assess the compatibility of development proposals within identified growth areas.

Policy GA-1.1b Promote the preparation of Development Master Plans to conceptually define land uses, multi-modal circulation, mobility, fiscal impact, and recreation and open space opportunities within growth areas.

Policy GA-1.1c Utilize the adopted Design Guidelines to ensure visual and functional quality in growth areas.

Policy GA-1.1d Promote infill and new residential development in areas convenient to the City's Economic Activity Areas.

Policy GA-1.1e Maximize the provision of compatible retail uses within growth areas.

Objective GA-1.2 To maximize public investment in both residential and employment uses that will directly and indirectly generate municipal revenue in growth areas.

Policy GA-1.2a Provide strategic investments of capital facilities and services within growth areas to induce private investment.

Policy GA-1.2b Annually update and prioritize the five-year Capital Improvement Plan to provide high levels of service to growth areas.

Policy GA-1.2c Re-evaluate the development fee and fiscal impact fee methodology every three years to ensure that its fee structure reflects the costs of growth.

Objective GA-1.3 To provide an efficient, multi-modal transportation system to serve growth areas.

Policy GA-1.3a Develop a transportation system in growth areas that supports the goals, objectives, and policies of the transportation element and meets the intent of the transportation plan.

Objective GA-1.4 To enhance the environmental quality within defined growth areas.

Policy GA-1.4a Strive to locate the desired employment sectors within growth areas to minimize the amount of vehicle miles traveled by its residents.

Policy GA-1.4b Strive to incorporate natural area open space compatible with the Sonoran Desert vegetation community in future development projects.

Policy GA-1.4c Strive to attain public services and facilities level of service standards to protect the health and safety of existing and future residents and employees.

Policy GA-1.4d Protect existing and future residential and other sensitive uses from the effects of vehicular and aviation-generated noise.

Policy GA-1.4e Protect the quality of the environment in growth areas by supporting county, regional, state, and federal environmental programs, laws, and regulations.

5.3 Plan Components

The Mesa General Plan has identified four growth areas where the City will focus its investment efforts for revitalized, redeveloped and new development. These areas are described below and shown on Figure 5-1.

5.3.1 Falcon Field

The Falcon Field Growth area is approximately 4,560 acres including the existing airport and extending to the north, south and west. There are numerous opportunities for economic development in this area based on the existing reliever airport, access to the future extension of Red Mountain Freeway, and proximity to existing public facilities and infrastructure.

Because of the proximity to Falcon Field, this area is not suitable for residential development. However, it is well suited for business park and light industrial uses, and it is easily accessible from large residential neighborhoods.

The General Plan designates a mixture of Industrial, Business Park, Mixed Use/ Employment and public uses in this area. The employment development potential for this area is approximately 30,160 jobs.

5.3.2 Town Center/Main Street Corridor

The Town Center/Main Street Corridor area is approximately 5,300 acres along Main Street and includes the historic town site of Mesa. The corridor stretches from the border with Tempe to Higley Road and is a potential light rail/ bus rapid transit route. The area is between two freeway corridors and is intersected by numerous arterials that network the western part of the City. This growth area is close to existing entertainment, cultural and business activities, as well as numerous public amenities. There is a high level of diversity in this area which offer numerous opportunities for cultural and employment enhancements.

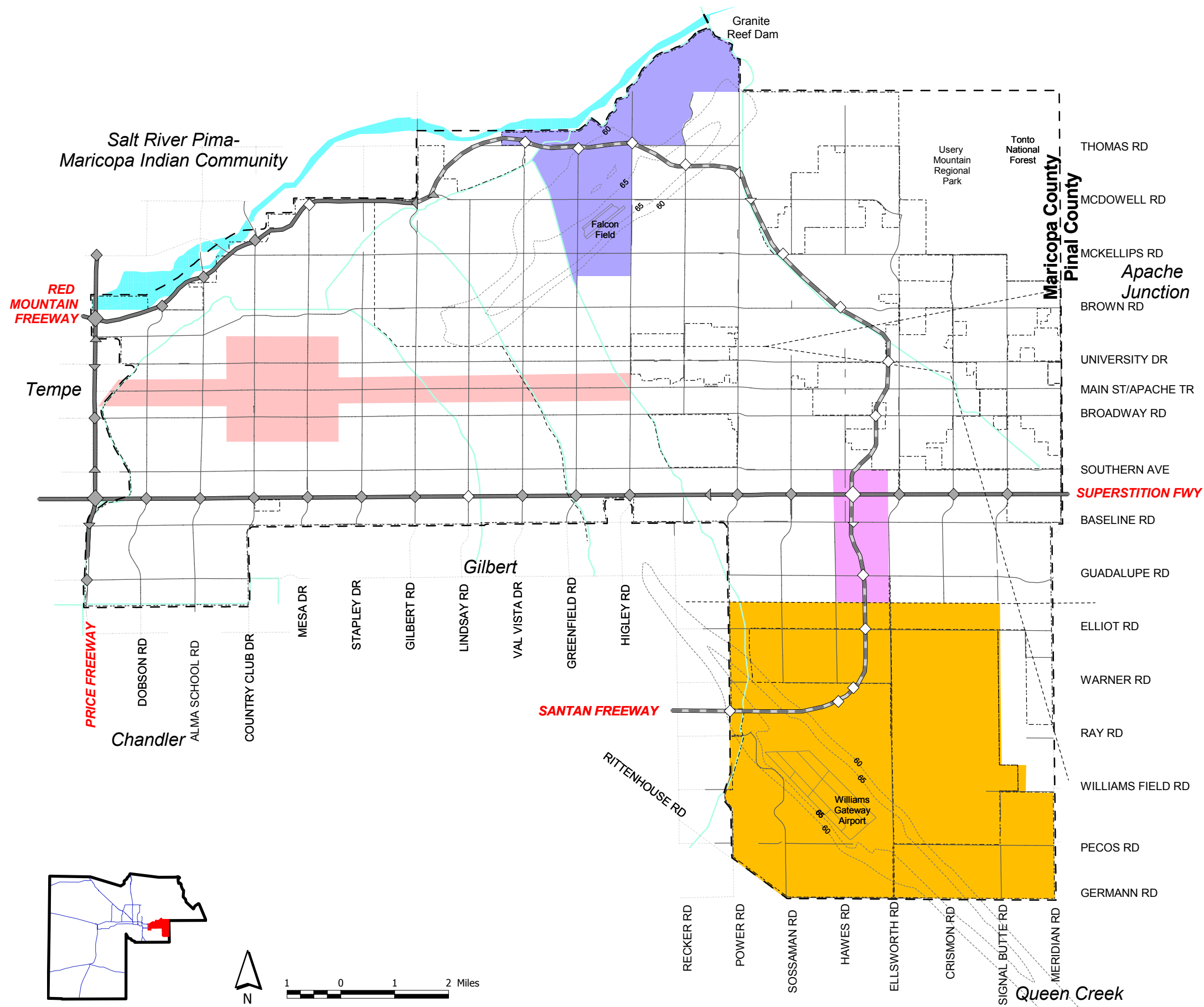
In terms of constraints, this area has aging infrastructure and land is often underutilized. The perception of much of the corridor is that it portrays a disjointed transition between rural and urban lifestyles.

The General Plan identifies a full array of land uses in this area, including the Town Center designation, which is very sensitive to historic and cultural land uses. The residential development potential for this area is 22,325 dwelling units on about 2,600 acres. This represents a population of about 46,700 with an average density of approximately 17.6 dwelling units to the acre.

The employment development potential for this area would provide approximately 38,930 jobs, or .83 jobs per capita, in the Town Center/Main Street Corridor.

Growth Areas

Figure 5-1



- Falcon Field Airport
- Town Center/Main Street Corridor
- Santan Corridor
- Williams Gateway

- Freeway
- Interchange
- Future Freeway
- Future Interchange
- Arterial Roadway
- Canals and Waterways
- Aviation Noise Contours
- Overhead Transmission Lines
- Planning Area Boundary



5.3.3 Santan Corridor

The Santan Corridor area is approximately 1,320 acres along the proposed Santan Freeway corridor between Southern Avenue and the power lines. The portion of the Santan Corridor between the power lines and Power Road is included in the Williams Gateway Growth Area. The width of the Santan Growth Area is approximately ½ mile on either side of the proposed freeway right-of-way.

The area provides excellent transportation linkages in terms of freeway access to both the Santan (Loop 202) and Superstition (U.S. 60) Freeways, as well as to Williams Gateway Airport. There are excellent opportunities for employment and commercial growth in this area because of the potential for using the multi-modal transportation systems in this area, as well as the large amount of vacant land. Development and redevelopment of land in this area provides great opportunities for sales tax enhancement.

In terms of constraints, this area is underdeveloped and lacks infrastructure. Also, growth in this area will be dependent on the funding and construction of the Santan Freeway.

The General Plan identifies a combination of residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed uses in this area. The residential development potential for this area is approximately 5,370 dwelling units on about 920 acres. This represents a population of about 12,900.

The employment development potential for this area would provide approximately 6,930 jobs, or 0.53 jobs per capita in the Santan Corridor.

5.3.4 Williams Gateway Area

The Williams Gateway Area is approximately 18,365 acres and includes the major portion of the southeast area of the community. Its boundaries are the power lines on the north, Germann Road on the south, Power Road on the west, and Signal Butte Road on the east, with an additional portion extending to Meridian Road between Williams Field Road and Germann Road. The area includes Williams Gateway Airport, the General Motors Proving Ground, and other adjoining properties.

This area represents a major opportunity for the achievement of innovative development patterns for the community. The vision for the area includes the creation of a second urban center for the Mesa community. The General Plan provides for a full array of land uses, including residential, commercial, business park, industrial, mixed-use, education, parks, and other public uses. As specified on the plan, the residential potential is approximately 8,900 dwelling units and a

corresponding population of about 26,300. The employment potential would provide approximately 147,700 jobs.

It is expected that additional detailed planning in conjunction with the Williams Gateway Airport, General Motors Proving Ground, and other properties will be needed to define the exact nature of the future development in this area.