

13.0 Safety

It is essential for the City of Mesa to ensure that the residents of Mesa enjoy not only a quality, but also a safe environment. In the event of a natural disaster or man-made emergency, the City is prepared to respond immediately to protect citizens, property, and businesses in the best manner possible. The Safety Element addresses the goals, objectives and policies necessary to provide a comprehensive program to deal with local, area-wide, regional and national emergencies.



13.1 Background

The City maintains an evacuation plan, emergency water supplies, communications for provision of emergency health care, law enforcement, disaster relief, roadway standards for emergency vehicles, building standards to facilitate emergency equipment and crews, and mapping to respond to and mitigate hazards that may be the result of a large-scale emergency or disaster.

This element of the Mesa General Plan addresses a variety of emergencies relating to both the natural environment and man-made environment that may impact Mesa. It does not address the on-going activities of police, fire, and emergency medical agencies, because these services are beyond the scope of this element.

13.1.1 Environmental Hazards

The City of Mesa, both internally and in cooperation with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, has carefully documented floodplain areas and has planned for future protective facilities. Eastern Maricopa County may be prone to severe weather and sudden heavy rainfall that often results in flash floods. Other flooding conditions may occur in the vicinity of the Salt River, north of the City boundaries, which drains both the Salt and Verde watersheds. Flood control projects along with conservation activities in the floodplains, as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other flood control activities have greatly improved the safety of the environment along the Salt River north of Mesa, as well as within the City itself.

It is also important that the emergency planning activities address rare and unforeseen events that could be the result of other natural disasters such as tornados, earthquakes, large brush fires and other potentially large-scale disasters.

13.1.2 Man Made Hazards

The Falcon Field Airport Land Use Guidelines (1994), the Williams Gateway Area Plan (1996), and the Williams Gateway Airport Part 150 Study (2000) each outline potential noise and safety considerations for these extremely important areas within the City of Mesa. It is important to consider these plans and update them to assure that the City has an up-to-date guideline for addressing related issues. These plans identify noise contours for 60 and 65 decibel noise disturbances that may occur on a regular basis, which designate no or limited residential development. However, areas lying outside these zones, which are under the flight path of aircraft, require aviation easements on homebuyer notification documents regarding aircraft noise potential.

An increased awareness of the hazardous man-made industrial and other processes has led to a series of planning efforts to protect citizens from accidental releases of hazardous chemicals. These planning efforts may be traced to environmental and emergency planning laws based on the Federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Law. This law also provides for information to be available to citizens in regard to hazardous chemicals that are in their community. According to this law, the City of Mesa networks with the State and Local Emergency Planning Agencies and the Maricopa County Local Emergency Planning Committee to develop emergency response plans for such disasters.

It is very important to be prepared for the results of a terrorist attack or act of war. Based on recent acts of terrorism relating to airports and governmental sites, we must again be prepared for the possibility of man-made emergencies. Therefore, any emergency planning needs to meet all federal, state and local laws in terms for this type of emergency, and have in place plans to guide us through evacuation, hazard identification, medical assistance, law enforcement, disaster relief and mitigation related to a community scale act of violence.

It is very important that the factors and policies in this element are included in the process of evaluating major land use issues. Future residents of Mesa should enjoy not only a quality, but also a safe urban environment.

13.1.3 Existing Emergency Preparedness Planning

Currently, the City of Mesa works closely with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County, Maricopa County Department of Emergency Services, the State of Arizona Division of Emergency Management, FEMA and other agencies to provide emergency and disaster planning. Hazardous materials mapping and response is networked with all levels of government from the City of Mesa Fire Department through the Maricopa County Local Emergency Planning Committee, and Arizona Emergency Response Commission. Through a network that is dedicated to responding to emergencies, and a comprehensive

emergency management program coordinated through the Mesa Fire Department, the City is ready to address disasters of any size to protect its population.

As urban development continues in Mesa, it becomes even more important to consider the potential impacts to existing and future residents by noise, floods, and other natural influences. Such factors are primarily negative impacts and are critical during the analysis of specific rezoning requests.

13.2 Goals, Objectives, and Policies

Goal S-1

Provide for a safe environment to protect citizens, property, and businesses from natural or man-made hazards.

Objective S-1.1 Ensure that the residents of Mesa are adequately protected from potential injury and damage resulting from natural, technological and man-made hazards through the development of the City of Mesa Emergency Operations Plan in accordance with Arizona state law.

Policy S-1.1a Develop guidelines to mitigate the risks and potential adverse impacts associated with natural and man-made hazards.

Policy S-1.1b Implement the existing plan covering emergency evacuation procedures in the event they are required.

Policy S-1.1c Recognize and protect floodplain areas as identified by the Flood Control District of Maricopa County and implement their recommendations wherever possible.

Policy S-1.1d Encourage development on hillsides that minimizes potential erosion and prevents geologic instability.

Policy S-1.1e Consider the issue of public safety as a factor of neighborhood development and redevelopment.

Policy S-1.1f Develop plans and strategies for protecting citizens in the event of an act of terrorism or large-scale emergency.

Policy S-1.1g Develop plans and strategies for protecting citizens in the event of an accidental chemical release, industrial related or other similar emergency identified by the Federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Law (SARA Title III).

Objective S-1.2 Promote the public health and safety in the vicinity of the Williams Gateway Airport and Falcon Field by operating the airports, where feasible, to minimize exposure to noise levels generated by airport operations.

Policy S-1.2a Prohibit residential development within the 65 day-night average sound level zone of the airports.

Policy S-1.2b For any sale, offer for sale, rent/lease or subdivision of residential property in the vicinity of Williams Gateway Airport or Falcon Field provide notification or disclosure that the site may be subject to aircraft noise that is objectionable.

Policy S-1.2c Continue to monitor development to protect the airspace around Falcon Field Airport and Williams Gateway, particularly in those areas where noise contours are 65 DNL or greater.

Objective S-1.3 Ensure that new development meets state-of-the-art standards for providing emergency access and evacuation capabilities.

Policy S-1.3a Require all new subdivisions to provide adequate access and roadway widths to provide access for emergency vehicles to all occupied, or potentially occupied parcels.

Policy S-1.3b Provide for citywide transportation system to provide optimal evacuation procedures in the event of a local or community-wide disaster.

Policy S-1.3c Ensure that buildings are properly equipped with fire suppression, communications and other emergency systems to minimize loss of life and property in the event of an emergency or disaster.

Goal S-2

Provide emergency evacuation, response, medical support, and mitigation in the event of a terrorist attack, act of war, or use of weapons of mass destruction.

Objective S-2.1 Provide assistance to assist and aid citizens in the event of a man-made emergency that disturbs peaceful state of the community from the global perspective.

Policy S-2.1a Provide emergency planning that meets all federal, state, and local laws and guidelines.

Policy S-2.1b Provide for evacuation, hazard identification, medical assistance, law enforcement, disaster relief and mitigation related to a community scale act of violence.