

history



character



VISION




**TOWN OF  
FLORENCE  
2020  
GENERAL PLAN**



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## *Welcome to the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan Update*

The State of Arizona, through detailed Growing Smarter legislation, requires that incorporated areas develop General Plans to assist in assessing current conditions and trends and developing goals, objectives and strategies that will help guide future growth and development.

The extensive public participation and planning process for the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan began with the 2007 update of the Town's General Plan Future Land Use Map, one of the most widely used figures in the General Plan. That process began our efforts towards completing a mid-cycle update of our General Plan that was last updated in 2002. While the State did not mandate this update for another few years, the Town took on this critical project early due to the many changes that have occurred since the last update.

Indeed, the Town of Florence has grown and changed dramatically over the decades and much more dramatic changes are yet to come. Through the decades, Florence has retained an undisputable sense of place and character by respecting local history and being the seat, and the heart, of Pinal County. While the growth ahead will present many significant challenges, this General Plan update presents a valuable tool for the Town to use to protect its position in the emerging "megalopolis" or "Sun Corridor" region. This Plan respects the unique history and character of the area while also accepting that additional growth and development is inevitable. Smart growth is encouraged by this Plan and it is acknowledged that we must grow in a sustainable manner that respects our natural and cultural resources and brings new economic prosperity.

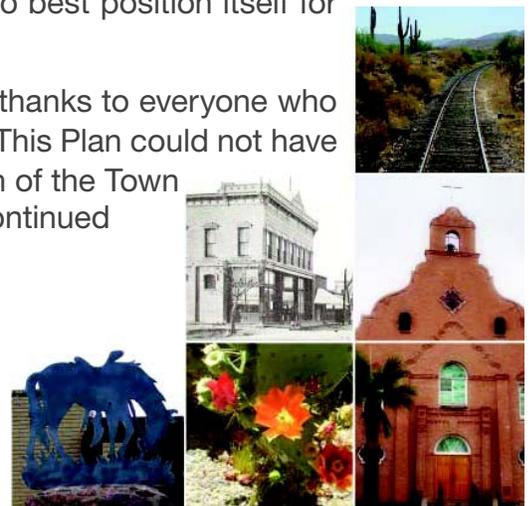
Florence is at a major crossroads with this current planning effort and this Plan should be viewed as only the beginning of a series of actions that the Town will need to take to implement the goals, objectives and strategies of the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan to best position itself for the future.

On behalf of the Town, I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who participated in our General Plan update process. This Plan could not have been done without your input and implementation of the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan will require your continued support and participation.

Sincerely,

*Mark Eckhoff*

Mark Eckhoff, AICP  
Town of Florence Planning Director



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## **Acknowledgments**

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Councilmember Tom Celaya  
Councilmember Arnie Raasch  
Councilmember Vallarie Woolridge  
Councilmember Bill Hawkins  
Councilmember Barbara Brown  
Former Mayor Tom Rankin  
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Vice Chairman Dale Harman  
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### INTRODUCTION

Florence stands at the crossroads between its past and its future. With extensive development projected in coming years, the community seeks a sustainable future that honors its past.

The Town of Florence 2020 General Plan, which may hereafter be referred to as the General Plan, encompasses a comprehensive strategy for managing the community's future. The General Plan sets forth the community's vision and defines the means it will employ to achieve that vision. This document sets forth the Town's policies regarding physical, economic and cultural development, as well as those for managing the community's natural environment. The General Plan is intended to be used by Town officials, the development community, citizens and others to guide decisions regarding the future development and management of human, land and natural resources within Florence.

This General Plan is the product of an extensive public outreach effort combined with principles of smart growth. The opinions and desires of citizens, elected officials and agency stakeholders shaped this document.

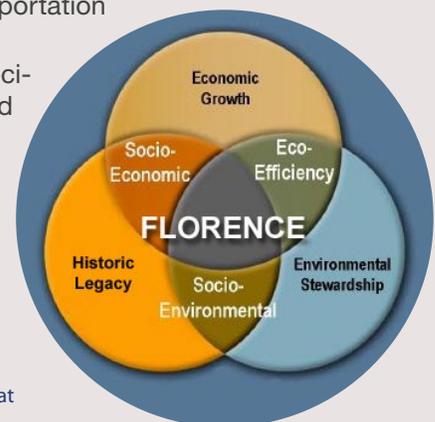
This General Plan communicates the community's intentions regarding its future development and physical form. It will serve to guide and inspire future elected officials as they deliberate proposed developments and public infrastructure projects.

### INTRODUCTION TO THE GENERAL PLAN

State law (Arizona Revised Statutes 9-461.5) requires that each municipality in the state adopt a "comprehensive, long range general plan for the development of the municipality. . . . The General Plan shall consist of a statement of community goals and development policies.

#### Principles of Smart Growth Mix Land Uses

- Take advantage of compact development design
- Create a wide variety of housing opportunities and choices
- Create a walkable community
- Foster a distinctive, attractive community with a strong sense of place
- Preserve open space, farmland, natural beauty and critical environmental areas
- Strengthen and direct development toward existing developed areas
- Provide a variety of transportation choices
- Make development decisions predictable, fair and cost-effective
- Encourage community and stakeholder collaboration in development decisions



Additional information can be found at

#### The General Plan is

- a comprehensive, long-range plan that guides the development of the Town
- the Town's official statement of community goals and development policy
- a management plan for future growth and change within the community

It shall include maps, any necessary diagrams and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards and plan proposals.” Overall, the General Plan serves to:

- Identify land use, circulation, environmental, economic and social goals and policies for the community and its surrounding planning area as they relate to land use and development
- Provide a framework within which the Town can make land use decisions
- Provide citizens the opportunity to participate in the planning and decision-making process affecting the Town and its surrounding planning area
- Inform citizens, developers, decision makers and other agencies, as appropriate, of the Town’s basic policies for both environmental protection and land development decisions

The General Plan is the Town’s primary tool for guiding the community’s future. It represents policy direction and serves as a handbook for achieving the Town’s desired future. The General Plan is not, however, a regulatory document or a book of legal requirements.

While the General Plan provides goals and strategies to guide the community over a 20- to 25-year period, Arizona State laws governing general plans currently require re-adoption and voter ratification of the General Plan every 10 years. As a result, the General Plan is intended to be a dynamic document, responsive to changing natural and societal needs and priorities and to changing community perspectives and attitudes.

The General Plan contains the Town’s policies on the location and character of future development, but it does not lay out “zoning” definitions and requirements. The General Plan establishes intent and direction for future growth and character. Provisions of the General Plan are, however, implemented and detailed through formally adopted ordinances, such as the zoning ordinance, which, along with the Town’s zoning map, is a legal

instrument that precisely defines permitted land uses and specific development requirements for properties throughout the town. The General Plan is designed to be a broad, flexible document that changes as community needs, conditions and direction change. Chapter 14 of this document sets forth Town requirements for amendments to the General Plan.

The Town of Florence 2020 General Plan is organized into “Elements”:

- The Land Use Element designates the general distribution of uses of land for housing, business, industry, open space, education, public buildings and grounds, waste disposal facilities and other categories of public and private uses. The Land Use Element also sets forth standards for population density and building intensity. Also included in this element are provisions to promote infill development.
- The Community Character Element describes the desired character of development within the Historic, Central, Suburban and Rural Southeast portions of Florence.
- The Circulation Element identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed freeways, arterial and collector streets, bicycle routes and other modes of transportation. Overall, the purpose of the Circulation Element is to promote the movement of people and goods within and through the Town.
- The Economic Development Element addresses promotion of a healthy economic base within Florence, including strategies to expand retail sales tax generation within the town as well as to expanding the community’s local employment base.
- The Housing Element embodies policy for providing adequate housing for all economic segments of the community, including elimination of substandard housing, improvement of housing quality within the community and provision of adequate sites for the housing development.



- The Parks, Trails and Open Space Element summarizes the Town’s adopted Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan, and sets policy direction for the provision of these critical amenities within the Town and its planning area.
- The Environmental Planning Element addresses maintenance of healthy air and water quality within the community and sets forth Town policy for the management of natural resources.
- The Energy Element identifies Town policy to encourage and provide incentives for efficient use of energy. Included in this element is Town’s commitment to energy efficiency for its own ongoing operations.
- The Historic Preservation Element defines Town policy for protection of historic resources critical to the community’s identity and character.
- The Growth Areas Element identifies those areas most suitable for infrastructure expansion and improvements, including the provision of multi-modal transportation systems to support planned concentrations of new residential and nonresidential development.
- The Water/Wastewater Element provides for coordination of water and wastewater service demands with proposed land use and growth areas within the community. The element also provides guidance for the planning of a long-term supply of potable water for existing and future development.
- The Cost of Development Element delineates community policies for requiring that new development pay its fair share of the public services such development will require, including provisions for exceptions when in the public interest.

Also included in the General Plan is an implementation chapter defining procedures for administering and amending the General Plan.

## LOCATION AND SIZE

Florence is located in central Arizona along the Gila River, at the junction of State Route (SR) 287 and SR 79. Florence is the seat of Pinal County. It is located midway between the two largest metropolitan areas in Arizona: Phoenix is approximately 61 miles to the north and Tucson is approximately 70 miles to the south.

The Town of Florence is generally surrounded by the Town of Queen Creek to the northwest, the Gila River Indian Community to the west and the City of Coolidge to the southwest. The northern, eastern and southern boundaries of Florence are bordered by a combination of State Trust land, County land, Bureau of Land Management land and privately owned unincorporated land. The Arizona National Guard/Military Reserve owns land north and east of Florence.

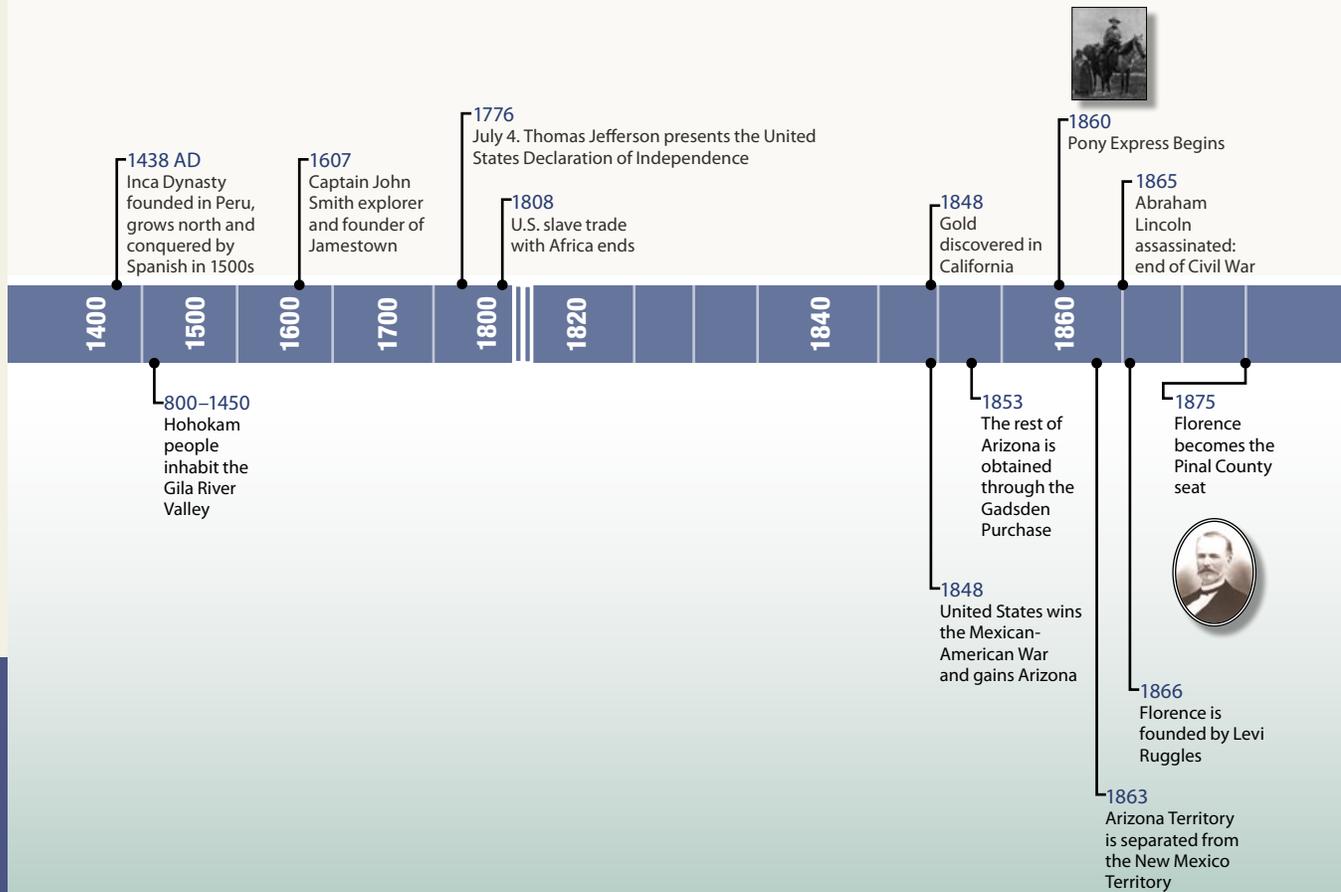
Major natural landmarks in the area are the Gila River, which flows in a westerly direction north of Downtown, and Poston Butte, which is located northwest of Downtown and is commonly known as “F Mountain.”

The Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal that runs near Florence supplies Colorado River water from Lake Havasu to the metropolitan areas of Phoenix, Pinal County, and Tucson.

The Town of Florence Planning Area encompasses 196 square miles, of which only about 10 percent is currently developed. Most of the Planning Area is located on gently sloping terrain; however, the eastern central region is characterized by steeper foothill and mountain terrain. Most of the Planning Area is undeveloped or in agricultural production, creating a rural character. The area south of Florence, including the Cactus Forest area, is nearly flat and studded with cholla cactus.



Regional map and planning area



**2020  
GENERAL PLAN**  
TOWN OF FLORENCE

## SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

The Gila River Valley was first settled by the Hohokam people approximately 1,200 years ago. The Hohokam built an extensive canal system and took advantage of the fertile soil to grow corn, beans and squash.

The Gila River Valley was also the junction of major trade routes. The Hohokam would trade surplus produce for pottery, parrots, seashells and obsidian. For reasons unknown to archaeologists, the Hohokam habitation ended abruptly during the fifteenth century. Some experts believe the Hohokam left the area because of a severe drought.

The United States won the Mexican-American War in 1848, obtaining the area in Arizona north of the Gila River. The rest of Arizona south of the Gila River became part of the United States through the Gadsden Purchase in 1853.



Charles Poston

Charles Debrille Poston, now

known as the “Father of Arizona,” played a major role in convincing Congress to separate the Arizona Territory from the New Mexico Territory in 1863. His final resting place is at the summit of Poston Butte.

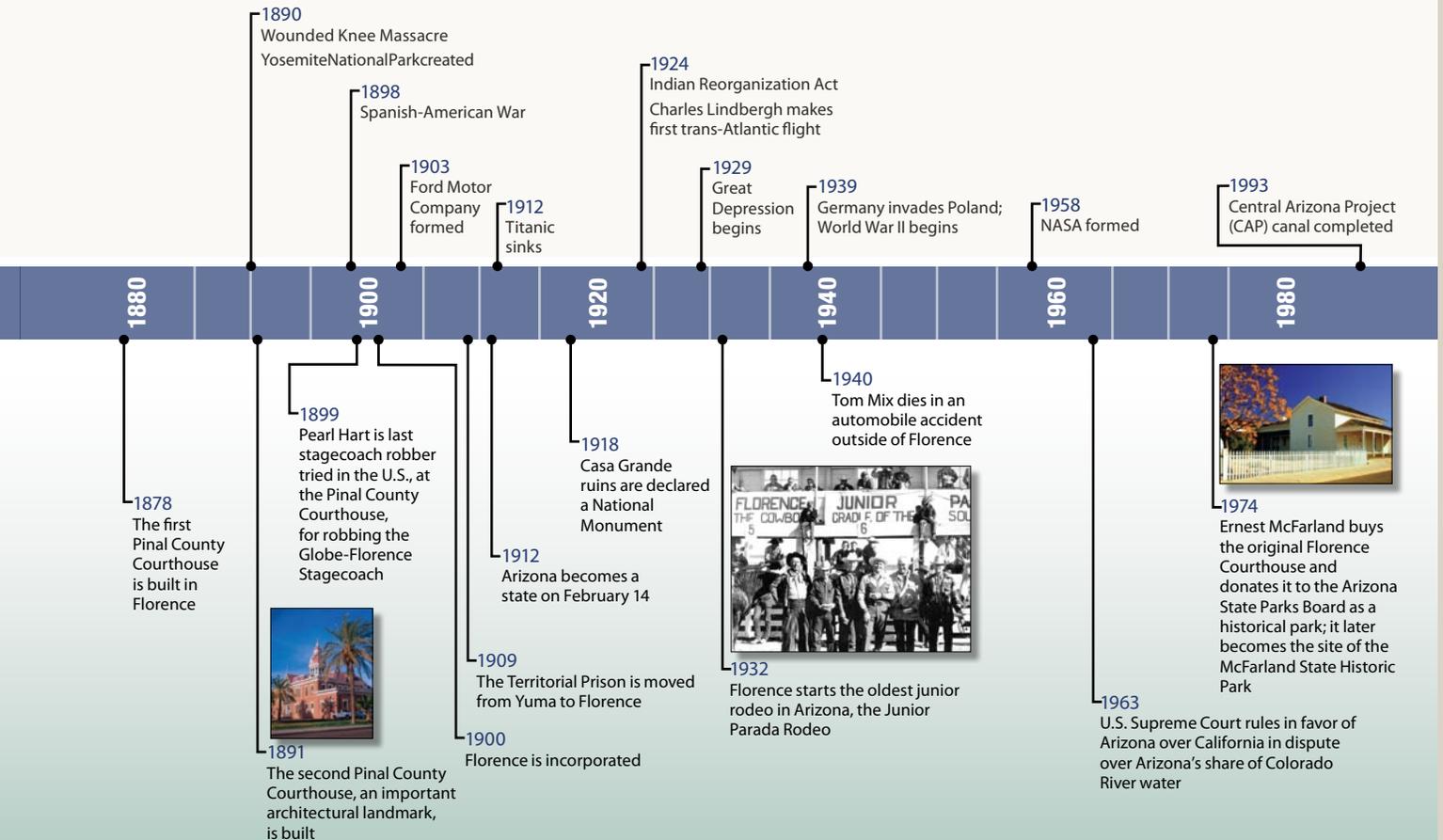


Large unexcavated ruin on road to Florence, 1929.

Source: National Park Service

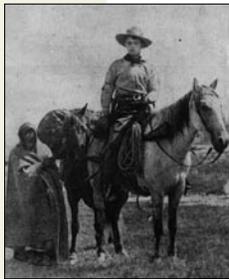
Levi Ruggles, recognized as Florence’s founder, arrived in the area in 1866. Born in Ohio, Ruggles was appointed the Indian Agent for the Arizona Territory and held that office from 1866 to 1869. He built a house, planted an orchard and plotted the town site. He gave the community a unique urban geography by creating 125-foot lots with 65-foot-wide parallel streets running north–south and east–west.

The early pioneers depended on agriculture for their livelihoods. The dry desert environment and struggles with Native Americans made the early years challenging.



Nevertheless, in 1870, the first church was established: the Chapel of the Gila. In 1871, the Florence School District was created.

In 1875, Pinal County was established, with Florence as the County seat. A few months later, silver was discovered in the mountains nearby. Establishment of the Silver King Mine drew miners and entrepreneurs to Florence, as



Pony Express.  
National Archives

did its location as a significant stage-coach hub and pony express route. During the mining heyday, the community had 28 saloons. The mine closed in 1889, resulting in a population decline for Florence.

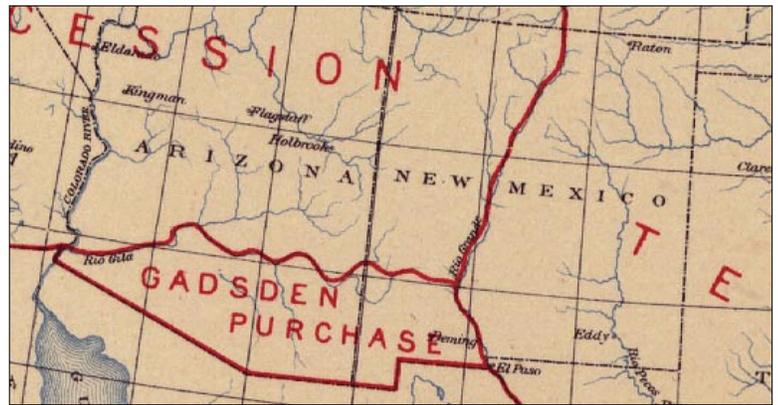
Florence officially incorporated in 1900. In 1909, the territorial government moved the Arizona Territorial Prison from Yuma to Florence. The Town's population hovered around a few thousand residents just before World War II. In 1932, Florence started the Junior Parada Rodeo, which is now the oldest junior rodeo in Arizona and an important annual event for the community. During the war, a prisoner-of-war camp was established just north of Florence to house German and Italian prisoners. In the 1960s, the site was converted into a retirement community.

In 1982, an inventory of historical buildings in Florence was conducted. The community now has many buildings and sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places. A major portion of the old Florence community has been designated the Florence Town site Historic District. For further information regarding the history of the Town and historic preservation efforts, please refer to Element 10, Historic Preservation.

Since 2000, a building boom has occurred in Pinal County. The Town of Florence has expanded its Planning Area from 144 square miles in 2002 to 196 square miles.

## FLORENCE TODAY

Today, the Town of Florence continues to envision development and prosperity. As the Pinal County seat, Florence will continue to be the

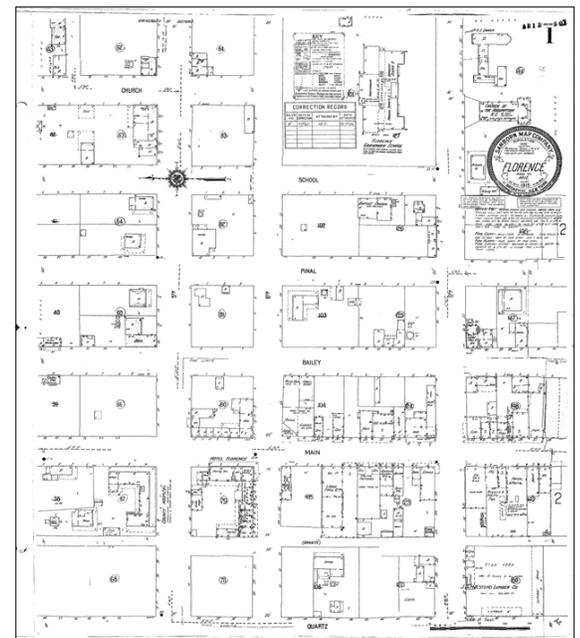


Gadsden Purchase

most important town in the region and serve as the center of government, employment and cultural activity. Florence appeals to old and new residents because of its natural landscape, colorful history and friendly people.

The Town now has a Planning Area of 196 square miles with an incorporated area of 51 square miles. The general Town population, as of July 1, 2008, was 26,656 including the prison population of 17,223. With development on the horizon, it is expected that Florence's future population at build-out (when all available and developable land is developed) will range between 588,900 and 761,000, depending on the density of future development.

While mining in the area has dwindled, correctional facilities continue to be a major source of stable employment for Florence, along with county and town government.



Town site, Sanborne fire insurance map



## FACTS ABOUT FLORENCE

**Founded: 1866****Incorporated: 1900****Elevation: 1,500 feet****Annual rainfall: 12 inches****Days of sunshine: 300 days per year****Highest recorded temperature: 119°F in 1985****Lowest recorded temperature: 11°F in 1913****Current general population: 26,656****Current Planning Area size: 196 square miles****Oldest town annual event: Junior Parada Rodeo (76 years) followed by the Annual Tour of Historic Florence (24 years)****Major motion pictures filmed in Florence: nine, including Murphy's Romance (1985) and Three Amigos (1986)**

In 2005, about 74 percent of the employment in Florence was government-related. About 15 percent of the community's employment was in waste management and facilities support, which include prison-related jobs. Other large employment sectors were accommodations/food services and retail trade. Cotton farming continues the agricultural tradition in Florence.

Florence is a "Main Street" community that seeks to promote the continued economic development of the Main Street area by encouraging cooperation and leadership in the community, improving the area's appearance and enhancing Florence's historical and cultural character.

The Town of Florence is a full-service municipality, offering police and fire protection to all citizens. It has a library, senior center and multiple parks. Water, sewer and sanitation services are also provided.

The Florence Unified School District has three public schools: two kindergarten through eighth grade schools and two high schools. The FUSD serves as a major source of stable employment. The main campus of Central Arizona College is close to Florence and offers numerous academic programs that grant occupational certificates and associate degrees. A satellite campus of the college is located in Florence. Two major state universities are located in nearby cities: Arizona State University in Tempe and the University of Arizona in Tucson.

The town has local physician's offices. The Casa Grande Regional Hospital is approximately 30 miles southwest of town, a new

Banner Hospital is planned in Pinal County just north of the Florence Planning area and discussions for future urgent care facilities and hospitals locating in the Town are ongoing.

Florence has six parks, including McFarland State Historic Park, which is operated by the Arizona State Parks Department and features a comprehensive history of Florence and the region. The Pinal County Historical Society Museum also provides perspectives on the history of Florence and Pinal County. The Casa Grande Ruins National Monument offers a window into the lives of the ancient Hohokam people.

Major annual community events include the Country Thunder U.S.A. music festival, Tour of Historic Florence, Multicultural Festival, and the Junior Parada Rodeo, which celebrated its 76th anniversary in 2008.



McFarland State Park



Junior Parada Rodeo



Second Pinal County Courthouse

## NATURAL SETTING

Florence is located in the Sonoran Desert, which has the most varied vegetation of any

desert in North America. The saguaro cactus is the most well-known plant of the Sonoran Desert. Other cacti include the organ pipe, cholla and prickly pear. Other plants include ironwood, palo verde and mesquite trees. Sonoran Desert wildlife includes mountain lions, coyotes, desert tortoises, Gila monsters and many species of lizards and snakes.

Popular outdoor sites east of Florence include Box Canyon, Martinez Canyon, the old Silverbell Mine and Coke Ovens. These sites provide dramatic scenic views and opportunities for hiking and exploring. Other nearby outdoor attractions include the Lost Dutchman State Park, Boyce Thompson Arboretum and Superstition Mountain Wilderness Area.

The community has over 300 days of sunshine each year. The average annual rainfall is approximately 12 inches, with the most rainfall occurring in the summer months of July and August and in the winter months of December and January.

July is generally the warmest month of the year, with the average high temperature around 105°F. January is the coolest month, with the average high temperature around 65°F.

The Florence Planning Area is characterized by gently sloping or flat terrain with views of agricultural fields and native desert. Poston Butte (F Mountain) and Picture Rocks are two prominent landforms near the community.

Views in the distance include the Superstition Mountains to the north, the Dripping Springs Mountains to the northeast and Picacho Peak to the south. The Gila River is another prominent natural feature in Florence; however, upstream damming of the river has left downstream areas dry most of the year.

## FLORENCE'S PEOPLE

Many current residents are descendants of the founders of Florence. The Town is proud of its past and hopes that its many new residents take pride in becoming part of Florence's future.

In 2007, people between the ages of 25 and 34 made up the largest cohort of the population, at 23 percent. Those between the ages of 35 and 44 made up the next-largest segment, at 22 percent. In the future, it is expected that the number of retirement age community members will increase as master planned retirement communities are developed and the general population ages.

With regard to racial demographics, the population was 55 percent White in 2007. African Americans made up 9 percent of the population and Native Americans 7 percent of the population. People of Hispanic origin (any race) made up 38 percent of the population. The racial distribution includes residents in correctional facilities. As the community grows, the prison population will become a smaller portion of the overall population and the community's racial makeup will more closely resemble that of cities in the south-



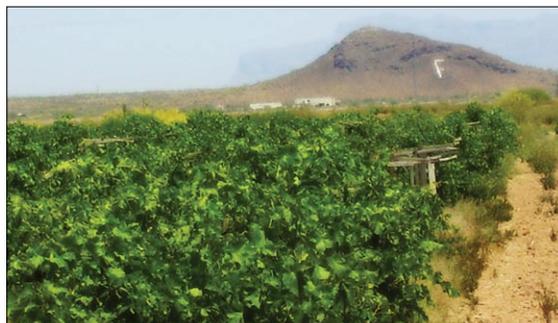
Town residents



Wild horses



Prickly pear cactus



Agriculture fields, with F Mountain in the background



Fourth of July Parade, 1882

eastern portion of Maricopa County, such as Queen Creek and Chandler.

The 2007 median household income for Florence was \$47,996, slightly above that of Pinal County as a whole, which had a median household income of \$46,000.

VISION STATEMENT

The Town of Florence will successfully capitalize on its favorable location, rich historical past, diverse neighborhoods, family-friendly parks and natural Sonoran desert setting to create a community and economic environment that is truly sustainable, desirable and respected. Florence will carefully blend the old with the new to strive to maintain its position as the heart and core of Pinal County.

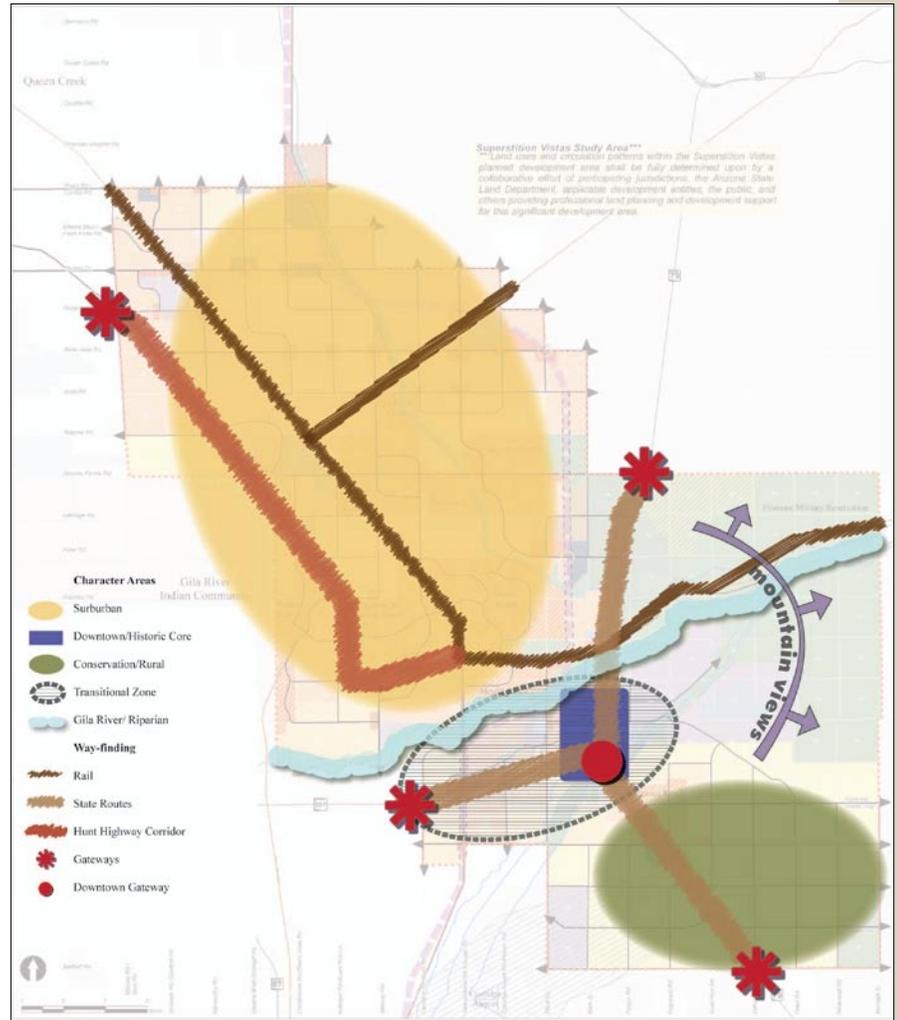
VISION FOR THE FUTURE

An extensive public involvement effort was conducted for this General Plan to research the community’s needs and collect input on people’s visions for the future. The outreach effort included public meetings, stakeholder interviews and advisory committee meetings. It focused on defining the past, present and future of the Florence area; delineating the area’s character; and gathering data on the visual preferences for how the community should look.

The General Plan process entailed a review of numerous existing plans, including those for neighboring jurisdictions. The process also drew on the principles of the Smart Growth Network, a partnership of private, public and nongovernmental organizations that seek to improve development practices in communities across the United States.

Through the public involvement effort, guiding principles were created to shape each

element of the General Plan, as discussed below. These guiding principles were used to update the Goals, Objectives and Strategies found in each plan element to ensure that Florence’s future growth is shaped by its strong community vision. The Goals, Objectives and Strategies are discussed in the implementation section of each plan element.



Cognitive map of town from public meeting citizen participation exercise



General Plan public meeting



Community residents participating in a cognitive mapping exercise

## Guiding Principles

### Community

- Encourage community events that celebrate the unique character of Florence such as the Junior Parada Rodeo and the Multi-cultural Festival.
- Foster safe neighborhoods through good community and environmental design that promotes a mix of uses, active streets, improved air quality and security.
- Improve coordination with residents and businesses by the police, fire, planning, transportation and other town departments to address security issues and achieve safe neighborhoods.
- Promote opportunities for community education and involvement through volunteering and civic engagement.

### Economic Development

- Promote Florence as the civic, cultural and economic hub of Pinal County.
- Encourage a mix of land uses in Downtown that will foster greater activity.
- Promote strategic development of vacant, under utilized and infill land, especially along principal transportation and commercial corridors, to improve the Town's economic outlook.
- Create and maintain a broad range of jobs that are accessible to all residents and that provide opportunities for advancement.
- Improve the community's jobs-housing ratio to increase local public and private sector employment opportunities and to provide appropriate employment and housing opportunities near each other.
- Work with educational institutions to promote the skill and talent of Florence's workforce to attract high-quality jobs.

### Environmental Resources

- Encourage sustainable levels of energy and resource consumption through well-

planned land use patterns and transportation systems.

- Encourage energy-efficient building design and construction techniques.
- Implement water conservation and wastewater reuse programs to reduce the consumption of potable water supplies. Promote waste management strategies that minimize the production of solid wastes.
- Preserve open space, agricultural land, natural resources and environmentally-sensitive areas to maintain community identity.
- Preserve and protect important historical and cultural resources that serve as significant and visible reminders of Florence's history.
- Continue to improve air and water quality to ensure a healthy community and region.
- Create vibrant public places that serve as gathering places, town centers and villages for the community.
- Promote the development of complete neighborhoods—both in new growth and infill areas—that foster a sense of place.
- Protect and replicate the pattern and character of Florence's unique and traditional neighborhoods.
- Promote designs for development that are compatible with the scale and character of existing neighborhoods.
- Locate and design buildings, street-scapes and public spaces that contribute to walkable neighborhoods.
- Promote developments that foster accessibility and connectivity between areas and safely and efficiently accommodate a mixture of cars, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Recognize and preserve those areas of Florence with a "sense of place" that contain historical and cultural resources.



## Guiding Principles

### Housing

- Provide a mix of housing to meet the needs of current and future residents, including an equitable distribution of affordable housing throughout Florence.
- Include a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to promote a diversity of household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels to promote stable neighborhoods.
- Encourage the rehabilitation of historical properties.
- Integrate housing into mixed-use developments to reduce transportation costs and to create more vibrant live-work core areas.
- Make housing more accessible.

### Land Use

- Make the Gila River accessible and have it showcase a restored riparian habitat.
- Preserve open vistas and views of Poston Butte and surrounding mountains.
- Protect existing rural, low-density residential areas by buffering them from the externalities of higher-intensity land uses.
- Actively promote the coordination and cooperation of public and sovereign entities within the Town's Planning Area.
- Encourage agricultural land use.
- Maintain a vibrant historical Downtown that serves as a regional destination for the arts, culture and entertainment while accommodating residents that live, work and gather there.
- Promote livable and well-designed neighborhoods that are walkable and complete, with a mix of uses and services to support improved health and the needs of families, youth, seniors and a growing population.
- Use sustainable development and land use planning practices that provide for the needs of existing residents and businesses while preserving choices for future generations.

- Provide a diversity of neighborhood environments, from the historical Downtown to well-integrated new growth areas.
- Use the existing assets of infrastructure and public facilities to increase infill and reuse while maintaining important qualities of community character.

### Mobility

- Preserve the north-south corridor for future freeway access by planning for compatible land uses that take advantage of this proposed regional route.
- Provide a variety of transportation choices that serve as alternatives to the automobile, including walking, bicycling and transit.
- Take advantage of drainage ways to create non-motorized connections throughout the community.

### Parks and Recreation

- Expand and improve existing pedestrian paths and bikeways to promote health, recreation and connectivity among neighborhoods.
- Provide innovative parks and recreational and sports facilities for all existing and new neighborhoods.
- Promote Florence as a cultural destination with arts and open space amenities throughout the community.

### Services and Facilities

- Provide quality public services, facilities and infrastructure distributed equitably throughout Florence.
- Support high-quality education and schools.
- Proactively work to ensure an adequate supply of potable water for existing and future residents and businesses.
- Continue to actively encourage the expansion of health care services in Florence.
- Promote joint use of public facilities to optimize use of public funds.

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# 2

## LAND USE ELEMENT

### PURPOSE

The Land Use Element sets forth Florence's goals, objectives and strategies governing its land use and identifies and enhances important land use components that directly and indirectly affect how residents, workers and visitors live, work and recreate in Florence.

A balance between housing and employment is the major consideration in defining the intensity, location and mixture of future land uses in the Planning Area. This reflects the desire of the community to be environmentally, economically and socially sustainable, rather than solely a residential suburb to the growing Phoenix metropolitan region. Additionally, the balance of housing and employment will provide enough municipal income to fund future Town services and desired community amenities discussed in the subsequent plan elements.

The arrangement and pattern of land use in the Planning Area takes into consideration existing development, transportation routes, current or future availability of infrastructure, topography, man-made barriers and a variety of interrelated aspects that shape the community. The Town's vision for the future largely begins with the Land Use Element.

### BACKGROUND

Florence has vast amounts of land available for future residential and employment development. The Town's current municipal boundary contains nearly 53 square miles.

In the 2002 General Plan Update, the Town's Planning Area encompassed 144 square miles, or 92,262 acres. This area has been increased in the current General Plan to 196 square miles, or 125,440 acres. Figure 2-1 illustrates the Planning Area.

*"A vision without a plan is just a dream. A plan without a vision is just drudgery. But a vision with a plan can change the world."*

—Proverb

Outside of the incorporated Town boundary, the Planning Area largely consists of agricultural land or undeveloped desert, and is rural in character (Figure 2-2). It also includes many unincorporated communities such as Johnson Ranch, adjoining communities located in the northwest region and the Cactus Forest developed area in the southeast region.

Developed areas within the incorporated Town boundary can be generally defined by

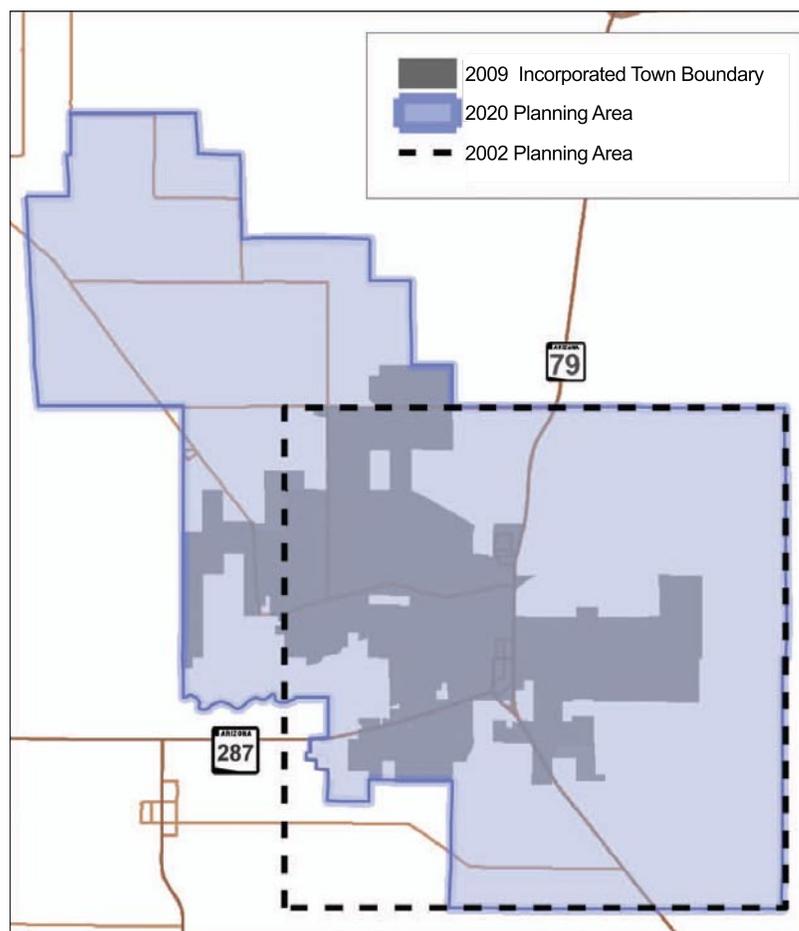


Figure 2-1. Town Boundary and Planning Areas

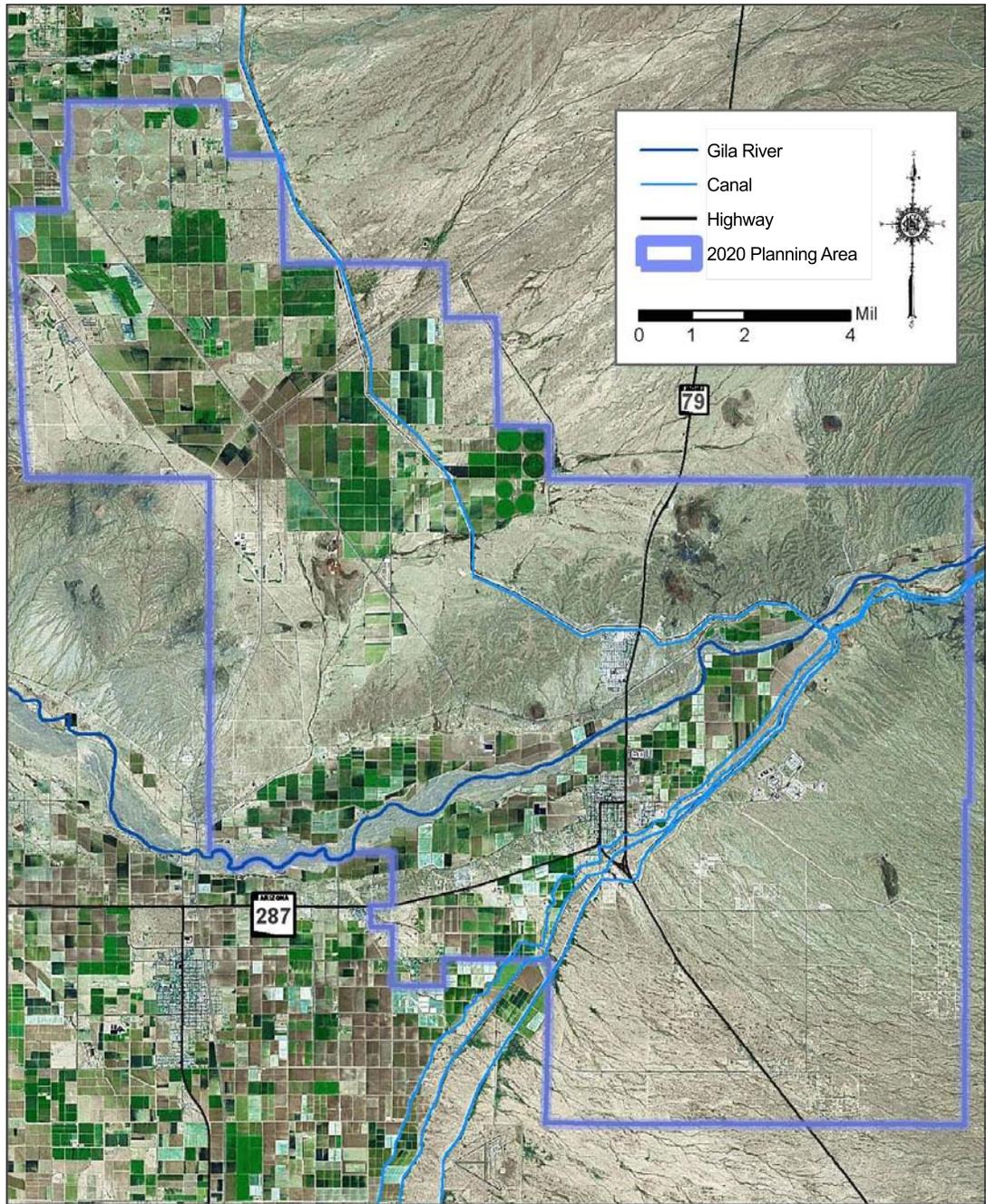


Figure 2-2. 2020 Planning Area

the following regions: the central core area encompassing the original historic town site, Florence Gardens and adjoining communities north of Downtown on State Route 79 (SR 79) and the more recently annexed Anthem at Merrill Ranch and Merrill Ranch master planned communities northwest of Downtown on Hunt Highway.

While Downtown Florence is south of the Gila River in the southern part of the Planning Area, it will always be considered the historical center of the community. Other than the agricultural uses that exist throughout the Planning Area, the largest current concentration of

employment-related land uses is located in the Downtown area and the prison complexes.

Approximately 41 percent of the land, or 51,280 acres, within the 2020 Planning Area is privately held. Figure 3 shows land ownership. Large private holdings occur predominantly in the agricultural and natural areas north of the Gila River. This agricultural land is where the most development in the Planning Area will occur. As the Phoenix metropolitan region continues to intensify, this agricultural land will transition into master planned communities and employment centers to accommodate the growth.

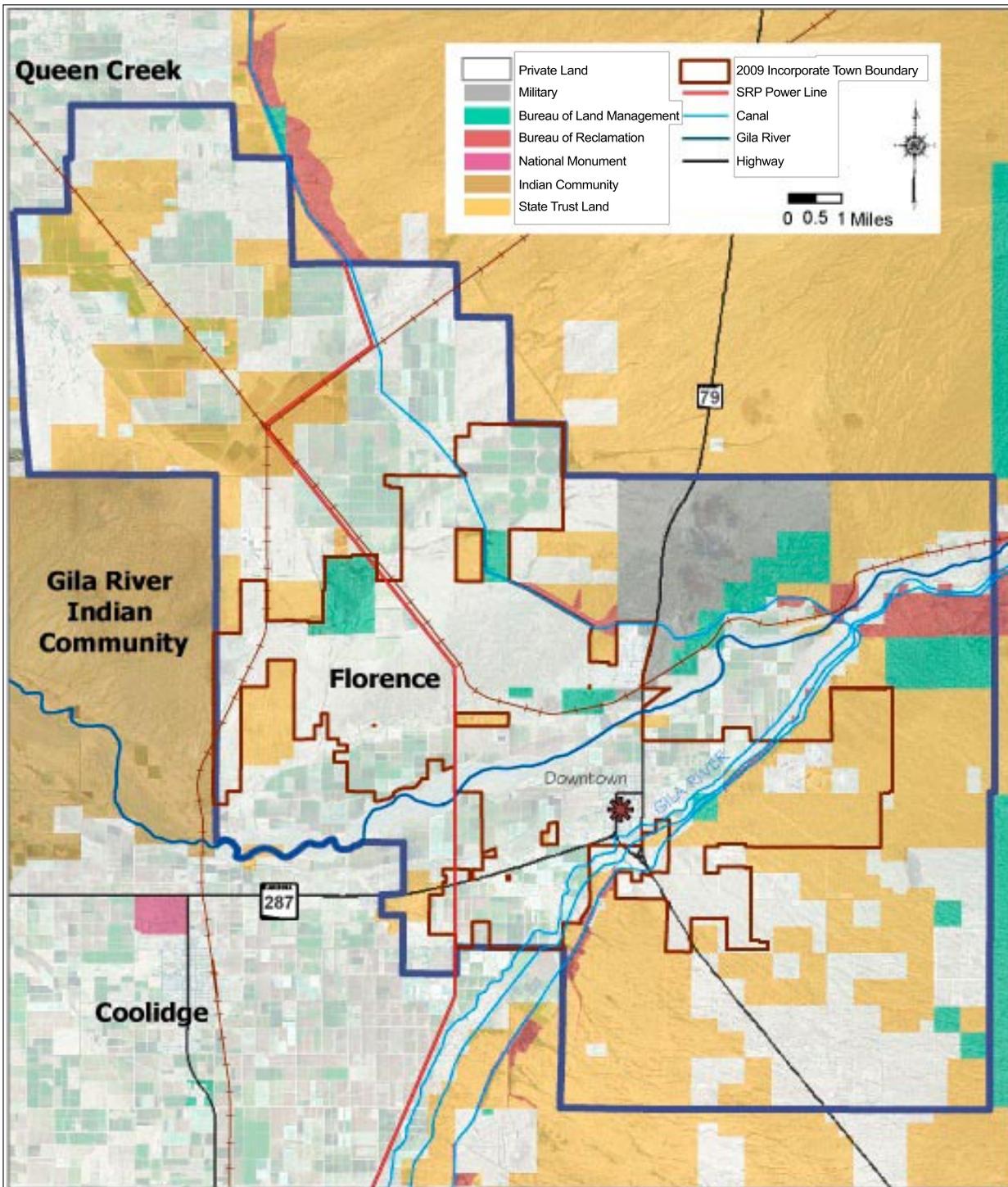


Figure 2-3. Land Ownership

The second largest landowner is the State of Arizona, under the direction of the Arizona State Land Department, which owns approximately 27,544 acres (22 percent) of the land in the Planning Area. The only existing development on State land in the Planning Area is the Arizona State Prison Eyman Complex, east of SR 79; otherwise, the land is agricultural or natural desert.

The remaining land in the Planning Area is owned by a mix of different governmen-

tal agencies, including the U.S. Military, Bureau of Reclamation, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Department of Homeland Security. The majority of the federal land is owned by the Arizona National Guard, which uses the Florence Military Reservation. The Military Reservation is located in the northeastern portion of the Planning Area and consists of 5,685 acres, or approximately 9 square miles.

BLM land is widely scattered across the Planning Area, with bigger portions north



**Rural residence**

of the Gila River and smaller areas south of the Gila River, including the location of the Charles Whitlow Rodeo Grounds and Aero Modeler Park. The Bureau of Reclamation administers land along the Central Arizona Project (CAP) Canal and approximately 1,200 acres of land located along the Gila River, northeast of Florence behind the Ashurst-Hayden Diversion Dam.

Also included in the federal land ownership is the Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement federal detention center, located north of the Town Core.

Two significant planning projects lie to the north of the Florence Planning Area and have great potential to influence the future development pattern within the Planning Area: the Superstition Vistas and the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport.

The Arizona State Land Department, with the help of the East Valley Partnership and other regional stakeholders, is currently developing a specific area plan for the Superstition Vistas area, a 275-square-mile area of vacant desert. Current estimates indicate one million or more people could live in this area. The Morrison Institute wrote a document entitled *The Treasure of the Superstitions*, which introduces a number of different planning scenarios for this area.

The Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Strategic Development Plan's main goal is to establish a major employment center in the Southeast Valley that is centered on and adjacent to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport. The Planning Area is approximately 20,000 acres and is expected to potentially accommodate 100,000 or more jobs by 2035. This airport could, in the future, be a reliever airport for Phoenix Sky Harbor air traffic, similar to



**Sonoran desert scrub**

Chicago's Midway Airport or John Wayne Airport in Orange County, California.

## **Population**

Historically, the Town has exhibited low rates of population growth. However, as residential growth from the Phoenix metropolitan area pushes into the Planning Area and Town limits, the population could increase at a rapid pace in the future (see Table 2-1).

The Town has seen growth in the prison institutions and facilities within the Town limits. In 1909, the Town had only one prison facility: the Arizona Territorial Prison. Nine prison facilities are currently located within the Town limits, including state, private, county and federal facilities.

Currently the Town population is 26,656; this includes a general population of 9,433 and a prison population of 17,223 (Central Arizona Association of Governments). Data from the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan indicate that the Town's population could be more than 113,942 by 2025. However, these numbers do not take into consideration the entire Planning Area. Population numbers projected using the Planning Area boundary of 196 square miles suggest that the Town's population could easily exceed 500,000 at build-out. This population estimate will vary depending on the residential densities of new developments and the expansion or building of new correctional facilities.

## **Land Use**

General Plan land use categories and the General Plan Future Land Use Map define the long-range goals and intentions of Florence. Land use categories establish the structure to allocate this growth to continue to achieve



Table 2-1. Population by Age, Town of Florence<sup>1</sup>

| Age Range    | 2000          |            | 2007          |            | 2012          |            |
|--------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|---------------|------------|
|              | Number        | Percentage | Number        | Percentage | Number        | Percentage |
| 0-4          | 555           | 2.8        | 773           | 3.5        | 1,292         | 4.1        |
| 5-9          | 588           | 3.0        | 722           | 3.3        | 1,132         | 3.6        |
| 10-14        | 620           | 3.1        | 707           | 3.2        | 1,128         | 3.5        |
| 15-19        | 989           | 5.0        | 1,115         | 5.0        | 1,449         | 4.5        |
| 20-24        | 2,186         | 11.0       | 2,398         | 10.8       | 2,746         | 8.6        |
| 25-34        | 4,860         | 24.4       | 5,107         | 23.1       | 6,136         | 19.3       |
| 35-44        | 4,504         | 22.6       | 4,776         | 21.6       | 5,348         | 16.8       |
| 45-54        | 2,459         | 12.4       | 2,791         | 12.6       | 3,917         | 12.3       |
| 55-64        | 1,403         | 7.0        | 1,632         | 7.4        | 3,126         | 9.8        |
| 65-74        | 1,077         | 5.4        | 1,236         | 5.6        | 2,703         | 8.5        |
| 75-84        | 549           | 2.8        | 665           | 3.0        | 2,178         | 6.8        |
| 85+          | 113           | 0.6        | 215           | 1.0        | 715           | 2.2        |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>19,903</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>22,137</b> | <b>100</b> | <b>31,870</b> | <b>100</b> |

<sup>1</sup>Population numbers include the incarcerated populations.

Source: ESRI Demographics

a balanced and sustainable municipality. Table 2-2 illustrates build-out scenarios for population and employees as related to the different types of land use.

Land use categories reflect the diversity of needs in a community. The objectives and strategies give direction and clarity to the Town’s land use goals. This Element also provides information on land use overlays to be used in conjunction with the more traditional land use categories in order to protect existing Town resources. It should be noted that General Plan land uses are recommended land use designations and may not always match the existing zoning ordinances.

**OBJECTIVES**

**Preserve an open, semi-rural, small-town community setting.**

**Have a mixture of dwelling unit sizes, layouts and ownership types (consistent with the corresponding land use designation and density range), especially within large-scale residential development projects, in order to provide housing opportunities for a range of incomes and households.**

**Residential Land Uses**

Several residential land use designations are provided for the development of a full range of housing types and densities throughout the Planning Area. These categories reflect the

Town’s vision to create a sustainable community, coupled with a strong community desire to retain the “small-town feel” in the Town with respect to the area’s natural terrain. The residential densities are presented with the maximum permissible number of dwelling units per acre (DU/AC) and are distributed with intent of organizing future growth into neighborhoods with a healthy mix of development types that encourages a “Town of neighborhoods.”

Residential land use represents the largest single land use in the Planning Area. The residential land use approach of this General Plan encourages interconnected, pedestrian-friendly and mixed use neighborhoods that support the history of the community as growth draws future residents to Florence. This is a model for creating balanced communities with a diverse collection of housing options for different income levels. These balanced neighborhoods offer several benefits: greater opportunity for residents to live near workplaces; increase housing options with increased income over time; and provide quality schools, parks and community facilities that contribute to neighborhoods’ value and character.

**Residential Land Use Designations**

**Rural Ranchette Residential (RRR) (0.10-1.0 DU/AC)**

The Rural Ranchette Residential (RRR) designation has been used throughout the Planning Area to assist in preserving the community’s

**Table 2-2. Residential and Commercial Build-Out Potential, Population and Employees, Town of Florence<sup>1</sup>**

| <b>Population</b>          |                |                |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Residential Land Use       | <b>Low</b>     | <b>Mid</b>     | <b>High</b>    |
| High Density Residential   | 64,900         | 75,700         | 86,600         |
| Medium Density Residential | 295,100        | 319,600        | 344,200        |
| Low Density Residential    | 106,600        | 133,300        | 160,000        |
| Downtown Mixed Use         | 900            | 1,400          | 1,800          |
| Highway Mixed Use          | 400            | 600            | 800            |
| Ranchette Residential      | 22,700         | 34,100         | 45,500         |
| Master Planned Community   | 47,100         | 58,900         | 70,600         |
| Prison                     | 30,000         | 30,000         | 30,000         |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>567,700</b> | <b>653,600</b> | <b>739,500</b> |
| <b>Employees</b>           |                |                |                |
| Commercial Land Use        | <b>Low</b>     | <b>Mid</b>     | <b>High</b>    |
| Community Commercial       | 116,700        | 131,200        | 145,800        |
| Neighborhood Commercial    | 3,300          | 3,700          | 4,200          |
| Professional Office        | 30,000         | 39,800         | 49,500         |
| Light Industrial           | 216,200        | 243,300        | 270,300        |
| Heavy Industrial           | 1,200          | 1,300          | 1,500          |
| Public/Institutional       | 10,000         | 11,300         | 12,500         |
| Downtown Mixed Use         | 2,700          | 4,000          | 5,400          |
| Highway Mixed Use          | 3,500          | 4,600          | 5,700          |
| Master Planned Community   | 29,700         | 34,700         | 39,600         |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>413,300</b> | <b>473,900</b> | <b>534,500</b> |

<sup>1</sup>All totals are based on acreage estimates from the current Town of Florence Land Use Plan. Population estimates are based on 2.3 persons per housing unit (to account for vacancy).

Source: Town of Florence Land Use Plan, Elliott D. Pollack & Co.

small-town, rural image. This designation will also provide executive housing on large lots, expanding the community’s range of housing types. Residential developments within this land use category should provide large lots with a rural character. RRR projects require minimal urban services and have a reduced need for construction of urban infrastructure.

Typical uses include single-family detached homes on large rural lots, stables/farms/agri-

culture, public/governmental facilities, parks, recreational facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses.

The RRR land use is predominantly located to the east of SR 79 in areas that have already witnessed development occurring in more of a rural pattern or areas that lack readily available urban-type infrastructure and amenities. The RRR land use is appropriately applied adjacent to the Charles Whitlow Rodeo Grounds to promote an equestrian lifestyle.

**Low Density Residential (LDR)  
(1.0–4.0 DU/AC)**

The Low Density Residential (LDR) designation is intended for suitable areas within and



**Rural Ranchette Residential**

The formula for calculating net residential density shall be:

$$D = DU / (A - [C + S + A1]), \text{ where:}$$

D = Residential density

DU = Total number of dwelling units in proposed development

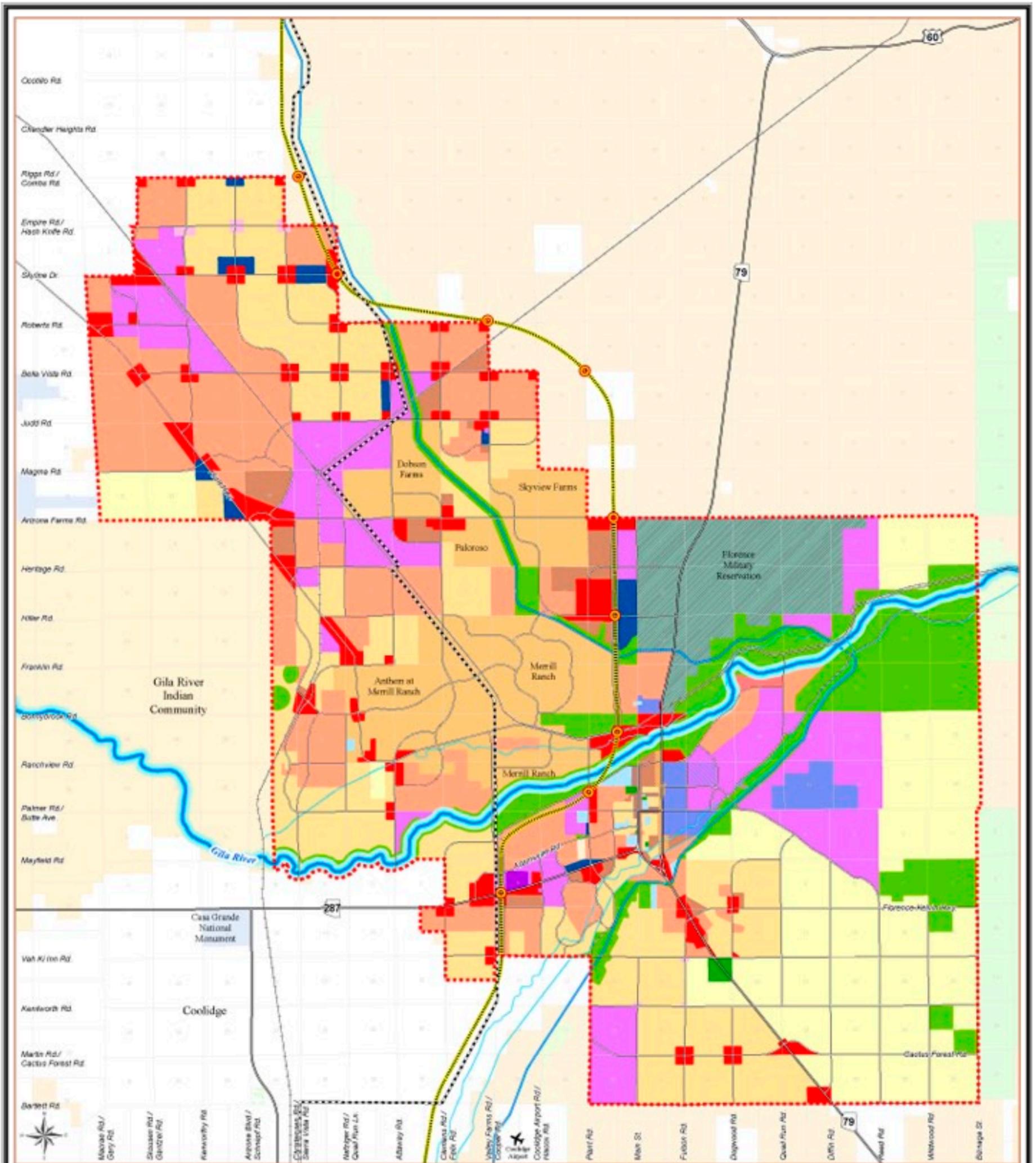
A = Total site area (acres)

C = Total commercial land area (acres)

S = Reserved, but undedicated school sites (acres)

A1 = Arterial roadway rights-of-way





## Town of Florence 2020 General Plan Future Land Use Map

### Legend

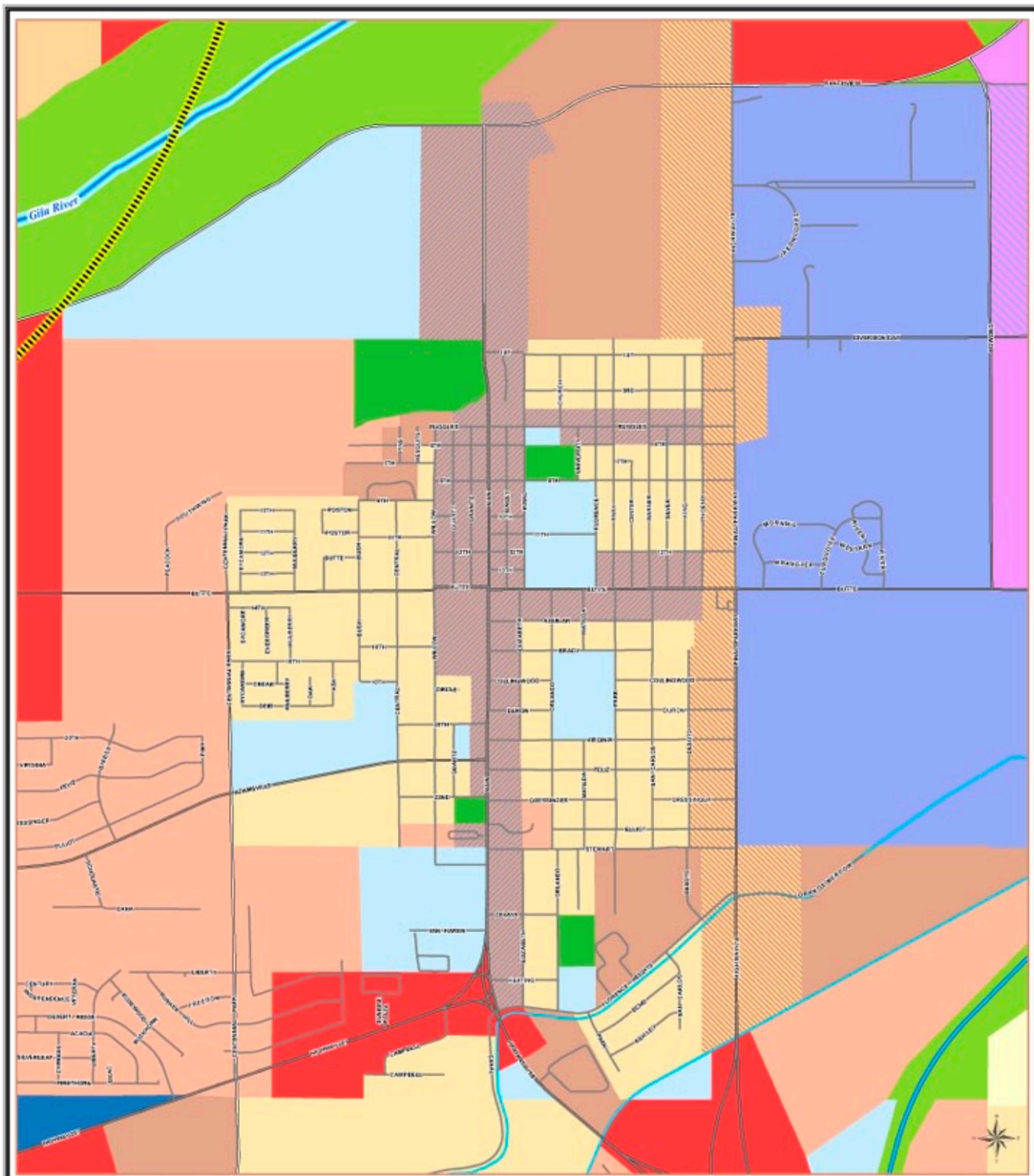
|   |  |  |   |   |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Canals</li> <li> CAP Canal, Open</li> <li> CAP Canal, Piped</li> <li> Railroads</li> <li> Roads</li> <li> Highways</li> <li> Potential Utility/ Multi-Use Corridor</li> <li> Conceptual Future Freeway Interchanges</li> <li> Conceptual Freeway Corridor</li> <li> Conceptual Freeway Corridor with Frontage Road</li> <li> Planning Area</li> </ul> | <p><b>Residential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Rural Ranchette Residential (RRR)<br/>(R-15-10 DUMC)</li> <li> Low Density Residential (LDR)<br/>(L0-4-0 DUMC)</li> <li> Medium Density Residential 1 (MDR1)<br/>(M0-8-0 DUMC)</li> <li> Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2)<br/>(M0-10-0 DUMC)</li> <li> High Density Residential 1 (HDR1)<br/>(H0-18-0 DUMC)</li> <li> High Density Residential 2 (HDR2)<br/>(H0-24-0 DUMC)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Commercial/Office/Industrial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Neighborhood Commercial (NC)</li> <li> Community Commercial (CC)</li> <li> Professional Office (PO)</li> <li> Employment/Light Industrial (E/LI)</li> <li> Heavy Industrial (HI)</li> </ul> <p><b>Mixed-Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Master Planned Community (MPC)</li> <li> Downtown Mixed Use (DMU)</li> <li> Highway Mixed Use (H/MU)</li> <li> Prison/Employment/Light Industrial (P/E/LI)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Community/Public</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Public/Governmental (P/G)</li> <li> Prison (P)</li> <li> Military Reservation (MR)</li> <li> Parks and Recreation (P/R)</li> <li> Open Space (OS)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Land Ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Bureau of Land Management</li> <li> Bureau of Reclamation</li> <li> Casa Grande National Monument</li> <li> Indian Community</li> <li> State Trust Land</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|---|---|

**Note:**  
 The land use shown are generated by location and use. For further guidance please refer to the Town of Florence General Plan. Please see and utilize the Future Land Use Designated as Open Space and have a minimum density of 1 DUMC. Please refer to the rest of the General Plan for additional information on zoning areas within the Town Planning Area. Some existing agreements about on the land use map are conceptual and subject to further study. The future freeway corridor, freeway interchanges, and other roadway facilities on the land use map are generally conceptual and subject to future study and approval. All design reports approved by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Interchanges that may be subject to future approval. Right-of-way width and existing conditions for the roadway will be subject to the findings and the final recommendation of the Town Engineer.

Figure 2-4. Town of Florence 2020 General Land Use Map

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**Town of Florence 2020 General Plan**  
**Future Land Use Map - Downtown**

**Legend**

- Canals
  - CAP Canal
  - Future Roads
  - Existing Roads
  - Conceptual Freeway Corridor
- |   |  |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Residential</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rural Ranchette Residential (RRR) (R-10-11.0 DUMC)</li> <li>Low Density Residential (LDR) (R-3-4.0 DUMC)</li> <li>Medium Density Residential 1 (MDR1) (R-3-8.0 DUMC)</li> <li>Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2) (R-3-12.0 DUMC)</li> <li>High Density Residential 1 (HDR1) (R-20-18.0 DUMC)</li> <li>High Density Residential 2 (HDR2) (R-20-28.0 DUMC)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Commercial/Office/Industrial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighborhood Commercial (NC)</li> <li>Community Commercial (CC)</li> <li>Professional Office (PO)</li> <li>Employment/Light Industrial (ELI)</li> <li>Heavy Industrial (HI)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Mixed-Use</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Master Planned Community (MPC)</li> <li>Downtown Mixed Use (DMU)</li> <li>Highway Mixed Use (HMU)</li> <li>Prison/Employment/Light Industrial (PELI)</li> </ul> | <p><b>Community/Public</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public/Governmental (P/G)</li> <li>Prison (P)</li> <li>Military Reservation (MR)</li> <li>Parks and Recreation (PR)</li> <li>Open Space (OS)</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|---|

*Notes:*  
 -The land uses shown are generalized by location and use. For better guidance please refer to the Town of Florence General Plan.  
 -Prison land and Wilson State Trust Land designated as Open Space shall have a maximum density of 1 DUMC.  
 -Please refer to the text of the General Plan for land use policies and additional information on overlay areas within the Town Planning Area.  
 -Some roadway alignments shown on this Land Use Map are conceptual and subject to further study.  
 -The future transit corridor, transit interchange, and other features indicated on this Land Use Map are generally conceptual and final alignments and locations of said features shall be determined upon more detailed development and engineering plans and in the case of the heavy transit final design reports approved by the Arizona Department of Transportation. Interchanges shall also be subject to FHWA approval. Right-of-way widths and technical specifications for Town roadways shall be subject to SDOT findings and the final recommendations of the Town Engineer.

Figure 2-5. Town of Florence 2020 General Plan Future Land Use Map - Downtown

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**Low Density Residential**

adjacent to the incorporated Town boundaries to provide opportunities for residential neighborhoods in traditional subdivisions. New residential development should be designed with identifiable neighborhood units and provided with parks, recreational facilities and schools as integral components of quality neighborhood design. Within LDR areas, larger neighborhood units are encouraged to provide choices for residents regarding the size and type of dwelling unit and lot, neighborhood design, density of development and community amenities.

Typical uses include single-family detached housing, public/governmental facilities, parks, recreational facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses.

The LDR land use category is located throughout the Planning Area to accommodate suburban-style, traditional single-family detached residential developments. LDR areas should have access to nearby transportation networks, shopping facilities, employment areas, schools, places of worship and parks.

**Medium Density Residential 1 (MDR1)  
(4.0–8.0 DU/AC)**

The Medium Density Residential 1 (MDR1) designation has been identified for appropriate areas to provide more compact development opportunities for a varied housing inventory. These areas are generally characterized by single-family homes in typical subdivision developments, as well as other detached housing such as zero lot line units and patio homes. While greater densities are encouraged within this land use category, detached single-family residential housing may be appropriate as part of an appropriately master-planned area. Developments are encouraged to cluster residential buildings around open space and/or recreational features. MDR1 developments are expected to be more compact and dense than traditional



**Medium Density Residential 1**

single-family detached neighborhoods. Each MDR1 development project should have unique design elements to create a sense of place and identity. This can include variation in architectural elements for individual units, separate entrances, entry paths, neighborhood trails, gardens and/or balconies.

Typical uses include single-family detached residential, single-family attached residential (e.g., townhouse, condominium), public/governmental facilities, parks, recreational facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses.

The MDR1 land use category is located throughout the Planning Area to offer owner-occupied housing opportunities at higher densities than LDR areas. MDR1 areas should have convenient access to transportation, and activity centers, such as schools, employment and recreation.

**Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2)  
(8.0–12.0 DU/AC)**

The Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2) designation has been identified for appropriate areas to provide more compact development opportunities for a varied housing inventory. Often, these lands serve as a buffer or transition area between lower density residential areas and higher density residential, commercial



**Medium Density Residential 2**

or mixed use areas. Each MDR2 development project should have unique design elements to create a sense of place and identity. While greater densities are encouraged within these land use categories, detached single-family residential housing may be appropriate as part of an appropriately master-planned area.

Typical uses include duplexes, triplexes, single-family attached residential (e.g., townhouse, condominium), public/governmental facilities, parks, recreational facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses. While greater densities are encouraged within this land use category, detached single-family residential housing may be appropriate as part of an appropriately master-planned area. Due to the higher potential densities allowed in MDR2 areas, developments might expect to be two to three stories in height where compatible with surrounding properties.

In the future, the MDR2 land use category could be located throughout the Planning Area to offer a typically owner-occupied housing alternative to the LDR and MDR1 land use categories. MDR2 areas should have access to nearby transportation networks, shopping facilities, employment areas, schools, places of worship and parks.

**High Density Residential 1 (HDR1)  
(12.0–18.0 DU/AC)**

The High Density Residential 1 (HDR1) designation has been identified for appropriate areas on the Land Use Map to provide alternative housing choices at locations where adequate utility services exist. Two story attached residential developments with surface parking typifies this density, although structures of greater height with compensating amounts of open space would be pos-



High Density Residential 1

sible. While greater densities are encouraged within this land use category, detached single-family residential housing may be appropriate as part of an appropriately master-planned area. As part of approved mixed-use developments, ground floor building space might be devoted to compatible commercial or office uses with residential development occurring on the upper floors of the buildings. Infrastructure, services and facilities must be available to serve the proposed density, and the proposed project must be compatible with surrounding land uses. Projects are encouraged to provide unique architectural and neighborhood elements to create a sense of place and identity.

Types of uses include townhomes, condominiums, apartments, parks, public/governmental facilities, recreational facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses.

The HDR1 land use category should be selectively applied to areas with convenient access to major transportation corridors, employment areas, shopping facilities and community parks. HDR1 areas are needed to meet future workforce housing needs and will help address potential future housing affordability issues.

**High Density Residential 2 (HDR2)  
(18.0–24.0 DU/AC)**

The High Density Residential 2 (HDR2) designation provides for a higher-density development character, providing townhomes, condominiums and apartments up to three or four stories tall. The HDR2 designation has not yet been applied to the Future Land Use Map, but is defined to provide future alternative housing choices at locations where adequate utility services exist or are anticipated to be provided.



High Density Residential 2



As part of approved mixed-use developments, ground floor building space might be devoted to compatible commercial or office uses with residential development occurring on the upper floors of the buildings. Infrastructure, services and facilities must be available to serve the proposed density, and the proposed project must be compatible with surrounding land uses. Attached residential projects are encouraged to provide unique architectural and neighborhood elements to create a sense of place and identity.

Types of uses include townhomes, condominiums, apartments, parks, public/governmental facilities, recreational facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses.

HDR2 areas will be supported only in the immediate vicinity of major transportation corridors, such as arterial roadways of regional significance and the proposed north-south freeway. The HDR2 land use category should be selectively applied to areas with convenient access to major transportation corridors, employment areas, shopping facilities and community parks. HDR2 areas are needed to meet future workforce housing needs and will help address potential future housing affordability issues.

#### OBJECTIVE

**Attract and maintain commercial and office land uses to continue to serve the needs of the community and expand employment opportunities within the community.**

### Commercial and Office Land Uses

Particular attention has been given to setting aside land for future commercial and office development. Florence has a strong base of public sector employment. To ensure long-term sustainability, it is critical that commercial and office land uses be expanded to achieve an appropriate jobs/housing ratio. Commercial and office land use categories are intended to provide for a full-service community, where employees, residents and visitors have a wide range of shopping and service options. Commercial development increases employment opportunities and generates tax revenues for the Town to support community amenities. Office land uses are critical to the community as well. Offices serve two functions in a community: to pro-

vide professional services to residents (doctor, lawyer) and offer additional employment options.

### Commercial and Office Land Use Designations

#### Neighborhood Commercial (NC)

The Neighborhood Commercial (NC) designation is intended to provide nodal areas for small-scale commercial projects that primarily serve local neighborhoods. Design features need to be included in NC centers to ensure that they are visually compatible with and complementary to adjacent and nearby residential uses. NC centers should provide convenient pedestrian and bicycle access from adjacent neighborhoods into the center. NC uses should be designed at a pedestrian scale and be supportive of non-vehicular oriented business.

Typical uses include retail, service sector and office uses compatible with adjacent residential development. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

Typical locations of NC are the intersections of collector and arterial roadways. Because of the scale of the Future Land Use Map, not all potential NC land use areas are shown. Accordingly, Town policy is to allow for up to 5 acres of NC without a Minor or Major General Plan Amendment provided that:

- The location meets the intent of the General Plan;
- Proposed commercial use is compatible with surrounding uses; and
- The change does not have a substantial impact on the balance and mixture of land uses within the Town's Planning Area.



Neighborhood Commercial

### Community Commercial (CC)

The Community Commercial (CC) designation serves to provide nodal areas for a larger level of retail services and retail goods throughout the Florence area for residents, commuters and visitors. The intent of the CC land use is to provide a wide variety of goods and services to the community, enhance local sales tax revenues and buffer traffic noise to prevent it from reaching surrounding neighborhoods. Whereas neighborhood centers within the NC land use areas will typically encompass 5- to 10-acre sites, developments within the CC area can be expected to average 20 to 30 acres and be anchored by larger supermarkets or other major retail business. Power centers, shopping malls, lifestyle centers and other major shopping developments might occur on significantly larger land tracts where projects have appropriate transportation accessibility, infrastructure needs and immediate access to significant population centers.

Design features need to be included to ensure that they are visually compatible with and complementary to adjacent and nearby land uses. Projects will be encouraged to feature 360-degree architecture (four-sided building articulation), drought-tolerant landscaping, public gathering areas, public art features and generous landscaping to buffer adjacent residential uses from noise, traffic and glare. Commercial projects should provide for convenient pedestrian and bicycle access from adjacent neighborhoods into the shopping centers.

Typical uses include retail and commercial services, professional offices and health care facilities that are intended to serve at a community or regional scale. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.



Community Commercial

Locations of CC-designated areas include intersections of arterial roadways and along the north-south freeway corridor. Because of the scale of the Future Land Use Map, not all potential CC land use areas are shown. Accordingly, Town policy is to allow for up to 5 acres of CC without a Minor or Major General Plan Amendment provided that:

- The location meets the intent of the General Plan;
- Proposed commercial use is compatible with surrounding uses; and
- The change does not have a substantial impact on the balance and mixture of land uses within the Town's Planning Area.

### Professional Office (PO)

The Professional Office (PO) designation is used to provide a land use category supportive of corporate, professional and administrative office developments, as well as projects centered around health care, including urgent care centers and hospitals. Some commercial service uses needed to support office-based business operations are expected. The PO designation is intended to encourage the concentration of office uses along major arterial roadways in a nodal development pattern and along the north-south freeway corridor, while generally discouraging larger isolated office buildings. Office developments may include low-rise garden office arrangements or mid-rise structures as appropriate to the project's specific location. Larger PO projects should provide a pleasant, campus-like working atmosphere or be located within an urban setting Downtown.

Typical uses include offices (general, professional, corporate and medical), health care facilities, financial institutions (e.g., banks and credit unions) and business services. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

Locations of PO land include areas along major arterial roadways and along the north-south freeway corridor. Because of the scale of the Future Land Use Map, not all potential PO land use areas are shown. Accordingly, Town policy is to allow for up to 5 acres of PO without a Minor or Major General Plan Amendment provided that:

- The location meets the intent of the General Plan;



- Proposed professional office use is compatible with surrounding uses; and
- The change does not have a substantial impact on the balance and mixture of land uses within the Town's Planning Area.

#### OBJECTIVE

**Provide a mix of industrial, employment-generating uses to support a diversified economic base.**



**Employment/Light Industrial**

### Industrial Land Uses

To balance the multiple land use objectives of the Town, not all employment will be office-based. A sustainable community needs to offer a broad range of employment options. The two industrial land use categories are intended to function as employment centers with uses such as technology parks, showroom retail, manufacturing operations and warehouse and distribution.

The three rail lines that pass through the Planning Area offer expanded opportunities for industrial land uses as well. However, industrial land uses are distributed in the Planning Area in specific locations so as not to encroach on any nearby neighborhoods.

### Industrial Land Use Designations

#### Employment/Light Industrial (E/LI)

The primary purpose of designating land as Employment/Light Industrial (E/LI) is to provide areas supportive of a variety of employment sectors. These areas are typically more labor-intensive than heavier industrial areas, meaning that the density of employment is higher than areas involving mostly warehouse uses.

Development within this designation may occur as a single use, a subdivision where individual entities own and operate their businesses or as multi-tenant complexes. Design features need to be included to ensure that projects are visually complimentary to adjacent and nearby land uses. Projects should feature articulation and architectural interest on façades visible to the public and use drought-tolerant landscaping. E/LI development projects should be adequately buffered from residential neighborhoods and have shared roadway access points on arterial roadways.

Typical uses include corporate and general offices, light assembly plants, light manu-

facturing plants, technology campuses, warehouses, distribution centers, sand and gravel operations, rail transport industries and other types of land uses that offer attractive opportunities for employment while being generally compatible with surrounding land uses. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur in this land use category.

Locations of the E/LI designation include areas east of SR 79, near the Coolidge Airport, around Town wastewater treatment plants, around the Ironwood Landfill and specified areas near railroads.

#### Heavy Industrial (HI)

Areas designated Heavy Industrial (HI) are intended for a range of large-scale industrial businesses, including uses that, for reasons of potential environmental effects, are best segregated from other, more sensitive land uses, such as residential neighborhoods.

Primary processing industries involving the mechanical or chemical transformation of raw materials, the blending of materials (such as lubricating oils, plastics and resins) and treatment and fabrication operations would generally be appropriate only within this designation. Industrial uses that may require structures outside of buildings, such as cranes, conveyer systems or outdoor storage, are also better-suited to this land use designation.

Design features need to be included to ensure that they are visually compatible with and complementary to adjacent and nearby land uses or completely screened from view. Projects should feature articulation and architectural interest on visible façades and use drought-tolerant landscaping. HI development projects should be substantially buffered from residential neighborhoods, as well as adjacent public roadways and other



**Heavy Industrial**

nonindustrial land uses. HI development projects should use shared roadway access points from major arterial roadways, highways or freeways.

Typical uses include mines, landfills, salvage yards, recycling centers, auto-body repair and painting centers, transfer stations, intensive assembly plants and heavy manufacturing plants. HI uses typically result in increased truck traffic and noise and are more land intensive. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

The only HI land use currently identified on the Land Use Map is the Ironwood Landfill, which may include a C and D landfill and transfer station in the future.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Encourage mixed-use development, where appropriate.**

**Mixed Land Uses**

Three unique land use categories have been designated to allow for flexible land use in activity centers and provide for innovation in design. Whereas the other land use designations generally focus on a single type of land use, mixed land use categories produce a successful blend of land uses to create successful districts.

**Mixed Use Land Use Designations**

**Master Planned Community (MPC)**

A Master Planned Community (MPC) category is provided on the General Plan Land Use Map. Various types of residential, commercial and office land uses may occur within the MPC, but all uses must be considered generally compatible with each other, as well



**Master Planned Community**

as adjacent properties. Public/governmental, open space and parks/recreation uses may also occur within the MPC.

Employment uses may occur within the MPC, but extra caution will be taken to ensure compatibility of employment land uses with adjacent and nearby residential areas. The minimum size of the MPC shall be 640 acres. All properties within the MPC shall be under the control of one master developer, have a Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning classification and be subjected to a development agreement between the Town and master developer. Factors such as locations, uses, areas, intensities and densities within the MPC shall be flexible, providing land use decisions regarding said factors are guided by good planning principles, a PUD development guide and the governing development agreement. The MPC shall be represented on the Land Use Map by the designation of the MPC category and representative color. Designation of the MPC category shall occur through a Minor General Plan Amendment process, except where the MPC is proposed adjacent to the HI, MR or P land use category.

Currently, six MPC areas are shown on the General Plan Land Use Map: Anthem at Merrill Ranch, Dobson Farms, Merrill Ranch, Paloroso and Skyview Farms. It is understood that the General Plan cannot override entitlements that may have been previously granted to existing projects with PUD zoning and/or development agreements. For more detail on projects with the MPC land use designation, refer to the final approved documents for these projects.

**Downtown Mixed Use (DMU)**

The Downtown Mixed Use (DMU) designation is used within the Downtown area to provide





**Downtown Mixed Use**

for a mix of land uses supportive of revitalization efforts while respecting the historical value of the area and existing developed properties. This land use designation supports a variety of compatible land uses and development standards that will be in keeping with the sense of scale and place already established on Main Street between Butte Avenue and Ruggles Street. The incorporation of vertically and horizontally integrated residential uses is a critical component to the success of the land use category.

Development is expected to be more compact and dense than what occurs outside of the Downtown core, and buildings could be of a greater height than that occurring at present, providing that they are compatible with existing surrounding land uses and consistent with the character of the area.

Typical uses within this more pedestrian-oriented land use category include retail, entertainment, professional services, restaurants, parks and mid-to-high density residential projects that are part of mixed use developments. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

The DMU designation is applied to the Main Street corridor from the proposed river road to the SR 287/SR 79 junction. The DMU designation also extends along Ruggles Street and Butte Avenue between Main Street and the HMU land use designation along SR 79. This designation will not be applied outside of this area, but, where appropriate, can be expanded to contiguous areas.

**Highway Mixed Use (HMU)**

The Highway Mixed Use (HMU) designation is primarily intended to assist with the revitalization of older strip commercial uses along SR 79 from the proposed river road to the



**Highway Mixed Use**

SR 79 “Y.” The intent is to provide for a mix of highway-oriented retail goods and commercial services for commuters, workers and residents and to encourage multistory buildings with residential components as part of mixed-use development projects. The HMU area is distinguished from the DMU area by being more vehicular-oriented because SR 79 is a major through route in Florence. However, stand-alone retail projects are still encouraged to occur in a nodal pattern.

Typical uses within this category include lodging, retail, entertainment, professional services, restaurants, automotive-related businesses (e.g., service stations, car washes), parks and mid-to-high density residential projects that are part of mixed use developments. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

The HMU designation is applied to the SR 79 corridor from the proposed river road to the SR 79 “Y.” This designation will not be applied outside of this area, but can be expanded to contiguous areas.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Maintain an adequate inventory of land to conduct public, quasi-public and institutional activities, including protection of areas needed for future public, quasi-public and institutional facilities.**
- Maintain an adequate inventory of open space within the community.**

**Community and Public Land Uses**

Public land uses include a wide variety of community uses, including the areas of government, education, health care, public safety and recreation. These community services will

need to expand as the population of Florence expands. High-quality community services amplify the image Florence presents to the region: a full-service, sustainable community that is a desirable place to live.

### Community and Public Land Use Designations

#### Public/Governmental (P/G)

The Public/Governmental (P/G) land use designation is used for public land and institutional uses that serve the community.

Typical uses include governmental offices, schools, libraries, fire stations, police stations, hospitals, water and wastewater treatment facilities, animal shelters, cultural facilities and other public facilities. Other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

Locations of the P/G designation are primarily concentrated in the Downtown area and along SR 79. A P/G land use may occur within any land use, subject to compatibility and local ordinances.

#### Prison (P)

The Prison (P) designation is used for existing and future private and public prisons and correctional facilities. This land use has significant historical relevance in the Florence region and has offered economic and employment stability to the region for many years. This land use also has a positive spin-off on other job sectors and supportive commercial facilities.

The P land use designation is applied almost entirely to areas east of the Town Core and SR 79. A small area north of the Gila River and west of SR 79 is also identified on the Land Use Map as P. Because of the nature of this land use and considerations related to public safety, transportation, infrastructure, land use compatibility and buffering, requests to apply additional areas of this land use on the Future Land Use Map will be considered as Major Amendments to the General Plan.

#### Parks/Recreation (P/R)

The Parks/Recreation (P/R) designation is used to identify existing and conceptual future locations where park land and recreational facilities will serve the existing and future population. P/R designations should be located, to the extent feasible, in the center of their respective service areas and be



**Parks and Recreation**

co-located with schools whenever possible. Parks and recreational facilities should be constructed to conform to their respective definitions as specified in the Town's 2008 Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan.

Typical uses include traditional public parks, state parks, county parks and areas designated for more passive recreational use. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

Larger areas designated on the Future Land Use Map as P/R include Heritage Park, McFarland State Park and the Charles Whitlow Rodeo Grounds. Not all current or proposed P/R land use areas are shown on the Future Land Use Map. The Town's 2008 Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan should be referred to for more detail on this particular land use category. It is noted that any P/R use shown on private land or State Trust land is entitled to have a maximum residential density of 1 DU/AC.

#### Open Space (OS)

The Open Space (OS) designation is identified for areas that exhibit valuable natural characteristics that are supported by the community. The OS designation encourages public visibility of the Town's trail system in order to promote safety for users by designing new adjacent residential development with windows that overlook the trail system. Design of trail entrances should also promote visibility and safety by placing them in prominent locations and minimizing obstacles. Maintenance of OS is crucial for its success as a public amenity. Emphasis should be placed on the planting, irrigation and maintenance of existing trees in designated trail areas. Tree canopies benefit a community's sense of place and are reflective





Open Space

of the community’s agricultural past.

OS uses will typically include passive open areas, cultural areas, floodplains, canal areas and regional open space trail areas. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

Locations of the OS designation include the Gila River, equestrian trails, canals, Poston Butte (“F” Mountain), the Picture Rocks area and historic cemeteries. It is noted that any OS use shown on private land or State Trust land is entitled to have a maximum residential density of 1 DU/AC.

**Florence Military Reservation (MR)**

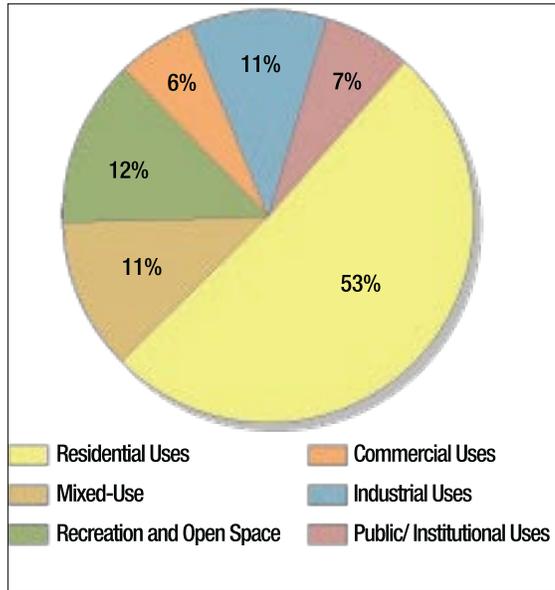
This designation provides for the ongoing operation of the Florence Military Reservation, a cooperative effort of the Arizona National Guard and other state and federal agencies. Within this area, the General Plan encourages and supports the Military Reservation’s multiple use policy, which provides for cattle grazing, hunting, camping and other outdoor recreation, in addition to military training.

The MR land use area includes an Artillery/Small Arms Impact Area used to identify the specific area where the Arizona National Guard conducts tank firing exercises and target practice. The MR area is not appropriate for any other uses, except for supportive and ancillary governmental land uses.

The MR land use is applied to the Florence Military Reservation located north of the Gila River and east of SR 79.

**Land Use Summary**

The land uses identified in this General Plan include 53 percent residential, 12 percent



**Figure 2-6. 2020 Planning Area Land Use Category Distribution**

Source: General Plan Future Land Use Map

recreation and open space, 11 percent mixed uses, 11 percent industrial uses, 7 percent public/institutional uses, and 6 percent commercial uses (see Figure 2-6).

**Land Use Overlay Areas**

Additional land use overlay categories are acknowledged by the adoption of this General Plan. These overlay categories add further refinement to the Town’s General Plan and provide greater direction to ensure the overall goals, objectives and strategies of the General Plan can be fulfilled. The Town may create special zoning categories to facilitate the implementation of these overlays.

**Historic District Overlay (HD)**

The Historic District Land Use Overlay is established to further recognize the Town’s registered Historic District and serves to support, along with the Historic Preservation Element of the General Plan, the preservation of the Town’s unique historical character. This overlay is intended to further encourage the retention, rehabilitation and reuse of historical structures.

**Redevelopment District Overlay (RD)**

The Redevelopment District Land Use Overlay is established to further recognize the Town’s adopted Redevelopment Area and provide further support for the implementation of the Town’s Redevelopment Plan, which is

discussed in more detail in the General Plan Economic Development Element.

### **Southeast Florence Overlay (SEF)**

The Southeast Florence (SEF) Land Use Overlay is created to provide for the protection of the unique rural character of the southeast Florence Planning Area.

The SEF Land Use Overlay is applied in policy to all areas of the Town's Planning Area south of the Mayfield Road alignment and west of SR 79. This area encourages larger lot and equestrian based development, but also will allow additional uses as indicated by the Land Use Map. However, all development within this area is expected to carry forward a common rural architectural theme and include landscaping, public art, fencing and other development features supportive of this theme.

### **Freeway Mixed Use Overlay (FMU)**

The Freeway Mixed Use Overlay provides a unique land use category related to the development of Florence's first freeway corridor. The FMU designation is designed to provide for a high intensity mix of large scale retail development, low- to mid-rise offices, visitor-serving development (e.g., hotels and restaurants) and hospital and health care facilities in locations where excellent, accessible transportation and transit service is anticipated. High-density residential development in a mixed use setting is also appropriate for this designation. Because the uses that will locate within this designation are typically those that seek high visibility, the quality of design and image presented by development in this overlay area will be critical. Elements in this category include the encouragement of high-density commercial, office and residential uses and creating attractive views from the freeway and along streets through building placement, quality architecture, pedestrian-oriented design and pleasant landscaping. Visual emphasis is to be placed on buildings and plaza/open space areas through strategic site planning efforts. Multi-modal connectivity should be emphasized throughout this land use area. Development projects in this category will be approved for size and scale on a project-by-project basis to allow for flexibility and uniqueness in the district.

Typical uses include lodging, restaurants, entertainment, specialty and general retail,

large-scale regionally-oriented commercial uses (e.g., shopping malls, power centers, lifestyle centers, auto malls), high-intensity office complexes and high-density residential projects in a mixed use setting. Public/governmental facilities and other supportive and ancillary land uses may occur within this land use category.

The FMU Land Use Overlay is applied to cover the area of the north-south freeway and any additional future freeway corridors that could be located within the Town's Planning Area. Because exact freeway alignments are yet to be determined, the FMU Land Use Overlay is a floating overlay that follows the final alignment of freeways and generally extends 1 mile from each side of the freeway alignment. Underlying land uses as applied on the Land Use Map shall be adhered to, but where land is comprehensively planned and PUD zoning is proposed to support mixed-use development and significant commercial and employment projects along freeway corridors, no General Plan Amendment shall be required, providing the zoning process appropriately addresses all issues of access, compatibility, buffering and infrastructure.

### **Conservation**

The Conservation Land Use Overlay is created to support efforts aimed at the protection of conservation areas defined in the 2008 Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan and implementation of the provisions of the General Plan Environmental Planning Element as it relates to the Gila River.

## **COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES**

The Land Use Element designates the general distribution, location and intensity of land uses for housing, business, industry, open space, Town facilities and other categories of public and private land uses in the Planning Area. This Element focuses on the desired land uses based on community input regarding future growth and development in the Town. With the existing Downtown continuing to be the center of the community, Florence will develop into a regional city of over half a million people. Land uses in this element are based on the existing development and historical legacy of the Town, as well as a pro-active community desire to



prepare and plan for the development that will occur in the future as the Phoenix metropolitan region continues to intensify.

Community feedback during the General Plan public process placed value on historical preservation, preservation of vistas and views of sunsets and stars at night, protection of the small-town character while the community continues to grow, economic development, expanded shopping opportunities, availability of affordable housing and promotion of Downtown as a gathering place for social, entertainment and civic purposes. Community comments included:

- Make the Gila River accessible and have it restored as a riparian habitat;
- Preserve open vistas and views of North Butte and surrounding mountain ranges;
- Protect existing rural, very low-density residential areas from the externalities of higher-intensity land uses;
- Actively promote coordination and cooperation of public and sovereign entities within the Town's Planning Area;
- Respect the agricultural heritage of the community;
- Maintain the historical Downtown as a vibrant entity that serves as a regional destination;
- Make available well-designed, full service neighborhoods for a wide range of ages and income levels;
- Promote sustainable development and land use planning practices;
- Provide a diversity of neighborhood environments; and
- Use the existing assets of infrastructure and public facilities to increase infill and reuse.

## GOALS

The Land Use Element is the foundation of the General Plan. It provides planned designations for current and future land uses. The Land Use Element prescribes the recommended types and standards for locating and rehabilitating residential, employment and other supportive land uses within the Town's Planning Area. The goals of the Land

Use Element are stated in the box below.

The Conservation Land Use Overlay intends to protect the unique natural resources in the southeast Planning Area, which is roughly bounded by Florence Kelvin Highway on the north, Biznaga Street on the east, Bartlett Road on the south and Dogwood Road on the west. Superior examples of Sonoran Desert plant and animal species encompass this area, and are worthy of conservation. Land uses encouraged in this overlay area include parks, trails and open space (emphasizing equestrian trails).

Low-density, context-sensitive design and development (such as large ranch properties or cluster housing) are encouraged to retain the natural beauty of the area. This conservation overlay area also protects from flooding and helps maintain the eastern mountain views, a valuable resource to the community. A scenic railway, to highlight the natural beauty of the area, is under consideration by the Town.

### Land Use Goals

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Goal 1</b> | <b>Establish and maintain an orderly pattern of land use types and intensities to create an economically, culturally and environmentally sustainable community.</b>                    |
| <b>Goal 2</b> | <b>Protect the community's small-town character while providing for growth and new development.</b>  |
| <b>Goal 3</b> | <b>Designate the use of land based on conditions such as location, adjacent uses, access and natural terrain.</b>  |
| <b>Goal 4</b> | <b>Provide for the everyday needs of Florence residents, workers and visitors by designating land uses that provide for diversity in housing, employment, services and activities.</b> |
| <b>Goal 5</b> | <b>Enhance the quality of life within the Florence community through the protection of natural areas.</b>  |
| <b>Goal 6</b> | <b>Minimize conflicts between different land uses.</b>   |

## LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Preserve an open, semi-rural, small-town community setting.</b></p>   | <p>Emphasize retention of Florence's natural environmental setting, semi-rural character and scenic features.</p>   |
|   | <p>Promote an assembly of distinct urban residential neighborhoods, rural communities and rural residential areas encompassing a range of housing types that can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provide a refuge from the congestion of the nearby metropolitan areas;</li> <li>– are visually attractive and compatible in intensity, dwelling unit size and structural design with an open, rural character; and</li> <li>– meet the needs and suit the small-town and rural lifestyles of present and future residents.</li> </ul>  |
|   | <p>Encourage the clustering of development as a means of preserving significant environmental features, provided that the clustered development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– results in the same number of dwelling units as would a traditional non-clustered development and does not require a greater level of public services and facilities;</li> <li>– displays a desirable and environmentally sensitive development plan, creates usable open space areas and preserves significant environmental features (hillsides, washes, vistas); and</li> <li>– is compatible with the surrounding environment.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Have a mixture of dwelling unit sizes, layouts and ownership types (consistent with the corresponding land use designation and density range), especially within large-scale residential development projects, in order to provide housing opportunities for a range of incomes and households.</b></p> | <p>Promote the establishment and maintenance of various features to enhance community character, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– provision of gathering, meeting and recreational places;</li> <li>– mixed use and pedestrian oriented development within and adjacent to Downtown; and</li> <li>– development designs and entry monuments that enhance neighborhood identity.</li> </ul>   |
|   | <p>Residential neighborhoods should exhibit a complementary variety of dwelling setbacks and lot placements.</p>  |
|   | <p>Lot patterns should reflect the existing topography and minimize the need for grading.</p>   |
|   | <p>Where residential infill development is proposed, ensure that the density is compatible with the existing residential neighborhood.</p>  |
| <p><b>Attract and maintain commercial and office land uses to continue to serve the needs of the community and expand employment opportunities within the community.</b></p>  | <p>Require that new residential development provide for construction of infrastructure and for provision of open space and/or construction of recreational facilities in order to reduce the public cost associated with such uses.</p>   |
|   | <p>Allow gated communities as long as infrastructure is built to typical Town standards.</p>  |
|   | <p>Allow conversion of existing single-family uses to multi-family development within the High Density Residential area contingent upon preparation of a plan for consolidation of access of existing driveways so that access for proposed multifamily developments will be provided in a safe and efficient manner.</p>   |
|   | <p>Encourage expansion of the range of commercial uses to include those that are currently underrepresented within Florence.</p>  |
| <p><b>Attract and maintain commercial and office land uses to continue to serve the needs of the community and expand employment opportunities within the community.</b></p>  | <p>Facilitate expansion of retail and commercial uses by increasing the number of residents within the primary trade area (10-mile radius).</p>   |
|   | <p>Implement programs to retain existing retail and commercial service uses and recruit new uses into the community.</p>  |
|   | <p>Encourage pedestrian-oriented and small-scale developments that feature specialty stores and boutiques that create vibrant areas for people to gather and socialize and that better serve the community by providing a greater range of commercial uses (e.g., sit-down restaurants, upscale apparel shops, stores related to hobbies or collectibles, gift shops).</p>  |
| <p><b>Attract and maintain commercial and office land uses to continue to serve the needs of the community and expand employment opportunities within the community.</b></p>  | <p>Encourage a greater variety of visitor/service commercial uses to better serve the community (e.g., hotels and extended-stay suites that include special event facilities to hold conventions, corporate meetings, weddings).</p>  |



## LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <b>Attract and maintain commercial and office land uses to continue to serve the needs of the community and expand employment opportunities within the community (continued).</b>                              | <p>Encourage more commercial leisure activities (e.g., family-oriented commercial recreation facilities, kids' entertainment restaurants, day spas, sit-down restaurants that not only provide food but are oriented around family gatherings and the appreciation of nature through their settings).</p>  |
|  | <p>Provide for retail and service uses that focus on physical, mental and/or spiritual well being. By seeking out these uses, the community could attract businesses and services that want health-oriented customers. At the same time, the community would receive a greater variety of wellness-oriented uses that it needs and values.</p>                                   |
|  | <p>Place commercial and office developments so that they have a strong relationship with the street, such as by siting the buildings so that they are close to the street. For buildings that need to be set back from the street with a large parking lot, locate pad buildings along the street to maintain an attractive street edge and visually buffer the parking lot.</p> |
|  | <p>Ensure that new commercial/office developments are designed to provide for reciprocal access, where feasible, along commercial corridors to minimize the number of driveway entries necessary, limit the need to use the street to gain access to nearby uses and provide a unified street edge.</p>  |
| <b>Provide a mix of industrial, employment-generating uses to support a diversified economic base.</b>   | <p>Reduce sales leakage through aggressive marketing.</p>  |
|  | <p>Maintain a broad range of employment opportunities and facilitate economic vitality by encouraging industrial development at appropriate locations within the community.</p>  |
|  | <p>Require all industrial uses to be adequately screened to reduce glare, noise, dust and vibration impacts on adjacent properties.</p>  |
| <b>Encourage mixed-use development, where appropriate</b>  | <p>Ensure that all industrial development adjacent to residential land uses (either existing residential uses or residentially designated land) includes a buffer zone or noise attenuation wall to reduce outside noise levels at the property line to an acceptable level.</p>   |
|  | <p>The specific mix of uses and development density within a development should be appropriate to the development site's particular location, access points, size and adjacent land uses.</p>  |
|  | <p>Within mixed-use land use designations, both "vertical mixed use" (various types of uses integrated within individual buildings, such as commercial on the ground floor with residential uses above) and "horizontal mixed use" (individual buildings housing different types of uses within an integrated site plan) are appropriate.</p>                                    |
| <b>Maintain an adequate inventory of land to conduct public, quasi-public and institutional activities, including protection of areas needed for future public, quasi-public and institutional facilities.</b> | <p>Provide guidelines for infill development within the Town Core area to facilitate redevelopment and revitalization efforts.</p>   |
|  | <p>Maintain appropriate locations for the conduct of public business and the operation of institutional uses within the community.</p>   |
|  | <p>Provide for adequate open space and recreation areas throughout the community. Within areas designated as open space, permit only uses that are consistent with the provision of public and private recreation (active and passive), protection of public safety, managed production of resources and preservation of significant environmental resources.</p>                |
|  | <p>Provide for compatible land uses and adequate buffering adjacent to community and institutional uses.</p>   |
|  | <p>Aggressively partner with both private and state interests to provide acute medical care and ancillary support services for the Town and surrounding region.</p>  |
|  | <p>Partner with the Florence Unified School District (FUSD) and private developers to ensure the timely expansion of school facilities to support a growing population.</p>  |
|  | <p>Coordinate with FUSD in relation to the expansion of school facilities to serve new development and to provide for joint use of recreational facilities at schools.</p>   |

## LAND USE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Maintain an adequate inventory of land to conduct public, quasi-public and institutional activities, including protection of areas needed for future public, quasi-public and institutional facilities (continued).</b></p> | <p>Continue to work with Central Arizona College to explore opportunities for establishment of a local facility to provide a curriculum that matches the educational and vocational skills and needs of the Town's targeted employer types.</p>  |
|   | <p>Work with Arizona State University, University of Arizona, Northern Arizona University and other public or private universities/colleges to explore opportunities for establishment of a local facility to provide educational and vocational skills.</p>   |
|   | <p>Work closely with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, Pinal County and private landfill owners to mitigate visual and environmental impacts of existing and future landfills by effectively managing daily cover operations, providing screening and monitoring groundwater well data.</p> |
|   | <p>Work closely with the owners/operators of Ironwood Landfill to create and implement, when appropriate, a workable reuse plan.</p>   |
|   | <p>Provide for the extraction of sand and gravel resources in the Gila River while protecting adjacent land uses from potential adverse effects of mineral extraction activities.</p>  |
|   | <p>Monitor the status of mining permits, and encourage the natural re-contouring and safe reuse (if feasible) of land where extraction activities have been completed.</p>   |
|   | <p>Monitor truck hauling activities associated with mineral extraction operations to minimize dust and noise impacts on nearby residential areas.</p>  |
| <p><b>Maintain an adequate inventory of open space within the community.</b></p>  | <p>Support the retention of agricultural-related activities on cultivated land as long as is feasible.</p>   |
|   | <p>Provide for the retention of important open areas, where feasible.</p>  |
|   | <p>Provide for the expansion of parks and recreational land to meet adopted levels of service as the Town's population expands.</p>  |
|   | <p>Acquire land in mountainous terrain to build Town parks and trails.</p>   |
|   | <p>Survey residents every 5 years to validate needs for programmed recreation programs and park/open space facilities.</p>   |
| <p>Develop multi-generational citizen activity centers.</p>   |  |



## PURPOSE

Underlying the livability and economic vitality of a community is its perceived image. Community design quality is not just an aesthetic matter, but has distinct functional dimensions. Quality in the design of the built environment is an investment in the quality of the community that pays dividends in residents' perceptions of their quality of life and the perceptions that prospective employers and retailers will have regarding the desirability of Florence as a location for their businesses.

Looking at the character components that have evolved in Florence will help guide future development within the historic Downtown and central areas of the Town so that it occurs in a manner respectful of the areas' historic character and setting, while allowing suburban and outlying areas to reflect a more contemporary character or the rural character of Southeast Florence.

### OBJECTIVE

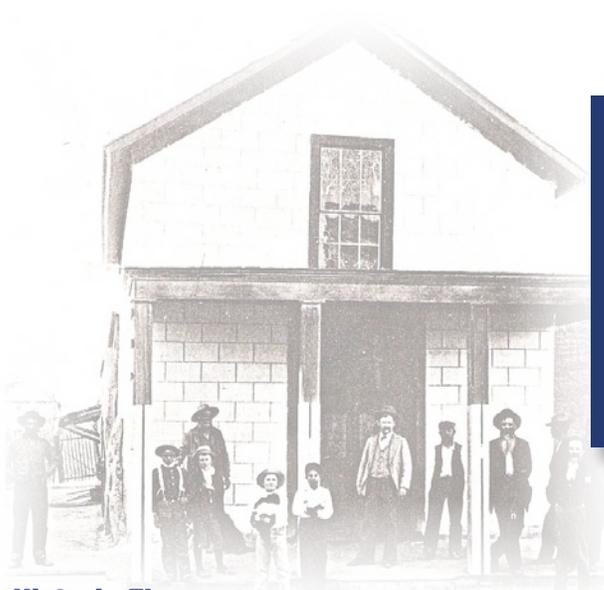
**Preserve and enhance the unique character of specific areas of Florence by integrating appropriate themes into the design of new developments and public facilities within these character areas.**

## CHARACTER AREAS

The Town of Florence encompasses several areas with a distinct character. It is the intent of the General Plan to retain and enhance the unique character of each of these "Character Areas," rather than homogenize development within the community. The Character Areas are illustrated in Figure 3-1 (on page 3-2) and include Historic Florence, Central Florence, Suburban Florence and Rural Southeast Florence, discussed below.

*"We shape buildings, and they shape us"*

— Winston Churchill



### Historic Florence

The Historic Florence area dates back to the boom of the 1870s that was fueled by the discovery of silver nearby. Historic Florence is designated as a National Historic District, with numerous historically significant buildings remaining intact, including the Pinal County Courthouse, reportedly the oldest public building still in use in Arizona.

Florence's commercial activity was historically centered on Main Street, which is lined with mostly one- and two-story storefront and mixed-use buildings of various architectural styles. Historic Florence's commercial core is surrounded by single-family neighborhoods that are made up of relatively small, rectangular blocks organized in a grid pattern. Most homes are relatively modest single-story structures on small lots.

Future development should preserve, revitalize and reinforce Historic Florence's character and unique sense of place. The architecture of infill development should be



Historic tavern



Florence Post Office



Infill buildings: historic character retained



Streetscape

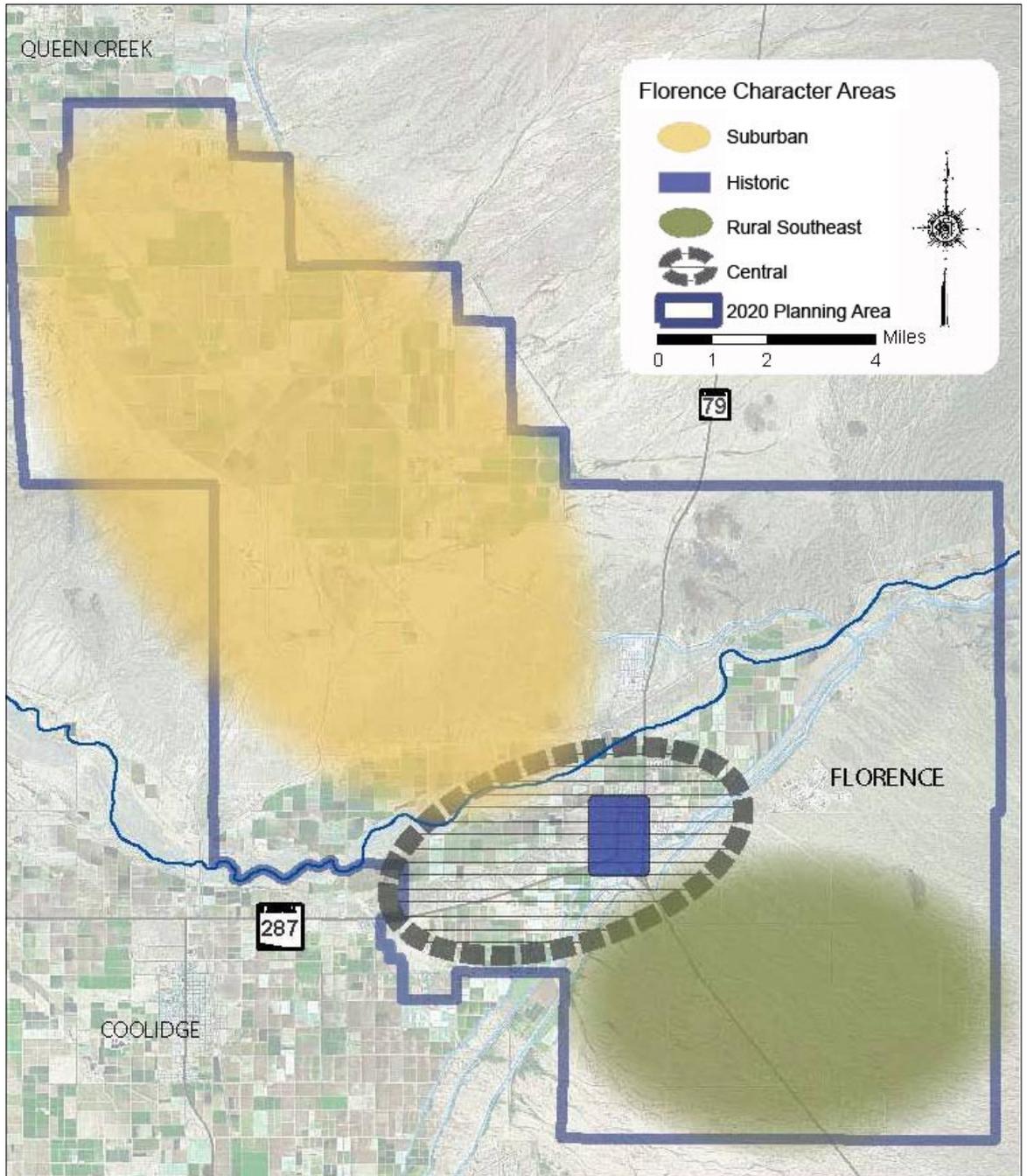


Figure 3-1. Florence Character Areas



authentic and in keeping with the late 19th and early 20th century styles commonly found in Historic Florence. The built environment should attract locals and visitors alike, and foster a vibrant specialty retail and lodging environment on Main Street, dominated by quaint and unique businesses that reflect local tradition and interests. Historic Florence is intended to be discovered on foot, with automobile traffic paying deference to pedestrians. The residential areas within Historic Florence should retain their livability and charm through careful infill and renovation, compatible with the scale and architecture of the neighborhood.

### Central Florence

Central Florence is the transition area between the Historic Florence area and the suburban lands to the north. Central Florence provides for a diverse mix of uses and higher development intensities than either Historic Florence or the suburbs. While intended to be safe, interesting and attractive for pedestrians, Central Florence is intended to have a balanced mix of transportation modes and accommodate automobile-oriented businesses as long as parking is relegated to the side and rear of buildings. Central Florence



Florence's Holiday Inn Express



Mixed-use building

accommodates a range of retail and office uses within commercial and mixed-use buildings, serving primarily local residents. Residences in Central Florence should typically be multi-family and attached single-family buildings.

### Suburban Florence

Suburban Florence encompasses a larger area north of the Town Core that is intended for residential development, interspersed with neighborhood-serving retail centers. The suburbs are intended to provide for a transition between denser urbanized areas in the city and the rural countryside. Unlike Historic Florence, the architecture of Suburban Florence may be more varied and include contemporary as well as traditional styles, so as to encourage creativity and unique designs for each development. Independent of any architectural style, careful design and quality materials should be used to ensure a harmonious and attractive built environment.

Residential developments in Suburban Florence should be characterized by blocks



Higher density homes



Retail plaza: Western character of architecture



Outdoor café



Suburban neighborhood park



Suburban neighborhood



Suburban neighborhood shopping plaza

and lots that are larger than those closer to the center of town, and by yards that are larger in relation to the homes. Development within Suburban Florence should allow for and encourage a range of detached and attached house types and sizes within each project, or preferably within each block, to avoid the common monotony of large-scale tract housing. Where residential developments provide for a similar lot size, a greater diversity of architectural styles within the development and along a block should be provided.

While the street grid within Suburban Florence may be irregular and more curvilinear in character than within the Historic or Central Florence areas, connectivity should be provided to facilitate walking within and between developments in Suburban Florence. To that end, cul-de-sacs should be used sparsely, and block perimeters should be limited. Pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian connectivity between Suburban Florence and other parts of town should also be provided through a network of trails.

While commercial and mixed-use developments are, by their nature, auto-dependent,

they should be designed as “park-once” developments where shoppers park their cars once in a lot (preferably to the rear of buildings) and walk to the various stores. Buildings should be placed close to the sidewalk to create attractive and interesting street frontages that attract pedestrian traffic. Where possible, commercial developments should be placed close to and connected with residential developments to allow for and encourage walking to and from business. Preferably, commercial centers should incorporate some residential uses above ground-floor retail to foster 24-hour activity.

### Rural Southeast Florence

The Rural Southeast Florence character area encompasses the Southeast Florence Overlay Area, and is intended to preserve the agricultural land and rural character around Florence for future generations. The Rural Southeast Florence character area allows for residential and limited commercial development. Settlement should appear to be sparse and consist of large lots that are accessed by country roads. Clustering of buildings to



Equestrian trail



Rural commercial



Southeastern Florence landscape



Rural commercial



Florence irrigation canal



Cactus Gardens: rural home

ral in character. Where feasible, roads need not have formal curbs and gutters, but can be provided with roadside swales with separated walkways rather than sidewalks, or no walkway on low-traffic local lanes. Driveways on large acreage lots may be gravel. Fences should be split rail, rather than picket fences.

Houses and other structures should not dominate the visual experience and, as a result, should be set back a greater distance from the road and provide for greater separation between buildings than in Suburban Florence. Generally, buildings should project a low-rise character and not exceed two stories in height. Lighting within the area should be low key and be shielded so as to protect the area's dark night sky.

### COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

Community feedback gathered during the public process for this General Plan placed value on preserving the community's unique historical architecture and providing a visual identity for the community that is appropriate to specific locations within the community and that is distinct from the Town's neighbors. As noted in the Historic Preservation

create "hamlets" can be accommodated if the building architecture and streetscapes reflect rural design themes.

Rural Southeast Florence is intended to create a clear distinction between the urban areas within the Town limits and the rural and lower density areas outside. The design of roads, fences and buildings should be ru-

Element, community residents have expressed a strong desire to retain a connection to Florence’s past while providing for future growth and development.

reflecting the unique character of the development’s setting within Historic, Central, Suburban or Rural Southeast Florence.

## GOALS

New development should do more than just fit in with its surroundings; it should make a positive contribution to the visual quality of the community. As vacant land develops and under utilized land experiences new development in the future, the design of such development should be attractive and functional,

## Community Character Goals

- Goal 1** Improve the aesthetic character of residential, commercial and other development within the Historic, Central, Suburban and Rural Southeast Florence areas.
- Goal 2** Make sound investments in Florence’s built environment by promoting design that is appropriate to the development’s setting within the community.

## COMMUNITY CHARACTER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Preserve and enhance the unique character of specific areas in Florence by integrating appropriate themes into the design of new developments and public facilities within these character areas.</b></p> | <p>Base the Town’s review of projects on the principle that development design should respect community goals and the desired character of development within defined character areas, as well as address the project’s economic objectives.</p>                                     |
|   | <p>Encourage development design that treats individual buildings and individual developments not as isolated entities, but as part of a larger area and a community.</p>   |
|   | <p>Promote developments with architectural styles, landscaping and amenities that are appropriate to the development’s setting, complements surrounding development and conveys a sense of purpose.</p>  |
|   | <p>Prepare detailed design guidelines to provide guidance for development within the Central, Suburban, and Rural Southeast Florence areas to complement existing design guidelines for the Florence historic district.</p>  |
|   | <p>Promote development design along the future north-south freeway route that both distinguishes Florence’s freeway-oriented development from other communities along the freeway and is compatible with the desired character of development within identified character areas.</p> |
|   | <p>Promote development design along rail lines that maintains the functionality of the lines without creating a stark “no man’s land” by backing walled development onto the rail lines.</p>   |
|   | <p>Consistent with the provisions of the Environmental Planning Element, maintain the natural character of the Gila River corridor.</p>  |



# 4

## CIRCULATION ELEMENT

### PURPOSE

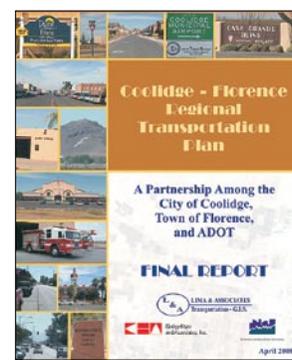
An effective public transportation network is essential to the creation of an environmentally and economically sustainable community. There are important linkages among the Town's public transportation system, street network, land use, growth management practices, environmental benefits and supporting infrastructure. Circulation affects these factors within the Town of Florence and regionally, where transportation facilities intersect with the regional freeway system, public transit and arterials that connect Florence to adjacent municipalities. The Circulation Element sets forth the Town's policy for achieving and maintaining the safe, efficient and reliable mobility of residents, visitors, goods and services throughout the community.

To ensure the continued development of a responsive transportation network that supports the community's land use and mobility needs, the Circulation Element sets forth provisions for the creation of a multi-modal transportation system. A multi-modal approach to transportation also supports the other elements of this General Plan, such as the Community Character, Energy and Growth Areas elements. Policies contained in the Circulation Element address existing and future roadways and intersections, pedestrian and bicycle paths, off-road paths, public transit (bus and rail), airports, and parking facilities.

### BACKGROUND

The Circulation Element of the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan is consistent with the recommendations of the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which was developed through a partnership among the Town of Florence, City of Coolidge and the Arizona Department of Transportation

(ADOT). The effort resulted in a 20-year plan and implementation program that would facilitate development of a regional, multi-modal transportation system. The RTP was prepared concurrently with the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan, and was completed in April, 2008. This Circulation Element incorporates the recommendations contained in the RTP, which is made available to the general public on the Town of Florence Web site, [www.florenceaz.gov](http://www.florenceaz.gov). However, highlights of the RTP are presented in this Circulation Element, as well as some additional potential strategies that the Town of Florence may consider in future updates to the General Plan. It is important to note also that the Circulation Element of the General Plan is consistent with the future land use scenarios and densities outlined in the Land Use Element.



Coolidge-Florence  
Regional Transportation  
Plan, April 2008

### EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### Roadways

Florence is served by two State Routes (SR 287 and SR 79). Inter-regional access is provided by Interstate 10, located 27 miles to the west, and which provides access to Florence through SR 287 and SR 387. Other significant roadways serving Florence are Arizona Farms Road, Hunt Highway and Attaway Road. The highest traffic volumes in Florence occur along the State Routes which generally operate at a Level of Service of B or better.

Florence currently is not served by public bus, air or rail transportation. The closest commercial airport is the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, about 24 miles northwest of Florence. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities

*"The point of cities is multiplicity of choice."*

– Jane Jacobs

within Florence are local in nature. Continuous pedestrian/bicycle facilities within the Town of Florence are limited to the Central Arizona Project Canal. For more information on trails, see the Parks, Trails and Open Space Element and the Town's Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan upon which that General Plan Element is based.

Florence's unprecedented growth has put extensive strain on the current transportation infrastructure. The Town lacks multi-modal facilities, has limited regional connections and has inadequate capacity along many roadways to accommodate existing and future development.

Because Florence will continue to experience growth in the population and employment sectors, major roadway and public transportation (transit) improvements will be needed to expand capacity of transportation corridors, minimize congestion and achieve improved roadway connectivity and development of intermodal transfer nodes.

## Railroads

Three freight railroads bisect the Florence area: Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR), Copper Basin and Magma. Copper Basin and Union Pacific are active freight railroads; the Magma Railroad is not in service. All three are being studied for potential commuter rail service to the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas in the future.

The Copper Basin Railway owns the railroad track that transects the northern half of Florence. It is a short line, which facilitates some flexibility to accommodate varied operational uses. The Copper Basin Railway connects with the Union Pacific Railroad at Magma Junction on the way to Winkelman—a 54-mile line hauling freight. A branch runs from Ray Junction to Ray—a 7-mile line.

Freight includes copper concentrates, ore, finished and unfinished copper, sulfuric acid, lumber and military equipment. Copper Basin Railway connects with the San Manuel Arizona Railroad at Hayden and handles freight traffic at the interchange with Union Pacific Railroad at Magma Junction.

The Magma Railroad that bisects the north-eastern portion of the Planning Area is a short line railroad that connects with the Union Pacific and Copper Basin Railroads

at Magma Junction on the way to the Town of Superior, northeast of Florence, a 28-mile freight line that is currently not in service, but could resume if a copper mine near Superior is reopened. A portion of the line is considered for future commuter rail service.

UPRR has a branch line that is located in the western half of Florence. The line runs from the main line near Picacho, south of Florence, to its terminal in Phoenix. It travels through the East Valley cities of Queen Creek, Gilbert, Mesa and Tempe before terminating in downtown Phoenix.

## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

### Circulation

This section presents a summary of the recommendations contained in the Coolidge-Florence RTP. The RTP identifies several challenges, the solutions for which form the basis of Florence's transportation plan:

- Considering and preparing for future regional bus, excursion rail and modern streetcar service (By 2025 Florence will have population and employment densities to support commuter rail service along a route between Phoenix and Tucson.)
- Setting aside space for community transit center
- Facilitating new development in a manner that will support use of transit within the community (Transit Oriented Development)
- Promoting use of rideshare options (van-pools or carpools)
- Preserving adequate rights-of-way for widening of existing roadways and development of new roadways
- Supporting the Pinal Rides program, participating in the Advisory Council and providing funding
- Addressing the need to conduct a Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study

The RTP recommends that implementation of the following transit modes be pursued over the long-term: Dial-A-Ride paratransit service; deviated fixed-route service; regional bus and rail service; commuter rail and excursion rail service. Continued coordination with the appropriate organizations and public agencies in the pursuit of inter-regional transit service is recommended.



**OBJECTIVE**

**Provide adequate roadway capacity to maintain Level of Service C or better on area roadways and highways.**

**Functional Classifications**

Roadways are typically described by their operational and physical characteristics

called, “Functional Classifications”. It is recommended that the following standard classifications be adopted for roadways in the Town of Florence. A detailed description of the Town’s roadway network is included in the Coolidge-Florence RTP; figures 4-1 and 4-2 show the RTP’s Recommended Functional Road Classification, and the Number of Lanes Map, respectively.

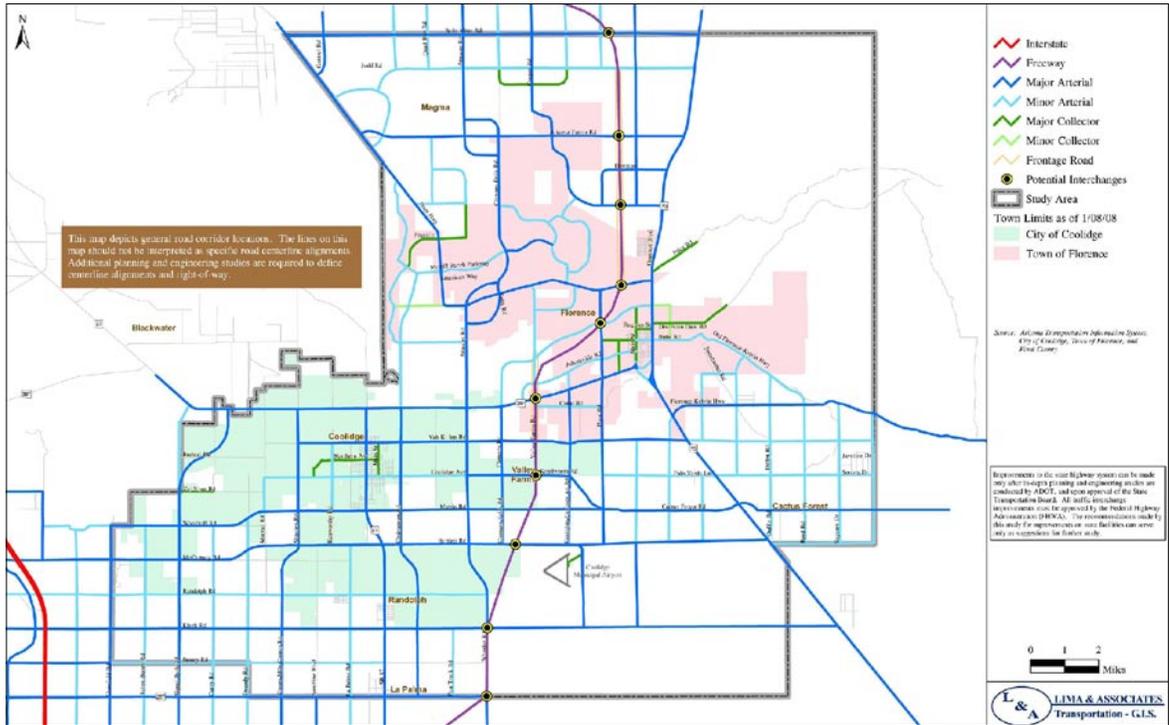


Figure 4-1. Recommended Functional Classification

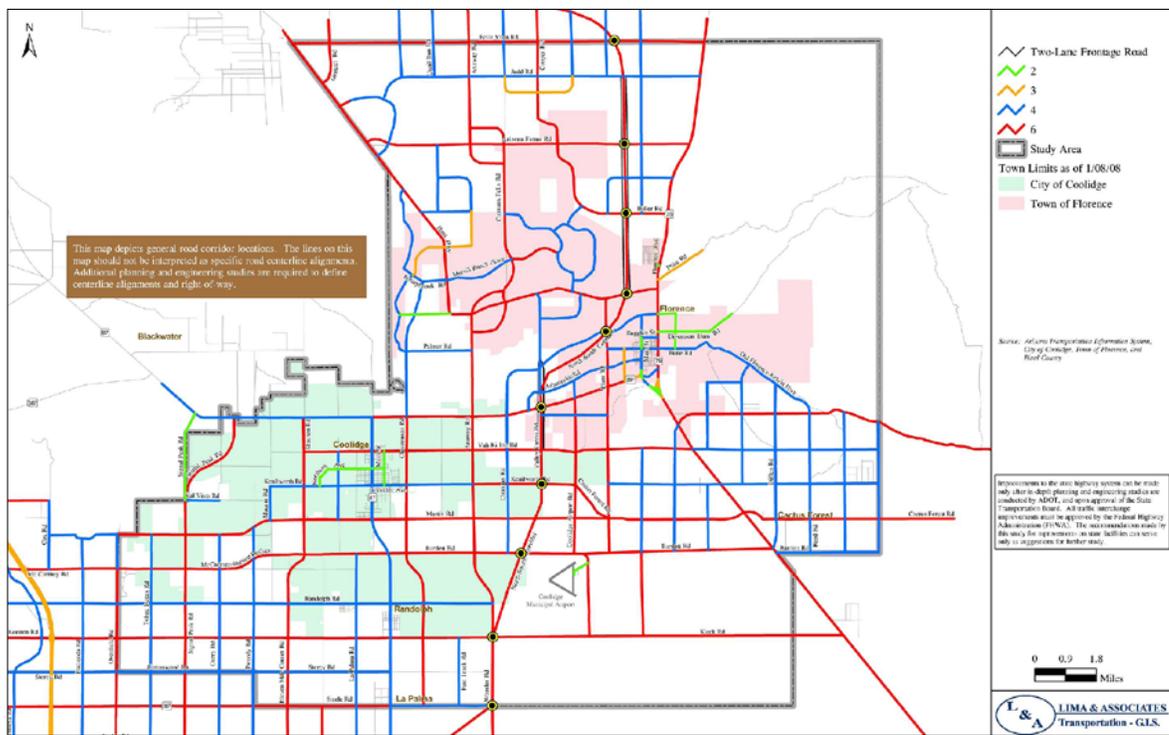


Figure 4-2. 2025 Number of Lanes

**Freeways** provide the highest level of mobility by limiting access points to grade-separated interchanges.

**Major Arterial Roadways** provide a high level of mobility and are generally six-lane facilities located on the 1-mile grid.

**Minor Arterial Roadways** serve similar circulation needs as major arterial roadways, but are typically four-lane facilities.

**Major Collector Roadways** may be configured as four-lane or two-lane roadways with a center turning lane.

**Minor Collector Roadways** are two-lane roads with no center turning lane.

**Local Streets** provide access directly to residential properties and are not designed to accommodate through traffic.

## FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND PROJECTS

### ADOT North-South Freeway

The Arizona Department of Transportation is considering the development of a new North-South Freeway from US 60 to I-10. Should ADOT proceed with this project, it would serve as a significant catalyst to economic growth and development for Pinal County and its neighboring communities, including the Town of Florence. The Town's long term goal would be to see this future facility developed as a high capacity, multi-modal corridor. In addition, the Town considers the location of future interchanges in the segment that would run through the Town's Planning Area as a significantly influencing factor in future land use and development. In addition to providing immediate freeway access, which is a valued amenity for commercial businesses, freeway interchanges serve as important nodes for compatible developments, such as commercial and light industrial activities, that could provide substantial economic development resources. Because of the potential significance of this future freeway to Florence's future economic viability, the Town considers it important to work with ADOT through the project development process, as it proceeds.

### Statewide Transportation Planning Framework Study

The Arizona State Transportation Board has allocated resources for a statewide collabora-

tive process called "Building a Quality Arizona" (bqAZ) to address long-term statewide multi-modal transportation needs. This effort is under development in collaboration with regional transportation planning organizations, governmental bodies, business and community leaders in concert with ADOT. The Town of Florence has been involved in the Central Region's regional framework study that will be incorporated into the statewide framework study.

Through stakeholder meetings, the Town of Florence has re-affirmed its long-term view of the importance of the development of commuter rail, light rail and multi-modal alternatives, to support continued rapid growth. The Town has also expressed its desire that the North-South corridor be developed as a multi-modal facility. Other recommendations that the Town presented to the bqAZ effort include: the need for new transportation routes; the recommendation that transportation and land use be developed in concert; and that protection of natural resources be paramount in the development of future transportation facilities.

The Town of Florence will continue to work with the regional framework study group and its partners toward the development of a long-term transportation framework that is consistent with Florence's circulation and land use goals.

#### OBJECTIVE

**Establish local and regional transit service that is available throughout the week and represents a viable alternative to automobile travel during peak commuting hours.**

### Transit

#### Commuter Rail

The Town of Florence has established smart growth as one of its goals. A commuter rail system of local circulators that ties into a regional, multi-modal, high-capacity rail network would be an ideal component of the Town's future growth and would fit perfectly with the principles of smart growth.

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is in the process of completing two commuter rail studies that analyze using the existing Copper Basin and Union Pacific rail lines in





Light Rail



Bus Service



Modern Streetcar



Grand Canyon Railway (Excursion Rail)



Commuter Rail

Florence. Those studies are the Commuter Rail Stakeholders Group and Commuter Rail Strategic Plan. An excursion train is possible along the Copper Basin Railroad east of Florence through the Gila River Canyon, this was outlined in the Coolidge-Florence SATS.

**Railroads**

The UPRR branch line noted in the Existing Conditions section should be considered as a potential multi-modal option, for future development, complementary to the potential multi-modal North-South Freeway.

**Airports**

The Town of Florence does not have an airport facility, but two are located nearby: Coolidge Municipal and Phoenix-Mesa Gateway. The Coolidge Municipal Airport is operated by

the City of Coolidge and is located less than one mile to the south of the Florence Planning Area. Phoenix-Mesa Gateway, a commuter facility, is located approximately 24 miles northwest of Florence and is operated by the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport Authority.

The Town may consider coordination with appropriate agencies to pursue potential long-term development of the Coolidge Municipal Airport as a centrally located reliever airport to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport located north of Florence, and the Tucson International Airport, located to the south. This may become an option for regional air connectivity, once the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport achieves its projected build-out.

**Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

Florence generally lacks designated bicycle routes and paths. In addition to roadways and various forms of transit, non-motorized transportation alternatives should be promoted in Florence.

All non-motorized facility markings along roadways should conform to guidelines and standards contained in the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials' (AASHTO's) 1999 *Guide for the Development*



Wide walkways and arcades encourage pedestrian movement.

of *Bicycle Facilities*, FHWA's 2000 *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* and applicable ADOT standards so that statewide standardization may be achieved. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) contains design standards for pedestrian facilities that should also be followed.

Four-foot-wide sidewalks should be provided on both sides of local streets

within urban areas. Five-foot-wide sidewalks should be provided along arterial and collector roadways, except in commercial districts, where six-foot-wide sidewalks should be provided.

It is the Town's policy to consider and provide for the safe operation of bicycles on all roadways when they are widened, repaved, reconstructed or newly built. Adequate space should be provided for bicyclists to coexist safely with vehicular traffic.

Promoting a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly environment improves the quality of life for Florence residents. Being bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly means Florence residents and visitors will feel and be safe riding and walking for recreation, exercise and transportation. Increased walking and bicycling translates to decreased motor vehicle emissions, while improving Florence residents' health.

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities are pivotal in supporting public health. For example, the Safe Routes to School Program was spurred by the epidemic of childhood obesity and diabetes. The program, according to ADOT's Transportation Planning Division, was created to accomplish three goals:

- 1) to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school;
- 2) to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and
- 3) to facilitate the planning, development, and implementation of projects

and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution near schools.

Improving bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Florence will benefit everyone in Florence. Residents will have better physical health and an improved physical environment in which to live, work, and play.

These classifications for alternative mode routes were identified for Florence: shared use paths, bike lanes and bike routes.

### Shared Use Paths

**Shared Use Path:** This paved bicycle facility is used by bicyclists, pedestrians, joggers, people with strollers, wheelchair users, in-line skaters, other non-motorized users and anyone wanting a smooth and consistent surface. The preferred surface material is concrete, however, asphalt is acceptable. Paths are signed for various users, are ADA-accessible (when they have less than 5 percent grades) and may also be used by small maintenance and emergency response vehicles. Standards may vary with AASHTO guidelines according to right-of-way width, existing or anticipated level of use, geographical conditions, environmental constraints and land uses.

The typical minimum paved path width is 10 feet. In areas of steep terrain, limited visibility, high existing or anticipated levels of use and/or areas with a great variety of users, the minimum width should be 12 feet.

The paved path system includes regional and local connections. Shared use paved paths can be either side paths or off-street paths. Side paths parallel a roadway. Off-street paths follow other corridors such as utility corridors, canals, rivers, washes, railroad corridors and other open space areas. A system of paved paths provides a variety of loops that connect neighborhoods to all types of roadway destinations and unpaved trails.

Refer to AASHTO guidelines for horizontal alignment, sight distance, path-roadway intersection signs/markings, lighting and other recommendations.

**Side Path:** A side path is a shared use paved path that parallels but is physically separated from vehicular traffic by open space or a barrier. It is located either in the roadway right-of-way



or an adjacent easement, tract, or setback.

A sidewalk in addition to the side path is acceptable, but not necessary. In addition, a side path could be on one side of a street and a sidewalk on the opposite side. Side path widths of at least 10 feet allow for two-way bicycle traffic.

**Off-Street Path:** An off-street path is a shared use paved path that is within an independent corridor such as along rivers, washes, canals, power lines, railroad tracks or other open spaces.

These facilities usually require special attention at street crossings because they often do not cross major streets at signalized intersections.

### Bike Lanes

A bike lane provides a one-way lane of travel and is located on the paved area on both sides of a roadway for preferential use by bicyclists. It is usually located along the edge of the paved area outside the travel lanes or between the parking lane and the first vehicle lane. Bike lanes are identified by pavement markings and/or signs deemed appropriate to give adequate instructions to their users. Bicyclists usually have exclusive use of a bike lane for longitudinal travel, and special bike lane striping and signing treatments are used at intersections to improve guidance and safety.

### Bike Routes

A bike route is a roadway identified as a bicycle facility only by the use of signs. There are usually not any special lane markings, and bicycle traffic shares the roadway with motor vehicles. Special regulations may be enacted and posted along such facilities to control motor vehicle speeds or restrict parking to enhance bicycling safety.

#### OBJECTIVE

Provide adequate and accessible Downtown parking facilities.

### Parking Facilities

Parking requirements and standards for development within the Town of Florence are incorporated in the Town’s zoning ordinance. Parking facilities currently appear to be adequate throughout the community, except for areas around Main Street. The proximity

of residential areas to Main Street highlights the need to expand off-street parking availability in the area.

### Access Management

Access management is the use of techniques by state and local governments to improve access along freeways, highways, arterial roadways and local streets to improve travel time and safety at a high level of service. The primary benefits of access management are overall reduced travel time and reduced vehicular crashes. Growth in traffic will cause potential conflicts between driveways and arterials, accessibility and traffic flow. Some of the most important access management techniques relate to reducing the frequency of driveways and intersections along roadways and the uniformity of traffic signal spacing. Travel time has been shown to decrease significantly as speed increases with the reduction in the number of driveway and intersection access points.

### Complete Streets

It may be advisable to explore the future adoption of a “Complete Streets” policy in a subsequent update to the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan. The objectives of a Complete Streets policy would be: to ensure that the design, operation and maintenance of roadways in Florence help promote safe and convenient access and travel for all users: pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, persons with disabilities, and equestrians, as well as cars and trucks.

Components of a typical complete street include: sidewalks and/or paths; bike lanes; appropriately spaced pedestrian crosswalks; wide shoulders; medians; bus pullouts; special bus lanes; raised crosswalks; audible pedestrian signals; sidewalk “bulb-outs.”

### Transportation Management Associations

As Florence’s future employment centers and residential communities develop over time, it may be advisable to explore potential implementation of a transportation management association (TMA). Goals of a potential Florence TMA could be to maintain or improving employee access to employment centers, improve mode choice and mode split among commuters, and reduce demand

for parking. Typically, the goals of the TMA would be to reduce congestion, improve employee recruitment/retention, and alleviate parking issues through strategies that reduce reliance on single-occupant automobile travel. A TMA could provide informational materials and public information events; support localized shuttle service, organize car pools, provide bike-to-work and walk-to-work incentives, rideshare incentives, transit pass subsidies, and regional/local advocacy.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

During the public outreach process of the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan, Florence residents and business owners placed significance on the following issues with regard to the Circulation Element:

- Reducing and/or eliminating traffic congestion through road expansion and the construction of new roadways
- Incorporating sustainability into the Town's transportation system
- Providing a variety of transportation choices that promote accessible alternatives to the automobile, including walking, bicycling and transit

## GOALS

The Circulation Element is one of the most integrated elements of the General Plan. It

contributes to almost every other element of the General Plan, including the Land Use, Community Character, Growth Areas, Economic Development, Environmental Planning, Housing, Cost of Development and Parks, Trails and Open Space Elements.

Transportation goals, objectives, and strategies outlined in the Circulation Element will affect more than just the Town of Florence. Florence's transportation system—as a mid-point between the Phoenix and Tucson metropolitan areas—is part of a much larger regional transportation system.

These components of the Circulation Element also involve partnering with neighboring communities as well as regional, state and federal agencies.

## Circulation Goals

**Goal 1** A safe, efficient and balanced vehicular transportation system to facilitate the flow of people and goods to and from existing and planned land uses throughout Florence.

**Goal 2** A comprehensive and balanced local transportation system providing a choice of vehicular, transit, and non-vehicular modes.

**Goal 3** Provision of regional transit services designed for the current and future needs of residents, workers and visitors.



## CIRCULATION OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Provide adequate roadway capacity to maintain Level of Service C or better on area roadways and highways</b></p> | <p>Implement the functional roadway classification system contained in the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan, including a system of freeway (future North-South Freeway corridor from Apache Junction to Coolidge through the Florence area) Major and Minor Arterials and Major and Minor Collectors, recognizing the need to provide for uninterrupted through movement (no direct access to adjacent land uses from the freeway and limited access to adjacent land uses along arterials), a balance of through movement and access to adjacent land uses along collector roadways, and the primary function of providing access to adjacent land uses along local roads (which are not shown on the Recommended Functional Classification map (figure 4-1) and the 2025 Number of Lanes map (figure 4-2).</p> |
|  | <p>Incorporate the Access Management Principles of the Regional Transportation Plan into the design of Florence's roadway system:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Primary Access.</b> For sites that have frontage on two streets, the primary access should be on the minor street.</li> <li>– <b>Minimize Access Points.</b> Development should be designed to minimize the number of access points from a use onto the adjacent roadway system.</li> <li>– <b>Cross Access.</b> Where feasible, non-residential development should be provided with joint driveways, and cross access easements should be implemented where feasible to permit users to move between (for example) adjacent commercial or office uses without having to use adjacent public streets.</li> </ul>                             |
|  | <p>Adopt the roadway design and access criteria set forth in the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan, including the recommended roadway cross-sections, as the basis for roadway design in Florence.</p>  |
|  | <p>Design new development to route through traffic around rather than through residential neighborhoods.</p>   |
|  | <p>Provide access to industrial areas and designate truck routes in a manner that separates truck traffic from residential areas to the extent feasible.</p>   |

## CIRCULATION OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Establish local and regional transit service that is available throughout the week and represents a viable alternative to automobile travel during peak commuting hours.</b></p>   | <p>As recommended in the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan, identify and consider setting aside appropriate space for a community transit center north of the downtown area near the intersection of SR 79 and the Copper Basin Railway tracks.</p> <hr/> <p>Provide for future bus turnouts at key locations along the community's arterial and collector roadway system.</p> <hr/> <p>Actively support the Pinal Rides Pilot Program by participating on the Advisory Committee and providing funding.</p> <hr/> <p>Consider development of transit oriented development overlays that could be implemented to facilitate provision of transit along future transit corridors.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to present short- and long-range plans to the ADOT Public Transportation Division.</p> <hr/> <p>As recommended in the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan, conduct a Transit Feasibility and Implementation study to identify current and future public transportation needs, as well as demographic thresholds for implementing future service.</p> <hr/> <p>Consider modifying the zoning ordinance to implement recommendations of the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan to provide "transit-friendly elements" within the community by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– providing for reduction in parking requirements for commercial and office uses along transit routes;</li> <li>– placing some required parking in commercial developments to the side or rear of buildings;</li> <li>– requiring provision of adequate easements on major arterials for the future addition of car pool and/or transit lanes;</li> <li>– providing on-street bicycle lanes; and</li> <li>– providing for shade and landscaping along sidewalks and multi-use paths.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Maintain a safe, convenient and continuous network of pedestrian sidewalks, pathways and bicycle facilities serving both experienced and casual bicyclists to facilitate bicycling and walking as alternatives to automobile travel.</b></p> | <p>Provide for the inclusion of bicycle facilities in the design of arterial and collector roadways.</p> <hr/> <p>Design new residential neighborhoods to provide safe pedestrian and bicycle access to schools, parks, and neighborhood commercial facilities.</p> <hr/> <p>Design intersections for the safe passage of pedestrians and bicyclists through the intersection.</p> <hr/> <p>Where shopping facilities are located adjacent to residential areas, provide for convenient pedestrian and bicycle access between the neighborhood and commercial facility.</p> <hr/> <p>Ensure adequate and convenient parking within the Downtown area by supplementing on-street and off-street parking with municipal parking lots where needed.</p> <hr/> <p>Facilitate mixed use development in appropriate locations to facilitate non-vehicular travel within the Downtown area.</p>   |
| <p><b>Provide adequate and accessible Downtown parking facilities.</b></p>   | <p>Supplement on-street and off-street parking with municipal parking lots where needed.</p> <hr/> <p>Facilitate mixed use development in appropriate locations to facilitate non-vehicular travel within the Downtown area.</p> <hr/> <p>As recommended in the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan, conduct a Transit Feasibility and Implementation study to identify current and future public transportation needs, as well as demographic thresholds for implementing future service.</p> <hr/> <p>Consider modifying the zoning ordinance to implement recommendations of the Coolidge-Florence Regional Transportation Plan to provide "transit-friendly elements" within the community.</p>   |



# 5

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

### PURPOSE

The Economic Development Element seeks to promote economic and fiscal stability in Florence in order to maintain a vibrant and healthy community. The Town recognizes the economic contributions made by existing government entities operating in the Town, and seeks to both expand upon these economic assets while also diversifying the local economy and expanding its private sector employment base. The Economic Development Element provides guidance to Town decision-makers, developers, businesses and the public when considering specific projects and other municipal decisions affecting the community's economic development and fiscal health.

### BACKGROUND

#### Demographics

Tables 5-1 and 5-2 show projections of income and age distribution in Florence for 2007 and 2012 as forecasted by ESRI, a national demographic information vendor. The income distribution projections show that new residents will bring higher incomes into the region.

While below the 2007 metropolitan Phoenix median income estimate of \$59,000, the Florence 2007 median income projection of \$47,996 is slightly above that of Pinal County as a whole, which has forecasted median household incomes of \$46,000 in 2007 and \$53,800 in 2012. The higher-income residents will bring additional spending power and will have a positive impact on inducing commercial development in the area.

*"In the long term, the economy and the environment are the same thing. If it's unenvironmental it is uneconomical. That is the rule of nature."*

—Mollie Beattie, *American Forester and Conservationist*, (1947–1996)

The age distribution forecast presented in Table 5-2 is for the existing Town of Florence boundaries of 51 square miles and does not assume any additional annexed population.

Table 5-1. Household Income Distribution

| Income              | 2000 (%) | 2007 (%) | 2012 (%) |
|---------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Under \$15,000      | 16.7     | 11.4     | 9.4      |
| \$15,000–\$24,999   | 14.6     | 11.2     | 10.5     |
| \$25,000–\$34,999   | 14.3     | 12.7     | 10.3     |
| \$35,000–\$49,999   | 21.2     | 16.8     | 14.0     |
| \$50,000–\$74,999   | 20.7     | 24.6     | 21.8     |
| \$75,000–\$99,999   | 7.8      | 12.1     | 15.2     |
| \$100,000–\$149,999 | 3.8      | 8.7      | 13.2     |
| \$150,000–\$199,999 | 0.1      | 1.6      | 3.7      |
| \$200,000 and above | 0.8      | 0.9      | 1.8      |
| Median Income       | \$38,636 | \$47,996 | \$56,511 |

Source: ESRI Demographics

Table 5-2. Population By Age

| Age   | 2000 (%) | 2007 (%) | 2012 (%) |
|-------|----------|----------|----------|
| 0-4   | 2.8      | 3.5      | 4.1      |
| 5-9   | 3.0      | 3.3      | 3.6      |
| 10-14 | 3.1      | 3.3      | 3.5      |
| 15-19 | 5.0      | 3.2      | 4.5      |
| 20-24 | 11.0     | 5.0      | 8.6      |
| 25-34 | 24.4     | 10.8     | 19.3     |
| 35-44 | 22.6     | 23.1     | 16.8     |
| 45-54 | 12.4     | 21.6     | 12.3     |
| 55-64 | 7.0      | 7.4      | 9.8      |
| 65-74 | 5.4      | 5.6      | 8.5      |
| 75-84 | 2.8      | 3.0      | 6.8      |
| 85+   | 0.6      | 1.0      | 2.2      |

Source: ESRI Demographics

These data show an aging population that is consistent with the expectation that a significant number of retirement-age people will move into communities such as the Sun City component of Anthem at Merrill Ranch and the Florence Gardens area.

### Employment

The U.S. Census Bureau compiles a database of business establishments by ZIP Code. The 2005 Census updates represent the most up-to-date record of businesses in Florence. The ZIP code business pattern data also estimate the number of employees at each establishment.

The following charts show the distribution of employees in Florence, by job category, based on the estimates from the Census survey. Because it is the County seat for Pinal County, a substantial number of both County and Town government employees are employed in Florence. The Florence Unified School District is also a major employer in the area.

Figure 5-1 shows that as population growth occurs over the next decades and Florence's population greatly expands, employment by the County, Town, and school district will also expand dramatically. Also included in

the existing government employment total are State Department of Corrections workers at the State prisons. Given its relatively small existing private-sector economic base, it is not surprising that government employees make up nearly three quarters (74 percent) of the Town's total employment.

Figure 5-2 shows that if government and agricultural employees are excluded, the largest remaining employment sector is facilities support and waste management, with 60 percent of the non-governmental/non-agricultural jobs. Waste Management has a landfill off Adamsville Road. This facility and its related jobs are not related to the prison industry. The other large employment sectors are in the accommodations/food services and retail trade sectors. When reviewing the community's demographic characteristics, one must keep in mind that the historical demographic profile of Florence will by no means be similar to the profile that will develop in subsequent years. Therefore, rather than viewing a portion of the current demographic profile as a constraint, policy makers must plan around an improving community in terms of population, job creation ability, incomes and industrial diversity.

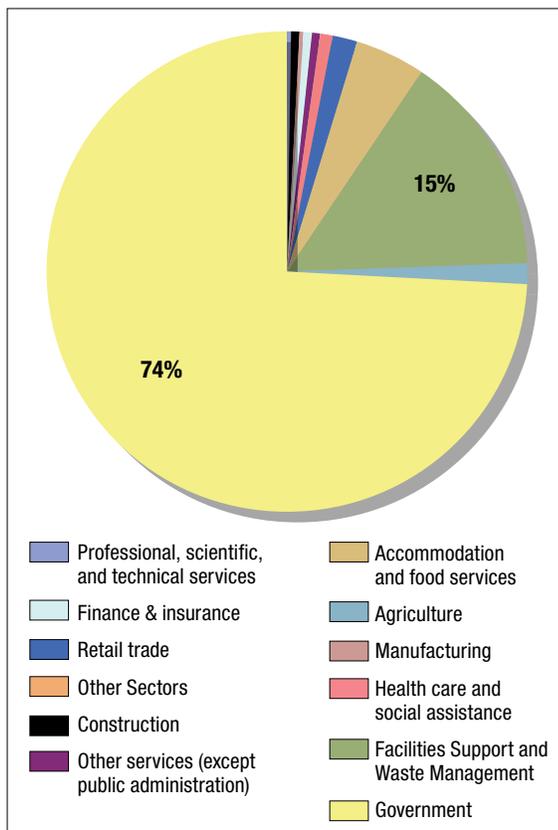


Figure 5-1. Town Employment Distribution, 2005

Source: ASU, U.S. Census Bureau

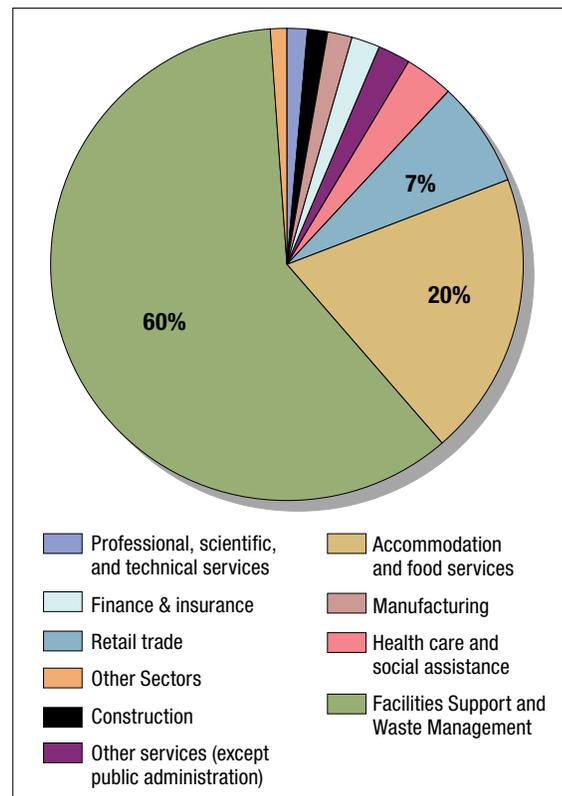


Figure 5-2. Town Employment Distribution (excluding government), 2005

Source: ASU, U.S. Census Bureau



## Economic Development Opportunities

Florence will be a major beneficiary of the ongoing expansion and growth of the Phoenix metropolitan area into northern Pinal County and the Tucson metropolitan area's growth into southern Pinal County. Approved, proposed and future planned communities throughout the Town's Planning Area will provide housing for tens of thousands of future residents, who will pour millions of dollars of disposable income into the local economy. Many of the master planned communities, most notably Merrill Ranch, have significant land set aside for future commercial development.

Florence will likely develop in a similar manner to most cities located in the path of expanding metropolitan areas. Like other communities, as population expands, the first types of jobs to come into the area will be retail- and service-oriented in order to meet the needs of people living in new residential developments. After the region reaches a certain critical mass in terms of population, office jobs serving local needs will appear, such as physicians, accountants and other small business professionals. As the labor base in Florence grows and commute times to employment centers increase, manufacturing firms and larger office-based businesses will find it advantageous to move to Florence, further expanding its employment base.

Rather than being complacent and allowing development to occur as the marketplace develops, Florence can create its own economic future by taking advantage of its strong historical character and regional events held within the community to bring people to the community and enhance tax collections, as well as enable the Downtown core to become more vibrant.

### Downtown

The primary driver to making any Downtown more vibrant is attracting people to the area. In 2008 the Town completed the update of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan. This document will help guide and develop a vision and implementation strategy to attract people and commerce to the historic Downtown.

The jobs created in Downtown Florence would primarily be a mix of retail and restaurant uses, along with some office/employment

establishments. As the population outside of the Downtown area grows and commercial development occurs to serve the population outside of Downtown, a transition for local-serving general retail uses to community-serving and specialty retail is likely, along with an increase in entertainment uses.

To ensure the ongoing viability of existing local-serving commercial development, residents will need to be added in the Downtown area to sustain the demand for existing local-serving commercial and to enhance demand for other desired commercial activities. Over-reliance on part-time visitors will not facilitate expansion of the Downtown employment base to a significant degree.

In order to maximize the potential of the Downtown area, a focused and aggressive effort to redevelop and market the Town and its historic assets is needed. Historic Florence needs to be more than just Main Street; historic themes need to be carried out in the design of the entire Town. Remediating the existing substandard housing surrounding Downtown Florence and revitalizing commercial uses along SR 79 will help portray an image of economic success and encourage new businesses to invest in the community, while also encouraging existing businesses to invest in expanding within Florence. The allure and amenities of Downtown will be the most important factor in keeping tourists and employees in the Town to capture their spending.

The Town of Florence needs to focus on the development of local entrepreneurs to own and operate businesses within the Downtown area. Most successful Downtown businesses are owned and operated by local citizens who have a strong sense of community and add to the friendly and historic fabric of Florence.

For Downtown to truly redevelop and become an important center for commerce, the Town of Florence needs to provide sufficient funding to create an environment that fosters redevelopment. By taking an active roll in establishing vision, by leading and providing for funding of redevelopment activities and fostering a positive business climate, the Town can greatly increase its chances of attracting the types of businesses that create the type of Downtown that Florence citizens de-

sire. Additionally, the Town should continue to support the Florence Main Street Program. The Main Street Program is a proven strategy to enhance downtown commercial districts. Main Street Programs are typically funded through taxpayer dollars, usually tax increment finance districts in other states. Because that is not an option in Arizona, the Town should continue to provide financial support to ensure a vibrant Main Street Program.

In time, Downtown Florence will have opportunities that other historical downtowns throughout the State do not. It will have an established historic character buttressed by sound policy and strong governmental support, but will also have the advantage of being near a large population base. The area to the north of the Town in particular is expected to have many thousands of residents, which will allow Downtown Florence to be more than a tourist destination. With proper planning it will be the cultural hub of the Town and the region.

### Government

Florence has a high concentration of government employment and is the government center of the County. The prisons, county seat, town and schools provide a stable employment environment. Employment by the County, Town, and school district will grow along with the Town's population growth.

The Town should actively try to expand and capitalize on this sector by attracting support services and businesses that normally cluster along with government agencies and prisons. Because many government workers are not local residents, Florence enjoys an expanded retail base with which to attract businesses during the workday. While encouraging the growth of public-sector employment does not diversify the local economy, public sector employment has a low transient rate compared with other industries and is less influenced by the business cycle.

Florence should also work with its congressional delegation and state officials to attract other state and federal facilities to Florence. This is a long-term economic development strategy that will take years to manifest. Arizona has many senior-level elected officials in Washington. Every effort should be made to promote Florence when the federal govern-

ment is looking to add another office or facility and an Arizona location can be considered.

### Industrial and Office

There usually must be some specific driver that attracts the first wave of industrial or large office development in a community. For Florence, this could be a new freeway, a railroad connection, or an airport or the achievement of a critical mass of people and services to make such development viable. The Phoenix metropolitan area's residential real estate market is currently severely overbuilt in relation to market demand. The commercial market is also beginning to show signs of being overbuilt. While this creates uncertainty as to when the next major wave of development will expand out from Phoenix, it is clear that such expansion will occur and it is only a matter of timing. As a result, substantial mid- and long-term commercial, office and industrial development opportunities remain, and it is important that an appropriate land base be available to capture commercial, office and industrial opportunities when they occur.

In the short term, Florence can count on steady government employment sector jobs, an increase in construction and real estate jobs, and an increase in retail and small office jobs that are dependent on the local population. The choice Florence faces is whether to wait out the current development downturn, or to proactively create its own opportunities. There are drivers that could accelerate the development of office space in the Town. As the county seat for Pinal County, there will be additional demand for offices as the County and Town grow. If a large institution like a hospital or college were to locate in Florence, it would likely spur demand for supporting office space as well. This type of development would help create the critical mass of employees that could draw additional residents and businesses to Florence.

A key to maintaining long-term economic development will be to establish some level of new industry within the community and diversify the Town's workforce. While there may be challenges in establishing additional industries in Florence, facilitating the development of new industries early in the Town's upcoming growth cycle will have long-term economic benefits compared with allowing such industries to locate elsewhere.

## Railroad

Florence has many miles of railroad tracks running through the Town: the Union Pacific Railroad Phoenix branch line, Copper Basin and Magma railroads. Historically, rail access has been an important asset for industrial development because it offers easy access to remote markets. While it is still important for many businesses, the Phoenix metropolitan area has not primarily relied on trains to export goods. Rather, trains bring goods into Phoenix, which are then stored and distributed throughout the metropolitan area.

As trains become more efficient and the price of gasoline increases, this transportation model will change. Long-haul transportation of containerized goods is increasingly being made by rail to central locations within or on the fringe of metropolitan areas where goods are transferred from trains to trucks for local distribution. Industries are finding that rather than scheduling and receiving multiple deliveries from a single supplier each week, it can be more economical to receive a single rail shipment. In addition, rather than sending numerous truck deliveries long distances to a single metropolitan area, it can be more economical for an industrial firm to send a single rail shipment to that area for transfer to trucks for local delivery.

Given the skills and educational level of Town and County residents, manufacturing remains a viable employment option along the three rail lines. There is very little available rail-served industrial land in the state. The greatest opportunities are the two short line rail lines that can function as spurs. Because both short lines have little or no traffic, they present an opportunity to attract industrial businesses that require rail access and seek an uncrowded location. Railroad access can also be an asset in generating tourism activity. A scenic railroad could highlight the region's natural beauty and underscore the historic character of the Town.

The potential of new industrial development surrounding under utilized rail lines could be realized by protecting the area for industrial uses and actively promoting industrial development. The more residential areas that encroach on these rail lines, the less viable these lines become as industrial uses.

Care must be taken, however, to reserve an appropriate amount of land for industrial de-

velopment and to avoid designating more industrial land than is economically viable. In terms of warehousing, most distributors prefer to be closer to dense population centers and near major roads, highways and interstates. However, the Town should welcome and encourage any rail-related development that does occur, including encouraging shovel-ready sites along any rail lines. There are large industries that tend to prefer outlying locations for their plants because they have found that the work force in such areas is more stable and that there are advantages to establishing close relationships with smaller communities and growing with them.

With the available land in the area, heavy manufacturing would be an ideal use along these rail lines. The Town of Florence should work with landowners along these lines to not only preserve the areas for employment uses but should also try to create shovel-ready rail-served parcels in the short term. As the rail industry continues to experience a renaissance, more cities in the area will create rail-served industrial parks. Surprise and Eloy are both planning for such undertakings. If Florence does not act quickly, it could lose a competitive edge in the marketplace for rail-served industrial jobs.

## Future Freeway Development

A freeway is planned within the Florence Planning Area that would connect southeastern Maricopa County with much of central Pinal County. Construction of the freeway, which will bisect the Town, is unlikely to begin for many years due to a lack of funding and weak residential market conditions that limit demand for a new major transportation facility.

Once constructed, this freeway could create significant economic development benefits by providing Florence-area businesses access to a larger labor force and placing Florence along a major distribution route from the Southeast Valley to southern Arizona and other markets. The freeway could also make Florence more attractive for residential development because it would reduce traffic congestion, reduce commute times to existing employment centers in closer-in communities and provide residents with easier access to a wider variety of amenities. While the addition of a freeway through Florence

would be an enormous asset for the local economy, its location bisecting the community may present urban design and community cohesion challenges.

The Town should continue to work with the Arizona Department of Transportation and its consultants to finalize an alignment as soon as possible so that it can designate the land uses around the final alignment of the proposed freeway corridor.

### Tourism

The Town has untapped resources that could allow it to become a popular tourism destination. In addition to the historic Downtown, Florence can capitalize on physical attributes such as the Gila River and its unique mountain vistas. There are opportunities to support a scenic railway and promote the Pinal Pioneer Parkway. A local and regional trail system can be expanded and protected. Because of its combination of natural and historic assets, the Town has great potential for tourism.

As the Town enhances its tourist appeal, it must also actively promote those efforts. Presently, there appears to be limited recognition of Florence at the Arizona Office of Tourism, and there is not a sustained public marketing effort on behalf of the Town. Although tourism is an important component of economic development, it will not be a primary economic driver as are the prisons and other government entities. While Florence has many attractions for short-term visitors, the Town does not likely have the ability to create a critical mass that will keep tourists in Florence for extended visits. Initially, it will be a challenge to promote the Town because it does not enjoy the name recognition or historic associations that many other towns do.

Efforts should be made to develop tourism that focuses on day trips to better capitalize on Florence's wide variety of local activities and destinations. The Town currently hosts a number of large regional events that bring in people from across the State. These types of events are crucial and will become more effective once redevelopment of the Downtown area progresses and visitors can more fully appreciate the charm and character of Florence.

### Economic Assumptions

The following points summarize the opportunities and challenges that Florence faces

in terms of its overall economic development potential:

- Short-term economic development potential exists within Downtown, which is an under utilized asset that needs active redevelopment.
- Sustainable economic development in Florence requires an incremental approach that includes short-term retail and support services, combined with a long-term outlook of office and industrial employment growth as the region continues to grow in density.
- Further growth of the residential market and an available labor force are necessary before extensive employment-related development can occur.
- Opportunities to expand the government sector will arise along with population growth.
- Rail service in Florence could become an economic driver if manufacturing is promoted and land protected along the rail lines.
- The proposed north-south freeway will be a strong economic driver for Florence as a long-term economic development strategy.
- "Branding" Florence with a strong vision of the Town's future is important to its success along with attracting investment and competing more effectively in the local marketplace against other employment centers.

### Build-Out Potential

Tables 5-3 and 5-4 show potential build-out scenarios for the Town of Florence, based on the revised land use plan, the Town's development guidelines and generally accepted industry standards for employment.

Low, medium and high scenarios have been created to reflect the build-out potential under different development intensities. These scenarios are based on the total acres in each land use category as defined in the Land Use Element, and illustrated in the General Plan Land Use Map.

It is expected that Florence's future population at build-out will range between 567,700 and 739,500, depending on the density of future development. A particular time frame is not associated with the build-out scenarios because too many unknowns currently exist for the Planning Area. The Planning Area is very large and mostly undeveloped, as well

**Table 5-3. Residential and Commercial Build-Out Potential: Housing Units and Square Feet<sup>1</sup>**

| <b>Housing Units</b>       |                    |                    |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Residential</b>         | <b>Low</b>         | <b>Mid</b>         | <b>High</b>        |
| High Density Residential   | 28,200             | 32,900             | 37,600             |
| Medium Density Residential | 128,300            | 139,000            | 149,700            |
| Low Density Residential    | 106,600            | 133,300            | 160,000            |
| Downtown Mixed Use         | 400                | 600                | 800                |
| Highway Mixed Use          | 200                | 300                | 300                |
| Ranchette Residential      | 9,900              | 14,800             | 19,800             |
| Master Planned Community   | 20,500             | 25,600             | 30,700             |
| Prison                     | N/A                | N/A                | N/A                |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>294,100</b>     | <b>346,500</b>     | <b>398,900</b>     |
| <b>Square Feet</b>         |                    |                    |                    |
| <b>Commercial</b>          | <b>Low</b>         | <b>Mid</b>         | <b>High</b>        |
| Community Commercial       | 52,498,500         | 59,060,800         | 65,623,100         |
| Neighborhood Commercial    | 1,498,500          | 1,685,800          | 1,873,100          |
| Professional Office        | 9,757,400          | 12,928,600         | 16,099,800         |
| Light Industrial           | 118,927,500        | 133,793,500        | 148,659,400        |
| Heavy Industrial           | 949,600            | 1,068,300          | 1,187,000          |
| Public/Institutional       | 3,258,300          | 3,665,600          | 4,072,900          |
| Downtown Mixed Use         | 875,600            | 1,313,300          | 1,751,100          |
| Highway Mixed Use          | 1,123,800          | 1,489,100          | 1,854,300          |
| Master Planned Community   | 13,378,400         | 15,608,100         | 17,837,800         |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>202,267,600</b> | <b>230,613,100</b> | <b>258,958,500</b> |

<sup>1</sup>All totals are based on acreage estimates from the current Town of Florence Land Use Plan.

Source: Town of Florence Land Use Plan, Elliott D. Pollack & Co.

**Table 5-4. Residential and Commercial Build-Out Potential: Population and Employees<sup>1</sup>**

| <b>Population</b>           |                |                |                |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <b>Residential Land Use</b> | <b>Low</b>     | <b>Mid</b>     | <b>High</b>    |
| High Density Residential    | 64,900         | 75,700         | 86,600         |
| Medium Density Residential  | 295,100        | 319,600        | 344,200        |
| Low Density Residential     | 106,600        | 133,300        | 160,000        |
| Downtown Mixed Use          | 900            | 1,400          | 1,800          |
| Highway Mixed Use           | 400            | 600            | 800            |
| Ranchette Residential       | 22,700         | 34,100         | 45,500         |
| Master Planned Community    | 47,100         | 58,900         | 70,600         |
| Prison                      | 30,000         | 30,000         | 30,000         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>567,700</b> | <b>653,600</b> | <b>739,500</b> |
| <b>Employees</b>            |                |                |                |
| <b>Commercial Land Use</b>  | <b>Low</b>     | <b>Mid</b>     | <b>High</b>    |
| Community Commercial        | 116,700        | 131,200        | 145,800        |
| Neighborhood Commercial     | 3,300          | 3,700          | 4,200          |
| Professional Office         | 30,000         | 39,800         | 49,500         |
| Light Industrial            | 216,200        | 243,300        | 270,300        |
| Heavy Industrial            | 1,200          | 1,300          | 1,500          |
| Public/Institutional        | 10,000         | 11,300         | 12,500         |
| Downtown Mixed Use          | 2,700          | 4,000          | 5,400          |
| Highway Mixed Use           | 3,500          | 4,600          | 5,700          |
| Master Planned Community    | 29,700         | 34,700         | 39,600         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>413,300</b> | <b>473,900</b> | <b>534,500</b> |

<sup>1</sup>All totals are based on acreage estimates from the current Town of Florence Land Use Plan. Population estimates are based on 2.3 persons per housing unit (to account for vacancy).

Source: Town of Florence Land Use Plan, Elliott D. Pollack & Co.

as awaiting significant but currently unfunded infrastructure improvements (such as the planned freeway). These conditions make predicting the Planning Area build-out in exact years very difficult, although it is known build out will not occur until well after 2030. At build-out of the Planning Area, Florence will be one of the largest cities in Arizona.

The Town’s population could grow by an average of nearly 7 percent each year, at which rate it would take 50 years to reach its build-out potential. If the Town grew at the same long-term rate as Pinal County—3.4 percent—it would take 100 years to reach build-out.

This indicates that the Town does not need to worry about land constraints, but instead should focus on creating a sound economic development strategy that capitalizes on all of Florence’s short- and long-term assets.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

The Economic Development Element provides guidance for planning and implementing balanced development of the Town’s social, economic, political and natural environments. The element is linked to the Land Use, Circulation, Growth Areas and Cost of Development Elements.

Community feedback gathered during the public process for this General Plan placed value on Downtown as a gathering place, prisons as a strong economic base, opportunities for entertainment in Downtown, Florence as a regional economic center, creating job opportunities and diversifying the economic base.

Specific comments received from the public included:

- Promote Florence as a civic, cultural and regional economic center;
- Encourage a mix of uses in the Downtown area to foster greater activity;
- Promote strategic development of vacant, under utilized and infill land within the Town core and especially along principal transportation and commercial corridors to improve the Town’s economic outlook;
- Assist in the creation and preservation of a broad range of jobs that are accessible to all residents and that provide opportunities for advancement;

- Promote the development of employment centers where economically feasible;
- Improve the jobs-to-housing balance by encouraging expansion of local employment opportunities and providing housing near employment centers;
- Work with educational institutions to improve the skills and talents of Florence’s workforce in order to attract high-quality jobs; and
- Promote a more diverse economy, including the attraction of base industries.

## GOALS

A pro-active economic development plan is essential to guide land and infrastructure development in a manner that ensures sustainable growth and the creation of economic centers that are responsive to community needs and desires. The goals for the Economic Development Element establish a framework to ensure that financially sustainable economic development objectives are met.

### Economic Development Goals

- Goal 1** Develop a sustainable economy in order to maintain a vibrant and healthy community.
- Goal 2** Establish a strong and stable fiscal base that can support a high level of community amenities through adequate funding and implementation of proactive economic development programs.
- Goal 3** Create and maintain an economically vibrant and visually attractive Downtown.
- Goal 4** Develop successful partnerships between the Town and local educational institutions to provide an educated, skilled local labor force.
- Goal 5** Expand private-sector employment opportunities by strategically preserving land for development of employment centers and facilitating the provision of infrastructure to provide sites that are available for immediate development of employment- and sales tax-generating uses.
- Goal 6** Improve the quality of life for residents through historic and cultural events in order to create ownership within the community and a desire to improve and advance the local economy.



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| Objective  | Strategy  |
|--|---|
| <b>Strengthen the Town of Florence’s economic development efforts.</b>   | Continue to support the Main Street Program.  |
|  | Through the Town’s Economic Development Coordinator, Chamber of Commerce and Florence Main Street Program, coordinate and communicate with other economic development organizations locally, regionally, statewide and nationally, such as the Central Arizona Regional Economic Development Foundation, Pinal County, Central Arizona Association of Governments, Arizona Department of Commerce, Arizona Association for Economic Development, Arizona Public Service Economic Development and International Economic Development Council. Through such coordination, joint marketing and sharing of economic development leads may result. |
|  | Continue to organize the leadership academy for citizens to become purposefully involved in community activities and participate in designing and implementing programs to capture economic development opportunities and eliminate constraints.  |
|  | Establish and maintain an inventory of local businesses and a comprehensive business database to assist in recruiting and integrating new businesses into the community.  |
|  | Continue to conduct, with the assistance of Arizona Public Service, an annual Florence Economic Summit to review and update the Focused Future Strategic Plan for Economic Development and to define implementation priorities for the upcoming year.   |
|  | Preserve an appropriate amount of land along rail lines for industrial uses.  |
|  | Provide the infrastructure needed to create rail-served sites that are ready for development in the short term.   |
|  | Create a multi-faceted approach to economic development, including programs to attract new commercial, office and industrial uses to the community as well as to provide assistance for existing businesses wishing to expand within the community.   |
|  | Ensure that local land development and business regulations facilitate, rather than hinder, development of desirable new commercial, office and industrial uses as well as expansion of existing businesses within the community.   |
|  | Streamline the development review process so that it works effectively and efficiently and provides certainty for the applicant and the community.  |
|  | Invest in a Town “branding” effort to target desirable businesses, create name recognition for Florence and publicize positive images of the community through placement of articles in local and regional media and business and trade journals.   |
|  | Recognize the economic development benefits of, and place emphasis on, beautification of major arterial roadways and community entry points, street cleaning, consistent enforcement of Town regulations and remediation of substandard conditions.   |
|  | Seek innovative ways to reduce the cost of infrastructure provision on new industrial, office and commercial development, without shifting the burden to the residential sector.  |
|  | Capitalize on future opportunities provided by the proposed north-south freeway by quickly defining an alignment and interchange locations and reserving land in key locations along the route for large scale commercial, visitor-serving, office and business park development.   |
|  | Work with major health care providers within the Phoenix and Tucson areas to attract hospitals, clinics and accompanying medical offices into Florence.   |
| Continue to pursue grant funding for preservation of historical and cultural resources, revitalization of marginal and under utilized commercial areas and remediation of substandard housing. |   |

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| Objective  | Strategy  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Provide up-to-date tools and maximize resources to strengthen and retain existing Florence businesses</b></p>          | <p>Make it a priority of the Town to uphold and regularly update the goals, objectives and strategies contained within the General Plan, as well as to pro-actively implement General Plan strategies.</p>                    |
|  | <p>Aggressively implement the Downtown Redevelopment Plan.</p>  |
|  | <p>Update and uniformly enforce the Town's development regulations and codes (i.e., zoning code and subdivision regulations) to ensure new development is of high quality and the community portrays an image of success.</p> |
|  | <p>Develop and enforce comprehensive community-wide design guidelines for both historic and non-historic development to attract residents and employment to the Town.</p>   |
|  | <p>Streamline the local development process for infill and strategic economic development projects within Downtown and designated employment- and sales tax-generating areas.</p>   |
|  | <p>Develop, annually update and implement the Town's Capital Improvement Plan.</p>  |
|  | <p>Re-establish a revolving low-interest loan pool for retention, expansion and attraction of qualified businesses.</p>   |
|  | <p>Develop and implement a business retention program along with the Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Program.</p>   |
|  | <p>Work with the Florence Chamber of Commerce to determine the needs of small businesses in Florence and to implement programs to assist in meeting those needs.</p>  |
|  | <p>Work with local and community partners and educational providers to conduct ongoing business training seminars that help existing businesses recruit and train skilled workers.</p>  |
|  | <p>Actively participate in and maintain the Arizona Department of Commerce's Rural Economic Development Initiatives (REDI) accreditation.</p>   |
|  | <p>Periodically survey the business community to understand the needs of local businesses and ways in which Town services can be improved to better meet those needs.</p>   |
|  | <p>Actively participate in and support the Main Street Program.</p>   |
| <p>Develop an entrepreneur development program to help establish new businesses that takes advantage of local resources.</p> |   |



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Develop and package enhanced tourism opportunities that attract and retain visitors as well as benefit local residents.</b></p> | Continue to pursue development of a scenic railway and a historic railroad park/museum.  |
|   | Assist the redevelopment of existing hotels and development of new hotels and smaller properties such as bed and breakfasts in the Town.   |
|   | Continue to support and develop annual signature events in town (Fourth of July Parade, Historic Home Tour, Country Thunder, Junior Parada Rodeo, etc.). Work with the Arizona Office of Tourism to gain recognition of these events and actively promote them.  |
|   | Assist in enhancing existing building façades on commercial and residential buildings in Downtown.   |
|   | Pursue, with the Visitor Center, more film/video production activities.  |
|   | Coordinate with wastewater facilities and the Central Arizona Project to obtain water allocations for restoring the Gila River for wetlands and bird/wildlife sanctuaries and habitat to attract visitors, residents and support services to the Planning Area.  |
|   | Assist in the promotion of the region's significant historic and cultural resources as tourist attractions, including continued support of regional museums.   |
|   | Cooperate to enhance the facility, programs offered and hours of operation at McFarland State Historic Park and Pinal County Historical Museum to make them tourist destinations for visitors.   |
|   | Implement a well-designed way-finding program to emphasize historic and cultural landmarks and assist visitors in finding their way around the community. Combining infrastructure, public art, design and history attracts visitors to the many historic points of interest throughout the Town and surrounding region. |
|   | Investigate opportunities for the installation of public art in and around Town facilities that is consistent with the historic nature of the Town of Florence.  |
|   | Work closely with surrounding communities (e.g., Gila River Indian Community, Superior, Oracle, Globe/Miami, Queen Creek, Apache Junction and the San Carlos Apache Nation) to establish the eastern Pinal County region as a unique historical and environmental tourist destination.                                   |
|   | Aggressively pursue federal and state funding and grants for targeted wildlife corridor protection, restoration and open space preservation, recognizing the great value these assets offer in drawing residents, businesses and visitors to the Town.   |
|   | Establish and sustain close partnerships with the U.S. Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Corps of Engineers regarding development of wetlands and a scenic Gila River trail, drive or railway.   |
|   | Work with property owners to provide assistance (e.g., pursue grants, provide technical assistance, grant loans) to develop vacant or under utilized properties.   |
|   | Join the International Sister City Program to raise awareness of Florence's unique and attractive Southwestern historical identity and to establish a role in the global community.  |
|   | Expand the local and regional trail system.  |
| Pursue an aggressive marketing campaign to showcase the Town's natural and historical assets.   |  |
| Create a tourism marketing implementation plan.   |  |

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| Objective   | Strategy  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Develop services and businesses that will benefit the growing senior citizen population and positively affect the Town.</b></p> | <p>Develop a targeted business approach to attract investment related to the senior living cluster.</p>   |
|   | <p>Expand health and recreation services for seniors as a means of encouraging seniors to extend their stay and make Florence their primary residence.</p>  |
|   | <p>Work with the Main Street Program to continue to strongly encourage existing residents and visitors to shop in Downtown.</p>   |
|   | <p>Partner, where appropriate, with other agencies (such as Pinal County, Department of Corrections) to strengthen local health care services.</p>  |
|   | <p>Attract affordable extended-care housing for seniors to the community, providing for a continuum of senior housing and care ranging from active adult communities to assisted living and skilled nursing care centers.</p> |
|   | <p>Attract investors to develop strategically located RV parks within the community.</p> <p>Encourage a Gila River crossing to establish a connection between Downtown Florence and future residential areas.</p>             |
| <p><b>Maximize the economic benefit of the prison system and governmental entities within the Town.</b></p>                           | <p>Identify goods and services that could be provided to serve the local institutions.</p>  |
|   | <p>Work with the Arizona Department of Commerce on business recruitment efforts to support the institutional services cluster.</p>  |
|   | <p>Explore opportunities to encourage other government entities and support industries to locate in Florence.</p>   |
| <p><b>Leverage public expenditures to enhance economic development.</b></p>   | <p>Reestablish a revolving low-interest loan pool for retention, expansion and attraction of qualified businesses.</p>  |
|   | <p>Continue to explore potential loans and grants for infrastructure and economic development through state, federal and nonprofit avenues</p>  |
|   | <p>Identify and build revenue sources to support the development of a comprehensive regional tourism program focusing on Downtown.</p>  |
|   | <p>Pursue telecommunication enhancements to ensure that Florence is properly positioned to participate fully in the new global economy.</p>   |
|   | <p>Pursue Public/Private partnerships to encourage development in the downtown.</p> <p>Use incentives as a means to attract businesses that might otherwise locate elsewhere.</p>   |
| <p><b>Create a strong and reliable tax base and maintain fiscal stability.</b></p>  | <p>Explore incentives to attract regional and local-serving retail and employment-generating businesses to Florence, ensuring appropriate locations of such businesses.</p>   |
|   | <p>Focus near-term business attraction and expansion efforts on sales tax-generating operations.</p>  |
|   | <p>Aggressively pursue selected annexations to protect the community from the encroachment of incompatible development and to enhance its tax base.</p>   |
|   | <p>Require new development to pay for its fair share of new infrastructure, public and community facilities and the incremental operating costs imposed on the Town.</p>  |
|   | <p>Designate adequate and appropriate land for future commercial, office and industrial development, including locations along the proposed freeway and arterial highways.</p>  |



## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

| Objective  | Strategy  |
|--|---|
| <b>Maintain Downtown as the historic center of the community.</b>                                      | Encourage the Florence Main Street Program to work with Downtown merchants to extend hours of operation.  |
|  | Aggressively pursue the preservation of historic sites and buildings. Where appropriate and needed, pursue restoration and adaptive reuse of historic structures as a priority over demolition. |
|  | Explore development incentives for the Downtown redevelopment area.   |
|  | Create and implement a comprehensive Downtown Redevelopment Plan.   |
|  | Restore and use historic buildings as offices, museums or hotels.   |
| <b>Enhance the pool of educated and trained employees available for local and regional businesses.</b> | Partner with Central Arizona College or state universities to provide quality, life-long learning opportunities that can train a highly skilled local labor force.                              |
|  | Encourage Central Arizona College and partner with local businesses to provide the requisite skilled workforce.   |
|  | Work with Small Business Development Centers to provide business and entrepreneurial training locally.  |
|  | Establish a stronger partnership between local businesses and schools to ensure that workforce training needs are being met.  |
|  | Pursue the expansion of a college or university satellite campus within the Town.   |

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# 6

## HOUSING ELEMENT

### PURPOSE

The Housing Element provides for the improvement of housing quality, variety and affordability. It is also designed to address the housing needs of all segments of the community, regardless of race, color, creed or income level. The Housing Element complements the Land Use Element's residential component by addressing the need for shelter within the community.

This element includes projections and guidelines to fulfill the General Plan goals, objectives and strategies. The projections are based on the forecast 10-year population growth of Florence and the Planning Area identified in the Land Use Element. The guidelines are indirectly linked to the Land Use Element as well. Implementation of the Land Use Plan and the Housing Element will strengthen the Town's vitality through new and infill development and provide a residential component that responds to the Town's dynamic and growing housing needs.

The Housing Element focuses on five key areas to fulfill the designated goals:

- Housing diversity
- Affordability of housing
- Neighborhood revitalization
- Housing for special needs groups
- Economic development

### BACKGROUND

#### Existing Population and Housing

In 1990, the Town of Florence had a population of 7,510, with 3,360 residents in the general population and 4,150 residents institutionalized in the prison system. By 2000, the total population grew to 19,903.

*"The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes"*

– Confucius



The Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG) estimates the total population in incorporated Florence at 26,656 in 2008, with 9,433 in the general population and 17,223 in the prisons.

Table 6-1 presents data for the Town of Florence and Pinal County with regard to population, housing units and demographics.

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, occupied housing consisted of 2,226 units, or 69 percent of the total housing stock in the Town of Florence. This was an increase of 70 percent from the 1990 U.S. Census (1,308 units).

In 2000, 1,579 owner-occupied units and 647 renter-occupied units were tabulated. The owner vacancy rate was 4.2 percent, while the rental vacancy rate was 19.4 percent. Typically, a vacancy rate of 4 to 6 percent re-

**Table 6-1. Town and County Population and Housing Data, 2000**

|                         | Florence    | Pinal County |
|-------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| Population              | 17,054      | 179,272      |
| Household population    | 5,224       | 164,497      |
| Households              | 2,226       | 61,364       |
| Average household size  | 2.35        | 2.68         |
| Vacant housing units    | 990         | 19,790       |
| Percentage vacant       | 30.8        | 24.4         |
| Single-family homes     | 1,036       | 37,742       |
| Attached units          | 683         | 8,966        |
| Manufactured homes      | 1,487       | 30,100       |
| Other homes             | 49          | 4,346        |
| Median age              | 35.4        | 37.1         |
| Percentage Hispanic     | 35.4        | 29.9         |
| Median household income | \$36,372.00 | \$35,856.00  |

Source: U.S Census

flects a healthy market with normal turnover of dwellings. The high rental vacancy rate is indicative of seasonal vacancies and an overabundance of dwellings available for rent.

The median household income in 2000 for the Town of Florence was \$36,372, which was slightly higher than that of Pinal County.

The total number of households in 2000 was 2,226, 69 percent of which (1,540) were family households, while the balance of households (686, or 31 percent) were identified as non-family households.

This represents an increase from 1,308 households in 1990. From 1990 to 2000, family households increased from 929 to 1,540, while non-family households increased from 379 to 686, reflecting a slight shift in the proportion of family and non-family households as the percentage of family households dropped from 71 percent of all households in 1990 to 69 percent in 2000.

The average number of persons per household decreased by 6 percent over the 10-year time frame, from 2.51 in 1990 to 2.35 in 2000, reflecting an increasing number of single-person households (primarily senior citizens).

In 2008, the *Pinal County Housing Needs Assessment* was completed by Kuehl Enterprises, LLC. This study found that, in 2006, 42.1 percent of Florence's dwelling units were single-family homes, 15.7 percent were attached homes, and 42.0 percent were manufactured homes.

Only 13.5 percent of all housing units existing in 2006 had been built since 2000, reflecting the Town's relatively slow growth. Based on recent housing trends, it is projected that the ratio of single-family homes will significantly increase because that is the strong preference among new residents. This preference is confirmed by Florence's newest master planned community, Anthem at Merrill Ranch, which primarily consists of single-family homes and contains the largest concentration of new residents in Florence.

According to the *Pinal County Housing Needs Assessment* and Arizona State University, the median resale home price in Florence in 2006 was \$169,000, while the median new

home price was \$193,495. At these prices, the study concluded that a family with the Pinal County median income could not afford to buy a median priced home, indicating that housing affordability was an issue. A majority of Florence's apartment units are age- or income-restricted.

#### OBJECTIVES

**Promote diversity in the types of housing products available to residents within the community.**

**Encourage sustainable building and design practices.**

### Housing Diversity

The Land Use Element provides a wide range of residential land use categories and opportunities for housing development. New categories have been added, including the Master Planned Community land use designation, which encompass over 14,865 acres of the Florence Planning Area. Preliminary projections from CAAG indicate that, between 2007 and 2017, the population of incorporated Florence will increase by 18,400 residents. This results in a demand for 7,350 additional housing units.

These units will primarily be single-family homes, although there will also be some demand for condominiums and apartments. The Town's goals and objectives provide the basis to evaluate future residential development and housing diversity on a continuing basis.

The Town is also working closely with private entities, the Pinal County Housing Department and the State of Arizona Department of Housing to promote multi-family residences/ multi-family sectors as a component of master-planned developments; preserve, retain and expand single-family neighborhoods; increase housing opportunities to reduce the isolation of certain income groups within neighborhoods and facilitate county-wide coordination through technical and financial assistance to housing providers and users.

Sustainable buildings that are energy efficient and feature low-water-use landscaping (resulting in lower utility costs for residents) should be emphasized for future residential development.

**OBJECTIVES**

**Provide convenient and affordable support services for community residents.**

**Encourage a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to result in a diversity of household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels.**

**Affordable Housing**

Numerous issues should be considered related to affordable housing. Housing affordability is a concern not only for those with very low incomes, but also for households earning the median income. The Town must address residents’ housing needs on a broad spectrum of income levels.

For low-income households, the Town of Florence should develop a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Action Plan. This outlines how the annual funding allocation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and other resources will address low-income housing and other improvements and services. The following recommendations provide the Town with future direction for improving and expanding low-income housing:

- Identify opportunities for low-income housing within incentive zones.
- Develop strategies to provide for low-income housing through density bonuses where multi-family developments are located adjacent to existing employment centers and recreational, park or open space amenities.
- Identify potential low-income housing opportunities within future Town redevelopment projects.
- Identify opportunities to purchase and rehabilitate multi-family structures within established revitalization and redevelopment plans.
- Continue the Home Investment in Affordable Housing Program (HOME) and Section 8 programs to provide low-income housing to Town residents.
- Coordinate a Town-wide home-care assistance team that can provide needed home maintenance to low-income and elderly residents who may not have the physical capabilities to repair and maintain their homes.

The Town should also create a housing plan for middle-income residents to ensure that safe, affordable housing is available. This should include specific programs to target households making between 80 and 120 percent of the area’s median income. The Arizona Department of Housing has made affordable housing a priority, and the Town should coordinate efforts with the State and other rural municipalities.

- Create an affordable housing plan for middle-income residents.
- Consider incentives for private investment in affordable housing.
- Coordinate with the State and other municipalities to determine the most effective strategies for addressing affordable housing concerns.

The Town of Florence strongly encourages home ownership for employees who work in and adjacent to the community. It also understands that home ownership plays a significant role in developing a foundation of strong neighborhoods, community pride and civic involvement. The Town currently leverages several funding sources to help make home ownership possible, including federal, state and local credit institution-sponsored home ownership assistance programs.

**OBJECTIVES**

**Promote proper maintenance of both private and public properties and educate and assist property owners whose properties do not meet existing standards.**

**Encourage the redevelopment and/or substantial revitalization of existing residential areas.**

**Neighborhood Revitalization**

Revitalization of Florence’s mature neighborhoods and Downtown area is a priority for the Town. Improving the safety and aesthetics of neighborhoods surrounding Downtown Florence, while maintaining their historical character, will help invigorate the area as a whole. In order to revitalize the commercial and recreational aspects of Downtown, an effort must be made to create a critical mass of residents in the immediate vicinity. The Town may wish to target higher-density residential development near Downtown Florence.



Florence has identified several effective efforts to bolster neighborhood revitalization. They include public-private partnerships and long-range planning activities. Public-private partnerships start at the grass roots level, where residents come together to resolve issues of mutual concern such as crime, drugs or trash removal.

Implementation of effective long-range planning increases the viability of mature neighborhoods by minimizing incompatible land uses, promoting compatible adjacent development that is sensitive to the needs of Downtown residents and achieving the Town's economic retention and expansion targets that support both high-quality residential sectors and employment opportunities for Florence residents.

OBJECTIVE

**Encourage and maintain a range of housing for special needs residents.**

### Housing for Special Needs Groups

Florence has residents with a variety of special housing needs. These residents include people who require part- or full-time assistance in their day-to-day lives. Family living centers, institutional facilities, social service programs and assisted living services each meet a portion of these needs.

The Pinal County Housing Department plays a key role in serving special needs citizens. The Town of Florence also encourages efforts to provide for these needs and offers support and assistance through its Economic Development Department and Grants Coordination Office.

Housing for special needs groups requires careful site location to leverage proximity to health care, personal services and transit needs. A stable living environment for special needs groups can be compatible with other residential uses in neighborhoods if potential issues are identified and satisfactorily mitigated at the outset. The updated Florence Zoning Ordinance and recommended Residential Design Guidelines should address these critical issues.

OBJECTIVES

**Initiate, maintain and expand programs to provide housing and property rehabilitation for a range of household incomes in order to support the Town's economic development goals.**

**Coordinate with the Town's economic development efforts.**

### Economic Development

The Town's housing strategy must ultimately be consistent with its overall economic development plan. There should be an adequate and diverse allocation of housing in areas surrounding future employment centers. To a large extent, demand for housing in Florence will be dependent on local and regional employment trends. Planned communities should include diverse land uses to accommodate complementary commercial and residential development. Land for high-intensity employment uses should be designated strategically to minimize commute times for residents.

### COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

Housing has been and will continue to be one of the basic needs that must be accommodated within the Town of Florence. The Housing Element describes the existing housing available and the goals and supporting strategies the Town will follow to ensure that adequate provisions are made for meeting the housing needs of all segments of the community.

Community feedback gathered during the public process for the General Plan helped shape this Housing Element. Comments received from the community include:

- Make neighborhoods desirable by providing walkable streets, a range of housing choices, mixed-use neighborhood centers and great schools, parks and recreation facilities.
- Provide a mix of housing, including an equitable distribution of affordable housing, to meet the needs of current and future residents throughout Florence.
- Include a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to provide a diversity of

household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels in order to promote stable neighborhoods.

- Identify policies to encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties within Downtown Florence.

ponent that responds to the Town’s dynamic and growing housing needs.

### Housing Goal

**Goal** Provide an adequate supply of safe, high-quality housing for all household income levels and meet the needs of special needs groups within the community through the provision of a wide variety of housing types organized into high-quality, unique and efficient neighborhoods.

## GOALS

Implementation of the Housing Element will strengthen the Town of Florence’s vitality and economic future through new and infill development that provides a residential com-

## HOUSING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <b>Promote diversity in the types of housing products available to residents within the community.</b> | Encourage the development of affordable housing options.   |
|  | Identify a broad range of housing densities on the Land Use Plan to facilitate a match between available housing types and affordability needs.  |
|  | Encourage residential development that is consistent with the Town's most recent historical architecture guidelines and zoning and subdivision ordinances.   |
|  | Promote higher-density housing in and adjacent to the Downtown area to support Downtown revitalization efforts.  |
| <b>Encourage sustainable building and design practices.</b>  | Conduct 5-year updates of the Town's inventory of sites suitable for residential development, and take appropriate action to ensure that an ongoing supply of available sites at appropriate densities meets projected housing needs for all economic groups.                                      |
|  | Promote the construction of energy-efficient housing through updated building codes, site planning and landscaping.  |
|  | Educate residents and home builders about green building programs and standards.   |
| <b>Provide convenient and affordable support services for community residents.</b>                     | Explore methods to encourage sustainable development throughout the community, such as the LEED for Homes rating system provided by the U.S. Green Building Council.   |
|  | Continue to work with Pinal-Gila Community Child Services or other providers to encourage the continued availability of affordable 24-hour day care in the community.  |
|  | Assist the Pinal County Housing Department in promoting housing counseling and arbitration services for renters who may be unaware of their rights as tenants.   |
|  | Evaluate teaming with an existing non-profit entity or establishing a Community Development Corporation where newcomers, existing renters and prospective homeowners can receive information on housing availability, new housing development and the availability of housing assistance programs. |
|  | Consider preparing and administering an ongoing program of public information and discussion regarding housing needs to establish a clear mandate for ongoing housing affordability actions.   |

## HOUSING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |  |
|---|--|--|
| <p><b>Encourage a mix of housing types within neighborhoods to result in a diversity of household types and housing choices for residents of all ages and income levels.</b></p>  | <p>Continue to promote the use of Planned Unit Developments and the Master Planned Community designation to offer a flexible way to mix densities in a high-quality manner.</p>  |  |
|   | <p>Coordinate with the County and nearby cities to market the region to appropriate national, regional and local home builders.</p>  |  |
|   | <p>Minimize the impact of non-residential uses on neighborhoods through the creation of appropriate buffers or the use of other means of land use separation.</p>  |  |
|   | <p>Support the mixing of market-rate and affordable rate homes in neighborhoods through various development incentives, compatible design features and high-quality community services and facilities.</p>   |  |
|   | <p>Meet annually with non-profit, private and other public entities to examine ongoing opportunities for cooperative efforts to expand the Town's supply of affordable housing.</p>  |  |
|   | <p>Actively seek out and conduct an annual meeting with potential developers for infill sites as a means of generating interest to undertake residential projects within the Town.</p>   |  |
|   | <p>Develop a program of granting density bonuses for development projects that provide housing units affordable to lower income households. Once adopted, the Town will promote the use of density bonuses by providing information and brochures to developers, which explain the benefits and opportunities to both developers and residents of using the density bonus program. This program will be ongoing as requests are made, and will strive to facilitate the achievement of Housing Element objectives for the provision of new housing for all economic segments of the community.</p> |  |
|   | <p>Undertake periodic reviews and updates of Town zoning and subdivision regulations, as well residential design guidelines, to ensure that such regulations and guidelines are clear, achieve their intended purpose and facilitate innovation in housing design. Also ensure the provision of a broad variety of housing densities, styles and product types and provision of needed amenities convenient to residential neighborhoods</p>   |  |
|   | <p><b>Promote proper maintenance of both private and public properties and educate and assist property owners whose properties do not meet existing standards.</b></p>   | <p>Develop neighborhood programs that stress education and compliance measures that enable residents to assist themselves in resolving structural deterioration and property maintenance issues.</p> |
|   |  | <p>Continue to educate and work with residents to maintain quality structural and historical standards in Downtown neighborhoods.</p>  |
| <p>Work with rental property managers to promote quality management and maintenance of both single-family and multifamily rental units.</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Seek opportunities to help private financial institutions meet their Community Reinvestment Act requirements.</p>  |  |  |
| <p>Establish a grant or low-cost loan program (in addition to existing state programs) to assist residents as they restore historic houses in Downtown.</p>   |  |  |
| <p>Assist residents in accessing home rehabilitation loans for lower income housing. The Town can assist residents by creating brochures that identify what rehabilitation programs are available and the processes by which these loans are granted.</p> |  |  |
| <p>Provide information to very low and low-income households and other special needs groups regarding the availability of rehabilitation programs through neighborhood and community organizations, and through the media.</p>                            |  |  |



## HOUSING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Encourage the redevelopment and/or substantial revitalization of existing residential areas.</b></p>   | <p>Develop and adopt an infill policy to provide a catalyst for Downtown development opportunities.</p>   |
|  | <p>Identify and implement programs to encourage the rehabilitation of existing historic residential properties while respecting and preserving the Town's historical character.</p>   |
|  | <p>Remain sensitive to the historic character of the Town. Recognize and redevelop historic properties as described in the Historic District Guidelines.</p>  |
|  | <p>Consider implementation of a housing conservation program to assist residential property owners to avoid deterioration of historic structures.</p>   |
|  | <p>Compatibly locate medium- and high-density residential uses within Downtown to foster a mix of residential uses and enhanced commercial opportunities.</p>   |
|  | <p>Provide ongoing inspection services to review code violations on a survey and complaint basis. Examples of code violations include families living in illegal units, such as garages, construction of illegal buildings and households living in unsafe buildings.</p>   |
|  | <p>In cases where housing conditions have deteriorated to the point that replacement, rather than repair, would be more cost-effective, encourage the demolition and replacement of substandard structures.</p>   |
| <p><b>Encourage and maintain a range of housing for special needs residents.</b></p>   | <p>As part of programs to facilitate development of new affordable housing, include programs to provide for replacement housing for households living with substandard units that require demolition.</p>   |
|  | <p>Coordinate with both private and public sector providers to locate single-family attached and detached homes, small apartments (3–4 units), condominiums, congregate housing and other alternatives for elderly people or mentally or physically challenged persons who are not completely independent.</p>  |
|  | <p>Encourage the establishment of a volunteer program, potentially involving civic, educational and institutional resources, to assist in home improvement projects for special needs residents.</p>  |
|  | <p>Cooperate with the Pinal County Housing Department and other public and private agencies to develop housing (including transitional housing), family counseling and employment programs for the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless. Additionally, the Town will analyze and determine whether its development policies and processing requirements facilitate emergency shelters and transitional housing. If any constraints are found, the Town will initiate actions to address these constraints.</p> |
|  | <p>Actively pursue HUD Continuum of Care or other appropriate grant applications for the special needs population.</p>  |
| <p>Review and revise, as appropriate, the Town's residential zoning ordinances and building codes to minimize accessibility impediments in housing products, and provide for the development, maintenance and improvement of housing intended for persons with disabilities. In addition, the Town will enact provisions to make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities in the land use and zoning application, review and approval process</p> |   |

## HOUSING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy  |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Initiate, maintain and expand programs to provide housing and property rehabilitation for a range of household income types in order to support the Town's economic development goals.</b></p> | <p>Continue to monitor the Town's housing inventory to ensure adequate housing for a growing local workforce.</p>   |
|  | <p>Continue to coordinate with the existing Pinal County Housing Department Housing Rehabilitation Program and expand the Town's existing financial assistance programs for the rehabilitation of substandard units.</p>  |
|  | <p>Continue to use federal, state and local resources to create a down payment grant program to promote first-time home buying.</p>   |
|  | <p>Continue to work with the Pinal County Housing Department to foster an in-kind program using sweat equity (i.e., Habitat for Humanity, Community Action Housing Resources Agency [CAHRA]) and self-help strategies to increase the number of residents who qualify for home ownership. Continue to communicate with CAHRA to determine if a self-help housing program is feasible.</p> |
|  | <p>Continue to monitor and submit grant applications, as appropriate, to capture state and federal housing initiatives that may provide additional funding or incentives for new, affordable workforce housing.</p>   |
|  | <p>Acquire land and structures through gifts, purchases or tax foreclosures that can be used for the development of, or rehabilitation into, workforce housing.</p>   |
|  | <p>Evaluate expedited review and approval procedures and the use of density bonuses for appropriate and desired housing projects.</p>   |
|  | <p>Formulate new housing development and/or existing housing rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization programs using CDBG funds, HOME program funds, State Housing Trust Funds and other funding sources that are or may become available on a federal, state or regional level.</p>  |
|  | <p>Use the Town's Capital Improvement Program to assist in establishing an ongoing program of public facility improvements (e.g., roadway and utility upgrades and parks and recreation improvements) to support overall neighborhood revitalization.</p>   |
|  | <p>Continue to support development of high-quality, federally subsidized rental housing through participation in federal rental housing assistance programs and the use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits.</p>  |
| <p><b>Coordinate with the Town's economic development efforts.</b></p>   | <p>Coordinate with other local and state municipalities to determine the most effective strategies related to workforce housing.</p>  |
|  | <p>Examine potential incentives for private sector investment in affordable housing.</p>  |
|  | <p>Monitor local and regional economic development initiatives as a means of forecasting future workforce housing needs.</p>  |
|  | <p>Promote land use relationships that provide for convenient and easy access between housing and employment areas.</p>   |
|  | <p>Plan for a housing mix that fits the needs of local and regional workers, including housing for all income levels represented in that workforce.</p>   |

# 7

## PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

### PURPOSE

The Town of Florence is located in northern Pinal County and has a rich agricultural heritage defined by its open spaces, small town ambience and relaxed character. The Parks, Trails and Open Space Element, along with the 2008 Town of Florence Parks, Trails and Open Space (PTOS) Master Plan (which provides greater detail regarding the Town's plan of the provision of parks, recreation and open space), define an approach for the next 20 years that will provide a balanced system of conveniently located parks, interconnected paths and trails, open spaces and multipurpose recreational facilities. With valuable direction provided by Town staff, Parks and Recreation Technical Committee, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and Town Council, existing parks were inventoried and evaluated to determine whether they meet community needs. This element of the General Plan is intended to provide policy guidance for the expansion of parks and recreational facilities, as well as preservation of open space within the community. Proposals contained within this element are not intended as ordinance provisions. The appropriateness of proposed land uses and development will be determined by the Town based on the Town's General Plan Land Use element and zoning.

### BACKGROUND

#### Existing Park and Recreation Facilities

The Town of Florence maintains six parks. Several other parks (approximately 11) are maintained by private developments. Approximately 84 parks are proposed, primarily as recreation facilities located in private developments (see Tables 7-1, 7-2, 7-3 and 7-4). In

*"Preserving local open space is not just critical to our region's quality of life, but also to safeguarding our water and environmental quality."*

– Allyson Schwartz, U.S. Representative



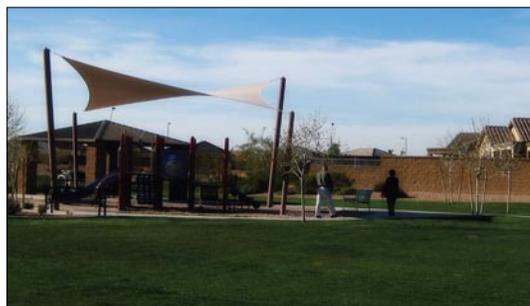
addition to these parks and recreation facilities noted in the tables, two privately owned golf courses are located within the Town's Planning

**Table 7-1. Existing and Proposed Neighborhood Parks and Recreation Facilities**

| Facility                | Existing | Proposed  |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Anthem at Merrill Ranch | 9        | 9         |
| Arizona Farms           | —        | 4         |
| Dobson Farms            | —        | 10        |
| Heritage Creek Estates  | —        | 1         |
| Merrill Ranch           | —        | 39        |
| Paloroso                | —        | 2         |
| Sendera                 | —        | 1         |
| Skyview Farms           | —        | 4         |
| Urton Farms             | —        | 2         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>9</b> | <b>72</b> |

Note: Parks managed by homeowners association (HOA)

Source: J2 Design, April 2007 inventory



Anthem Master Planned Community Neighborhood Park

**Table 7-2. Existing and Proposed Community Parks and Recreation Facilities**

| Community Parks         | Existing | Proposed  |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|
| Heritage Park           | 1        | —         |
| Anthem at Merrill Ranch | 1        | 1         |
| Paloroso                | —        | 1         |
| Dobson Farms            | —        | 1         |
| Town of Florence owned  | —        | 9         |
| <b>Total</b>            | <b>2</b> | <b>12</b> |

Source: J2 Design, April 2007 inventory

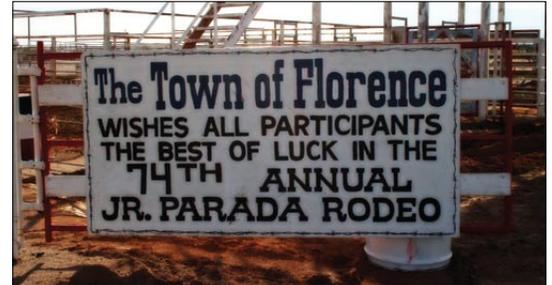


Heritage Park Facilities: skate facility, soccer field, play area, and basketball court (from top to bottom)

**Table 7-3. Existing Special Use Parks and Recreation Facilities**

| Special Use Parks   | Existing |
|---------------------|----------|
| Aero Modeler Park   | 1        |
| Arriola Park        | 1        |
| Jacques Square Park | 1        |
| Little League Park  | 1        |
| Main Street Park    | 1        |
| Rodeo Park          | 1        |
| <b>Total</b>        | <b>6</b> |

Source: J2 Design, April 2007 inventory



Rodeo Park: equestrian arena and rodeo grounds  
Pocket parks: Arriola Park and Main Street Park (from top to bottom)

**Table 7-4. Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities**

| Description   | Existing Facilities |
|---|---------------------|
| Baseball (official 90-foot)/Softball                                | 1                   |
| Little League (60-foot)/Softball                                    | 2                   |
| Softball  | 1                   |
| Soccer  | 1                   |
| Multi-use Fields  | 0                   |
| Basketball  | 2                   |
| Volleyball  | 1                   |
| Tennis  | 0                   |
| Picnic Ramadas  | 7                   |
| Swimming Pools  | 0                   |
| Children's Play Areas   | 1                   |
| BMX Parks   | 0                   |
| Skateboard Parks  | 1                   |
| Off-leash Dog Parks   | 1                   |
| Community Center with Gymnasium, Handball/Racquetball, Fitness Area | 0                   |
| Handball/Racquetball  | 0                   |
| Gymnasium (at Recreation Center)                                    | 0                   |
| Indoor Swimming Pools (at Recreation Center)                        | 0                   |
| Community Equestrian Park   | 1                   |
| Golf Course, 18 hole (private)                                      | 2                   |

Source: J2 Design, April 2007 inventory

Area, as well as multi-use facilities located at local schools operated by the Florence Unified School District. Table 7-5 contains standards for parks by size, service area, and classification. These standards provide a benchmark for level of service (LOS) standards.

The McFarland State Historic Park houses a historic structure built between 1877 and 1878, that served as the Pinal County Courthouse and later became the Pinal County Hospital. The Pinal County Historical Society acquired the building in 1963 and maintained a museum on the premises until 1970. In 1974, former state governor Ernest W. McFarland purchased the building and donated it to Arizona State Parks in 1977. The courthouse is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is maintained by Arizona State Parks. The Town also maintains the Dorothy Nolan Senior Center Fitness Center and a Teen Center in Downtown Florence.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Maintain and enhance existing levels of park acreage and facilities service.**

**Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan**

The PTOS Master Plan for Florence provides the descriptive details of how the appropriate balance of parks, trails and open space can be accomplished throughout the development of the entire Planning Area based on the pattern and densities of residential uses identified in the Land Use Plan. The LOS standards to assess park and open space needs can then be applied, as shown in Tables 7-5, 7-6, 7-7 and 7-8. It is important to define parks and open space because these terms are often used interchangeably.

**Park:** A parcel of land that contains a mix of active and passive recreation facilities including, but not limited to, defined and improved play field and/or sport court areas, tot-lots and picnic or ramada areas that are hardscaped and landscaped in a pleasing manner.

**Paths, Trails and Trailheads:** Off-street multi-use paths (paved), trails (unpaved) and associated amenities are the non-motorized transportation and recreation corridors that tie the Town's neighborhoods together as well as provide linkages to local and regional destinations such as the Gila River, Downtown Florence, parks, schools, open spaces, shopping areas and employment centers.

**Open Space:** A tract of land that is preserved in its natural state or developed to convey a sense of openness that may contain passive recreation activities such as seating, viewing areas, etc. Developed open space includes, but is not limited to, golf courses, drainage corridors and retention basins.

**Park Type Definitions and Standards**

**Neighborhood Parks**

A neighborhood park serves the immediate neighborhood with a "walk to" park. While the Neighborhood Park Standard established in the PTOS Master Plan defines a neighborhood park as a 10-acre site serving up to 5,000 people with a 1/2-mile radius service area, the Plan recognizes that Master Planned Communities often provide parks that are owned and maintained by homeowner's associations.

**Table 7-5. Comparison of Park Classification Standards**

| Park Type                               | Size (in acres)                 |                             | Geographic Service Area  |                         | Population Served | Acres Per 1,000 People |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
|   | Florence Area General Plan 2002 | NRPA Standard               | Florence Area General Plan 2002  | NRPA Standard           | NRPA Standard     | NRPA Standard          |
| Pocket Park                             | —                               | —                           | —  | —                       | —                 | 0.25–0.5               |
| Neighborhood Park                       | 10 acres (5 acres minimum)      | 5–10 acres                  | 3/4 mile; not constrained by physical barriers                             | 1/4- to 1/2-mile radius | up to 5,000       | 1–2                    |
| School Park                             | varies; depends on function     | 30–50 acres                 | varies; generally serves the entire community                              | —                       | —                 | 5–8                    |
| Community Park with Community Center    | —                               | 50+ acres; 75 acres optimal | —  | —                       | up to 20,000      | —                      |
| Community Park without Community Center | 30–50 acres                     | —                           | 1.5 miles; serves two or more neighborhoods                                | 1/2 to 3 miles          | —                 | 5–10                   |
| Regional Park                           | —                               | 1,000+ acres                | —  | 1-hour drive time       | —                 | 5–10                   |
| Riparian Open Space                     | varies                          | —                           | approximately 1/4 mile on both sides of the river                          | —                       | —                 | —                      |
| Linear Open Space                       | varies                          | —                           | varies; based on presence of canals, utility easements, right-of-way, etc. | —                       | —                 | —                      |
| Cultural Open Space                     | varies                          | —                           | varies; based on resource availability and opportunity                     | —                       | —                 | —                      |
| Natural Area Open Space                 | varies                          | —                           | varies; based on resource availability and opportunity                     | —                       | —                 | —                      |
| Agricultural Open Space                 | varies                          | —                           | varies; based on historical and existing land use                          | —                       | —                 | —                      |

**Community Parks**

Community parks should be accessible to many neighborhoods and their service area, providing parking, safe bicycle and pedestrian access and intensive recreation opportunities. These parks have the typical list of amenities in addition to athletic fields, courts and facilities such as urban lakes, skate courts, large group picnic facilities, recreation centers, etc. Larger community parks may include fire or police stations, libraries and commercial development.

Community parks serve a larger area and population within a 3-mile radius (a 5-mile

radius under special circumstances). The recommended service area serves approximately 50,000 people. The typical size for a community park with or without a community center is 50 to 100 acres.

Typical community park facilities include:

- Baseball fields (lighted) (one)
- Little League fields (lighted) (two)
- Softball fields (lighted) (four)
- Soccer fields (lighted) (four)
- Sand volleyball courts (lighted) (four)
- Picnic areas with a mix of single, double and large group ramadas (ten)



- Children’s play areas (two)
- BMX park (one)
- Skateboard park (one)
- Off-leash dog park (as needed)
- Community center/recreation center (with gymnasium, handball/racquetball courts, fitness area) (one)
- Restroom and concession area (one)
- Parking (adequate amount to serve park)
- Landscaped open space areas (25–40 percent of site)
- Paths and trails (connecting to neighborhoods and open space)
- Trailheads (if adjacent to open space)

**OBJECTIVE**

**Develop special use parks as part of the overall parks and recreation system.**

**Special Use Parks**

Special use parks serve a need for specific or single-purpose recreational activities. They enhance the quality of life in the community and provide year-round recreational or passive recreational opportunities. Existing special use parks are: Aero Modeler Park, Arriola Park, Jacques Square Park, Little League Park, Main Street Park and Rodeo Park (Figure 7-1). Proposed special use parks include:

- Gila River corridor
- Florence Canal corridor
- Florence/Casa Grande Canal corridor, between canals
- Poston Butte
- Magma Arizona Railroad corridor
- CAP Canal corridor
- Copper Basin Railroad corridor
- Magma Dam basin, cut off drainage corridor
- Power line corridor
- El Paso Natural Gas corridors
- BLM Gateway Trail Park
- The Confluence Trail Park

- Bogart Wash
- Union Pacific Railroad corridor
- Cemeteries (active and inactive)

Many of the special use parks within Florence are along established corridors and provide a connected network that promotes pedestrian and bicycle travel.

**Park Classifications and Level of Service Standards**

Level of service standards were applied to existing and future populations (2008 and 2028). Level of service standards are population driven and provide the Town with a perspective on its park and recreation status as a whole. This effort was completed to answer the question: “Where does the Town of Florence stand in relation to existing planning standards, area standards and national standards?”

While comparing Florence with recognized standards provides an overall guiding principle, the Town of Florence recommended standards will be implemented. The basis for level of service standards is derived from the National Recreation and Park Association’s (NRPA’s) park planning documents.

**Recommended Level of Service Standards**

Level of service standards were based on the comparison of standards, recognized park standards and staff input. They are presented in Table 7-6, below.

The future park acreage needs for the residents of Florence are based on population projections, preferred locations in the Town and application of the recommended standards. Using the recommended standards for sizes, types and numbers of parks, the quantities, sizes and locations of parks were tailored to meet the needs of Florence residents and effectively allocate available park sites throughout the Town. The number of needed parks, per classification type, is listed in Table 7-7.

**Table 7-6. Recommended LOS Standards**

| Park Type         | Acres   | Geographic Service Area | Population Served |
|-------------------|---------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Neighborhood Park | 10      | 1/2-mile radius         | 5,000             |
| Community Park    | 50–160+ | 3-mile radius           | 50,000            |

Table 7-7. Recommended Future Parks

| Year               | 2008  | 2013   | 2018   | 2028   |
|--------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Population         | 8,593 | 12,631 | 19,831 | 28,754 |
| Neighborhood Parks | 2     | 3      | 4      | 6      |
| Community Parks    | 0     | 0      | 0      | 1      |

The future recreation facility needs for Florence are based on population projections and the application of recommended standards for the number of facilities per 1,000 people. Based on these standards, recommended facilities are proposed for Florence, listed in Table 7-8. These standards were used for the mapping and tabular calculations of needed parks and facilities.

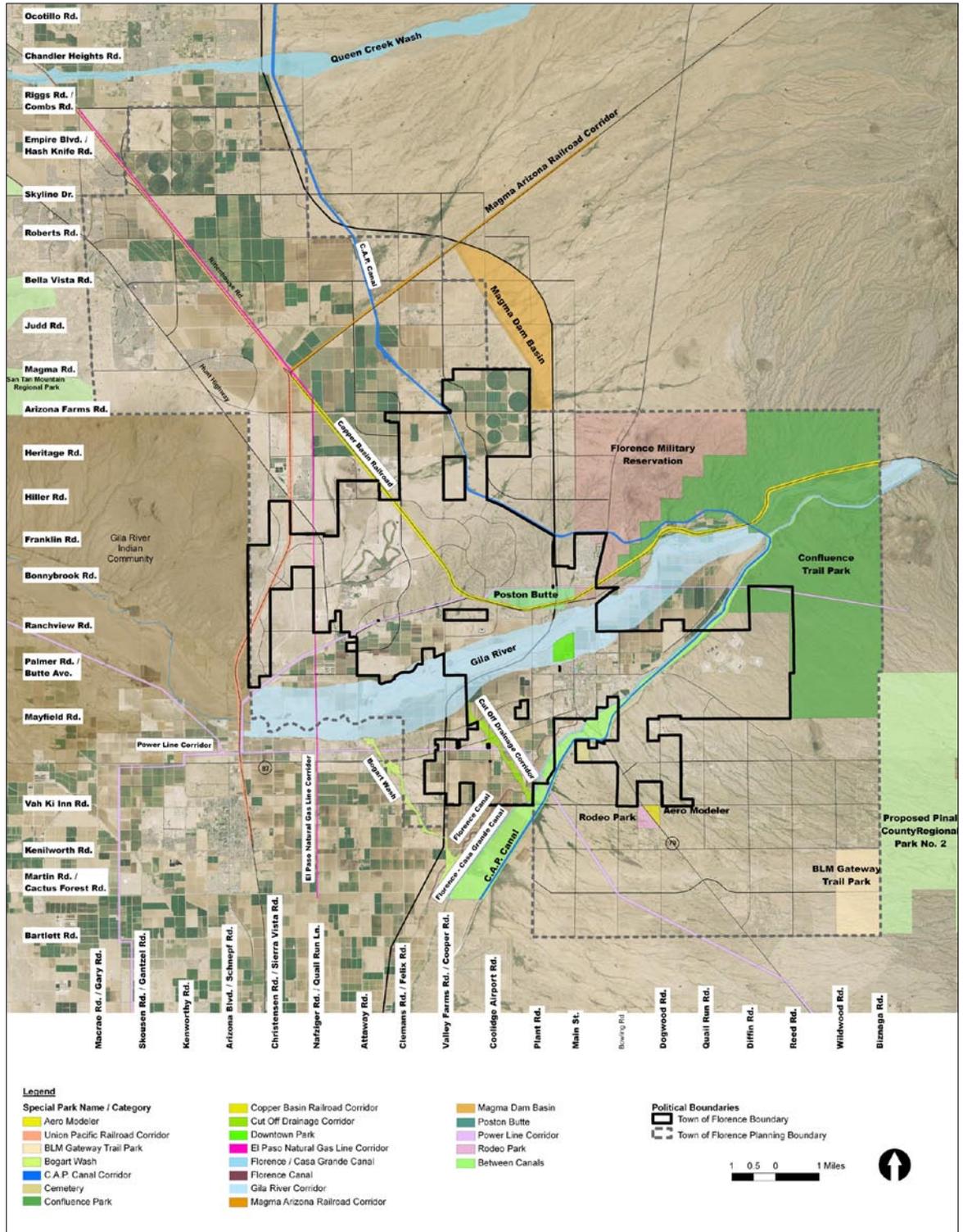


Figure 7-1. Town of Florence Existing and Proposed Special Use Parks

Table 7-8. Recommended Recreation Facility Needs

| Facility  | Population Served | Existing 2008 | Need 2008 | Need 2013 | Need 2018 | Need 2028 |
|---|-------------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Baseball (official 90-foot)/Softball                                  | 25,000            | 1             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Little League (60-foot)/Softball                                      | 12,500            | 2             | 0         | 1         | 0         | 0         |
| Softball  | 7,500             | 1             | 0         | 1         | 2         | 3         |
| Soccer  | 7,500             | 1             | 0         | 1         | 2         | 3         |
| Multi-use fields  | 15,000            | 0             | 1         | 1         | 1         | 2         |
| Basketball  | 5,000             | 2             | 0         | 1         | 2         | 4         |
| Volleyball  | 10,000            | 1             | 0         | 0         | 1         | 2         |
| Tennis  | 6,000             | 0             | 1         | 2         | 3         | 5         |
| Picnic ramadas  | 2,000             | 8             | 0         | 0         | 2         | 6         |
| Swimming pools  | 35,000            | 0             | 0         | 0         | 1         | 1         |
| Children's play areas   | 5,000             | 1             | 1         | 2         | 3         | 5         |
| BMX park  | 100,000           | 0             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Skateboard parks  | 100,000           | 1             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Off-leash dog parks   | 100,000           | 1             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         |
| Community centers with gymnasium, handball, racquetball, fitness area | 50,000            | 0             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1         |
| Handball/racquetball courts   | 50,000            | 0             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1         |
| Gymnasium (located at recreation center)                              | 50,000            | 0             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1         |
| Indoor swimming pools (located at recreation center)                  | 50,000            | 0             | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1         |

**OBJECTIVE**

**Develop an on- and off-street multi-use path and trail system throughout the Town.**

**Paths and Trails**

Paths, trails and their associated amenities are non-motorized transportation and recreation corridors that tie the Town's neighborhoods together. They provide linkages to local and regional destinations such as the Gila River, Downtown Florence, parks, schools, open spaces, shopping areas and employment centers. The PTOS Master Plan provides guidelines and standards for typical unpaved trails, paved paths, enhanced pedestrian facilities, trailheads, access points and path and trail road crossings and other crossings.

A limited number of motorized off-highway vehicle routes have been identified in Pinal County.

**Shared Use Paved Paths**

This paved facility is used by bicyclists, pedestrians, joggers, people with strollers, wheel-

chair users, in-line skaters, other non-motorized users and anyone wanting a smooth and consistent surface.

The preferred surface material is concrete; however, asphalt is acceptable. Paths are signed for various users, are Americans with Disabilities Act accessible (when having less than 5 percent grades) and may be used by small maintenance and emergency response vehicles. Standards may vary within American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials guidelines according to right-of-way width, existing or anticipated level of use, geographical conditions, environmental constraints and land uses. The typical minimum paved path width is 10 feet. In areas of steep terrain, limited visibility, high existing or anticipated levels of use and/or areas with a great variety of users, the minimum width should be 12 feet.

**Unpaved Trails**

These trails consist of unpaved corridors used by non-motorized users such as mountain bicyclists, recreational bicyclists, walkers, run-

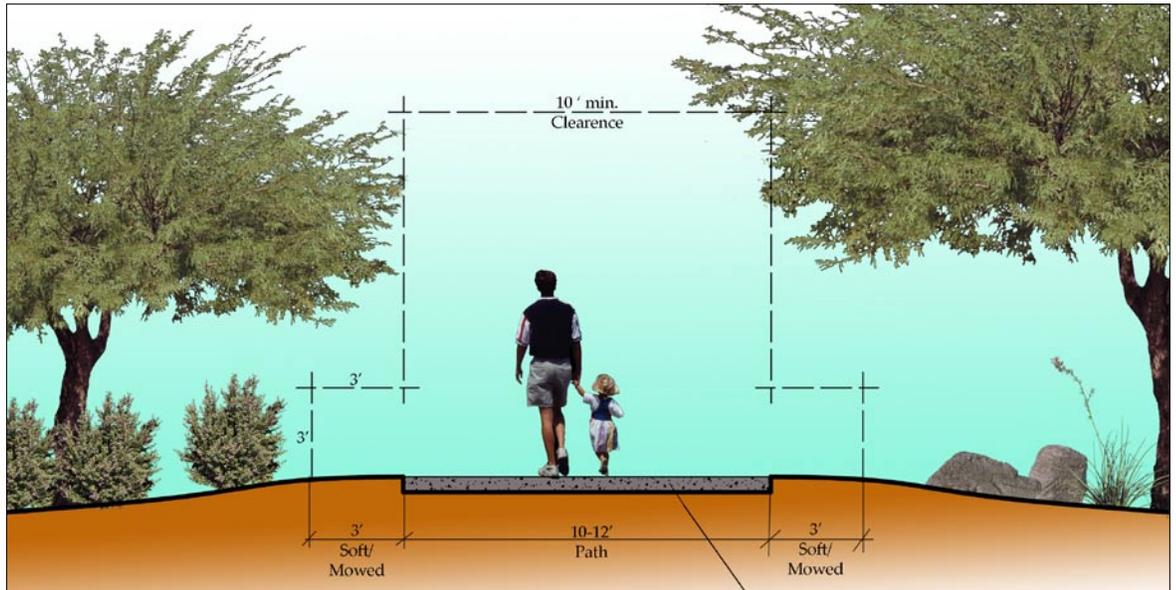


Figure 7-2. Cross-section of Paved Path

ners, hikers, equestrians and others who prefer a soft, natural surface rather than a hard paved surface (Figures 7-2, 7-3, and 7-4). Although the trails accommodate a variety of uses, there are nationally recognized “yield to” rules that promote safe and courteous use of the trails and show how all users are expected to yield to equestrians. Bicyclists also yield to hikers and walkers.

#### Back Country Trails (Multi-use)

These trails are located within preserved open space or mountainous, undeveloped or protected areas such as Poston Butte and the two proposed trail parks. They are built with greater sensitivity to the existing natural environment and are, therefore, narrower than trails in developed parts of the Town.

#### Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Trails

The Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan identifies existing, planned and proposed off-highway vehicle trails within Florence. These trails are located east of Highway 79 and provide access primarily to the vast open space areas west of Florence and along the Gila River. Because the PTOS Master Plan addresses only non-motorized paved paths and unpaved trails, this document provides no additional OHV

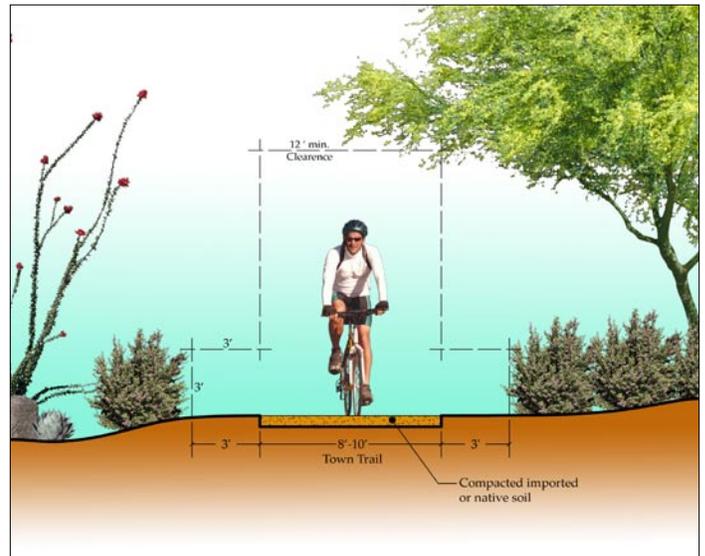


Figure 7-3. Cross-section of unpaved Town Trail

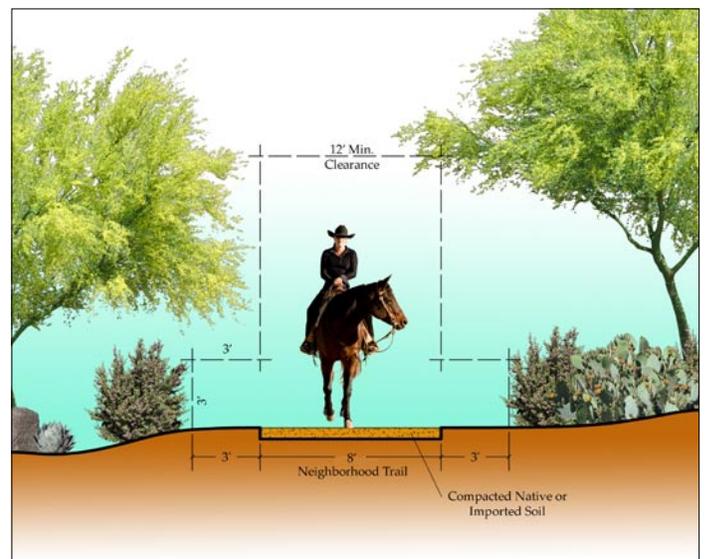


Figure 7-4. Cross-section of unpaved Neighborhood Trail

routes within Florence and no additional information regarding OHV trail standards and guidelines.

### OHV Staging Areas

To serve and direct users to OHV trails identified within the Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan, one OHV staging area is proposed within the Confluence Trail Park. The OHV staging area should be physically separated from the other trailheads located there and described later in this element. It should provide, at a minimum, parking spaces with ample turn-around area for vehicles with trailers, restrooms, drinking water, emergency phones, group ramadas and signs with trail maps, rules, regulations and helpful information.

As in any site development within a natural resource park, the staging area should be located in the least environmentally sensitive location that provides direct and reasonably easy access to the greatest quantity of OHV trail opportunities.

### Trailheads

Trailheads are located along all types and levels of trail and path corridors. They provide drive-in as well as non-vehicular access to local and regional destinations and open space areas.

Four levels of standard trailheads are proposed: two with equestrian parking and amenities and two without. The trailheads can be located within neighborhood or community parks or built as separate facilities.

#### OBJECTIVE

**Acquire and preserve open space and natural resources for future generations.**

### Open Space

Open space is generally associated with passive recreation activities and provides a continuous network of corridors and areas for trail linkages, view shed preservation, wildlife habitat, preservation of cultural and historic sites, park facilities and drainage corridors.

This open space will consist of rivers, wash corridors, wildlife habitat and desert land areas. In addition, utility, railway, canal and public rights-of-way will also serve to pro-

vide open space linkages. Recommended development for open spaces should provide recreational and interpretive multi-use trails and paths; trailheads with amenities, signs and parking; as well as the acquisition of sufficient, usable land areas for future recreational development. See Figure 7-5.

The PTOS Master Plan has mapped and evaluated open spaces based on natural, cultural, political, man-made and legal features. In defining the open space as indicated in the Plan, criteria were created and applied to the Town of Florence Planning Area.

Criteria applied in the open space analysis included:

- Location of 100-year floodplains;
- Provision of a minimum of 15 percent of the net acreage as open space within Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) unless otherwise approved by the Town of Florence;
- Locations of known historical and cultural resources sites;
- Community, neighborhood and special use parks;
- Canals;
- Power line corridors;
- Mountain peaks;
- 15 percent or greater slopes; and
- Railway corridors.

The defined open spaces are a composite of the above criteria applied and combined.

The tools for application and acquisition of open space lands include:

- Direct purchase of land from private owners or the Arizona State Land Department;
- Lease agreements with the Bureau of Land Management through a Recreation and Public Purposes Permit or Lease; and
- Donations of land by private citizens or corporations.

### Sustainability

The Town of Florence is fortunate to be located in the upper Sonoran Desert, which provides a direct connection to the natural environment. To sustain the quality of life expected by Florence citizens, the implementation of sustainable practices is encouraged.

Sustainability is the ability to maintain an ecological balance in an area by not exploiting the natural resources. Below are exam-

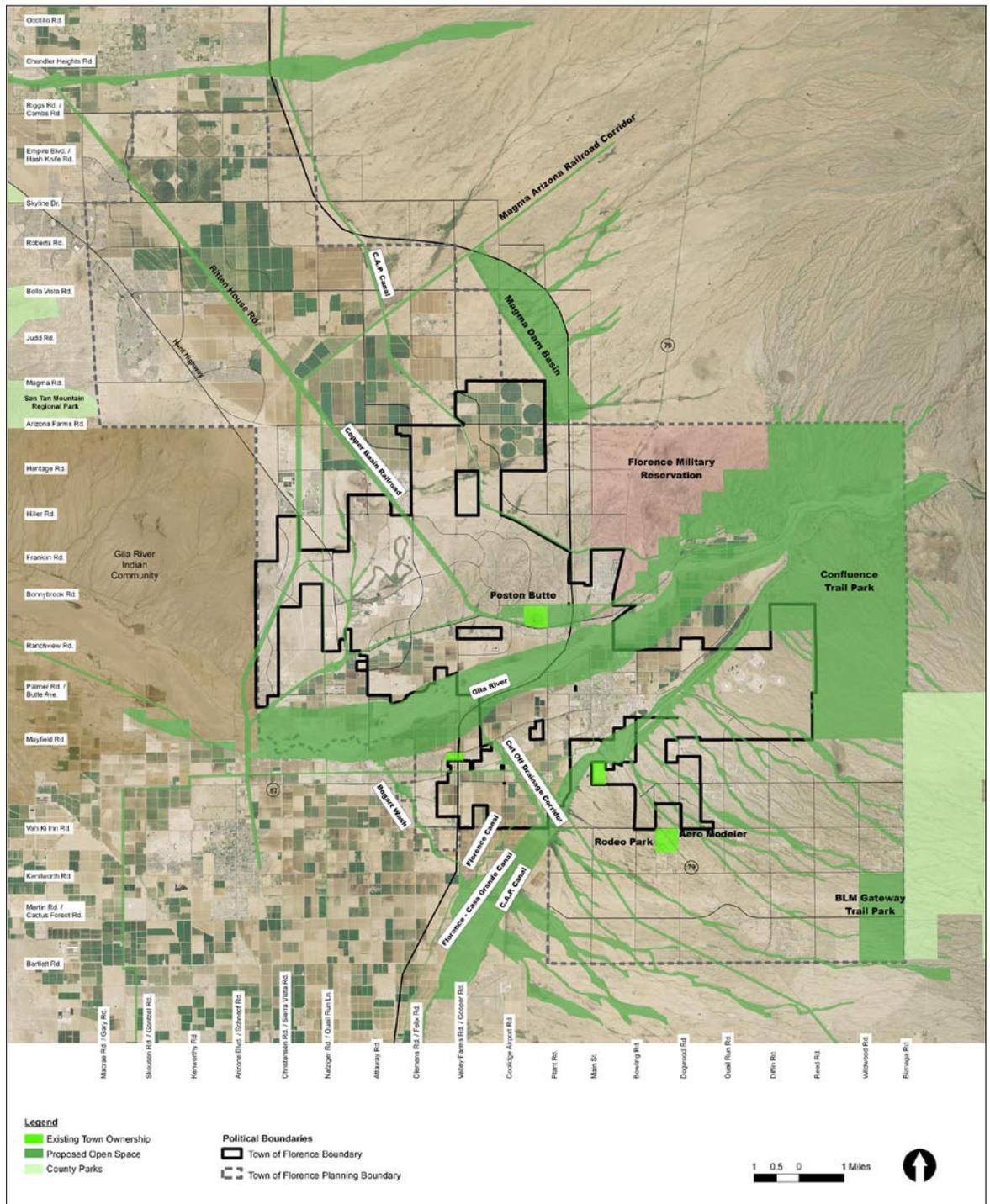


Figure 7-5. Open Space Plan

ples of sustainable practices.

- **Greenhouse gas emissions** – Trees, shrubs and groundcover help reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by capturing and storing it for use in producing roots, leaves and bark.
- **Urban climate** – Trees in urban settings reduce the heat island effect and provide windbreaks.
- **Biodiversity** – Landscaping promotes bio-

diversity with a mix of native species and appropriate nonnative species. Invasive nonnative species that have been introduced to the United States continue to spread and result in increased control costs and elimination of native species.

- **Water waste** – Good design techniques reduce water runoff. Conventional drainage systems typically deliver large volumes of water to streams in a short amount of time, leading to increased downstream

## Sustainable Practices

### Sustainable vegetation practices

- Protect and conserve existing vegetation and native plant species.
- Eliminate the use of invasive plants so as not to threaten native species.
- Specify the use of plants from a local grower to reduce energy costs.
- Minimize the amount of time that plants are stored on-site before planting.
- Specify native and drought-tolerant plants to conserve water and support native wildlife.

### Sustainable soil practices

- Preserve and protect healthy soils by retaining topsoil and preventing erosion. Minimize grading, compaction and soil disturbance.
- Improve the health of degraded soils through soil restoration, reuse and rehabilitation to achieve conditions similar to regional reference soils.
- Recover yard trimmings for composting.
- Use composted soils that are rich in nutrients and reduce the need for fertilizers.

flooding, erosion, water quality degradation and fewer opportunities to enjoy the aesthetic and recreational benefits of streams and lakes.

- **Water pollution** – Careful plant selection and organic soil additions reduce the use of pesticides and fertilizers that can contaminate water.
- **Yard waste** – Composting leaves and grass not only enriches the soil but reduces landfill volume as much as 18 percent.
- **Public health** – The positive effects that views of plants have on the overall health of people are exceptional and well documented.
- **Energy consumption** – The use of local, sustainable materials reduces energy demands to produce and transport the materials.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

Parks and open spaces emphasize the small-town character that the citizens of Florence

value. The surrounding agricultural land, flanked by various mountains and natural resources, creates a varied and magnificent setting for the Planning Area. Florence is experiencing significant population growth. Residential development that has and is anticipated to occur demands more parks and open space.

Currently, Florence is very close to meeting basic park and recreation facility needs with its existing parks and recreation facilities. The Town is transitioning from a small town to a larger community. Florence, however, does provide more parks on average than many other comparable communities in the Southwest. The challenge for the Town is to provide a high standard of parks and open space to the residents while the population continues to grow.

Community feedback gathered during the public process for this General Plan update placed significance on preserving and enhancing:

- Parks, both natural and built;
- Trails and paths;
- Open space;
- Natural resources;
- Environmentally sensitive areas;
- Agricultural land;
- Community image; and
- Public health.

Specific comments received during the public process related to parks, trails and open space included:

- Enhance the lives of resident by expanding active and passive recreational opportunities.
- Take a leadership role in sustainable practices, setting a positive example of accomplishing environmental excellence in the built environment.
- Embrace the Gila River and enhance its riparian environment.

## GOALS

The parks, trails and open space goals, objectives and strategies provide the foundation to achieve the Town’s vision. The goal statements are an update to the previous General Plan and the resolution of key issues identified by the Town’s citizens, the Technical Advisory Committee for the PTOS Master Plan, elected officials, appointed of-

officials and Town staff.

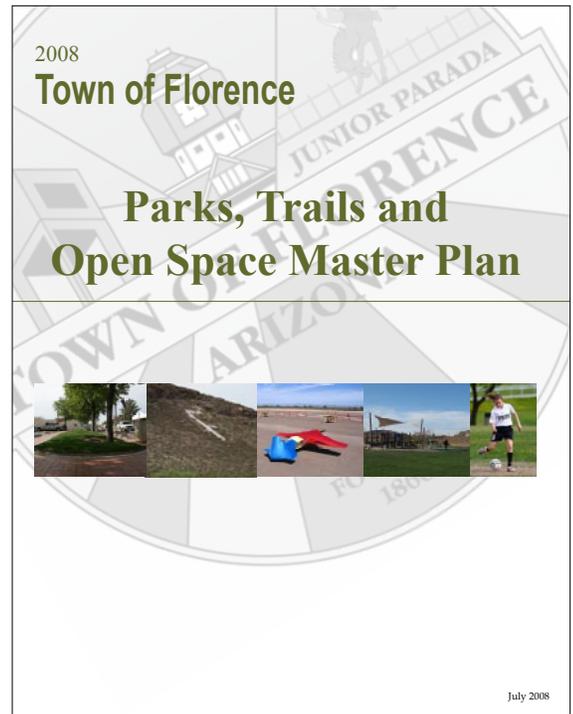
## PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE

The PTOS Master Plan list of capital improvement needs identifies a 20-year “menu”

### Parks, Trails and Open Space Goals

- Goal 1** An integrated, accessible town-wide park system providing high-quality recreational programs.
- Goal 2** A regional, linked open space network.
- Goal 3** A comprehensive network of paths and trails for bicyclists and pedestrians.

of projects to be implemented to meet the needs of projected population growth. A Capital Improvement Plan budget outline is also provided in the PTOS Master Plan, which may be referenced for further information about parks, trails and open space in the Florence community.



PTOS Master Plan, adopted July 2008

## PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy  |
|---|---|
| Maintain and enhance existing levels of park acreage and facilities service.  | Provide parks to meet the needs of a growing population and provide adequate funding to support park and open space development and maintenance.  |
|   | Monitor use of parks, open space and recreational facilities to determine whether user demand is proportionate to available facilities.   |
|   | Work with private developers to ensure that adequate open space is provided with all new development and ensure that standards are developed to meet community need in relation to new development. |
|   | Co-locate neighborhood parks with new public schools.   |
| Develop special use parks as part of the overall parks and recreation system. | Continue to offer a full complement of recreational activities for residents of all ages.   |
|   | Acquire or lease properties for development or preservation.  |
|   | Work with private developers to set aside properties for special use parks that are located on private land and could be counted as open space.   |
|   | Work with historical preservation and cultural groups to develop and operate special use parks.   |
|   | Work with economic development and tourism organizations/departments to assist in the development, preservation and promotion of special use parks.   |



## PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Develop an on- and off-street multi-use path and trail system throughout the Town.</b></p>  | <p>In conjunction with provisions in the Circulation Element, implement an on-street bicycle lane system throughout the Town.</p>  |
|   | <p>Require private developers to build and maintain paths and trails through their developments to help provide a connected system of paths and trails throughout the Town.</p>  |
|   | <p>Provide paths and trails in parks and open space owned or leased by the Town.</p>   |
|   | <p>Monitor the progression of path and trail connections to avoid gaps in the system.</p> <p>Create a Town “trail planner” position or role that acts as a bridge between the Planning, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Streets and Police Departments.</p>                                      |
| <p><b>Acquire and preserve open space and natural resources for future generations.</b></p>   | <p>Encourage, through open space easements, development rights transfers, acquisition or other incentives, the long-term maintenance of existing and future open space in its natural condition.</p>   |
|   | <p>Through acquisition, a land exchange program, or transfer of development rights, strive to place large, unbroken stretches of the open space in public ownership.</p>   |
|   | <p>Use the resources of national, regional and local conservation organizations, corporations, nonprofit associations and benevolent entities to acquire environmentally sensitive land or preservation areas.</p>   |
|   | <p>Encourage access to open space during design of developments adjacent to open space, including trail connections.</p>   |
|   | <p>Encourage the preservation of historically cultivated land in agricultural production for as long as it is economically feasible to do so.</p>  |
|   | <p>Encourage the preservation of the Gila River corridor while regenerating the natural vegetation surrounding the river to establish a natural riparian corridor. Coordinate an interconnected path and trail system through the area surrounding the river for pedestrian and equestrian uses.</p> |
| <p>Develop facilities that will enhance the historical and cultural attributes of Florence and the region.</p>  |  |
| <p>Encourage development of facilities that are conducive to large, revenue-generating venues (i.e., outdoor concerts, model plane demonstrations, etc.).</p> |  |

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## PURPOSE

The Environmental Planning Element identifies important natural resources that should be conserved and discusses measures to protect public health and prevent the destruction of significant natural areas. Natural resources discussed in this element are:

- Land and soils;
- Biological habitats;
- Agriculture;
- Cultural resources;
- Climate;
- Water quality and supply; and
- Air quality.

## BACKGROUND

The designation, preservation and conversation of natural resources are the responsibility of both governmental and private interests. The State of Arizona does not have a regulation that details the amount or type of natural resources a community should preserve. The State has established ranges of air particulate matter and water resources standards (based on population) that influence the quality of existing natural resources.

### OBJECTIVE

**Maintain and preserve significant land areas.**

### Land and Soils

Historically, Florence has been an agricultural community because of good soils and the presence of the Gila River, which bisects the community. The majority of land in the Planning Area is flat, undeveloped desert or agricultural fields, thus contributing to the historical rural character of the area. Elevations

range from 1,350 to 2,020 feet, but most of the terrain has less than a 3 percent slope. The most significant natural landforms in the Planning Area are the Gila River and Poston Butte (often referred to as “F Mountain”).

Approximately 17,000 acres of Florence’s undeveloped or agricultural land in the Planning Area is committed to future development as master planned communities. Anthem Parkside and Anthem Sun City at Merrill Ranch (located to the east of Hunt Highway between State Route [SR] 287 and Arizona Farms Road) are currently in development; several additional master planned communities are entitled and zoned.

Soils in the Florence Planning Area consist of eight soil associations. Three of the associations—Rough and Broken Land, Granite and Schist Rock and Chiricahua—exhibit very limited uses for development or agricultural production and are located on the northern bank of the river and at the extreme western and northeast portions of the Planning Area, where steeper slopes exist.

The Gila River Valley, with Gilman-Antho-Pimer soil, exhibits the most ideal characteristics for both development and agricultural production. This area is generally located adjacent to and within the Gila River, but also extends southeast through the Cactus Forest portion of the Planning Area.

The remainder and majority of the Planning Area has Casa Grande-La Palma, Mohall-Vecont, Gunsight-Cavelt-Rillito and Laveen-Rillito soils. These four soil types exhibit moderate conditions for development and agricultural production, and are located on the nearly flat northwest, central and southwest portions of the Planning Area.

*“Plans to protect air and water, wilderness and wildlife are in fact plans to protect man”*

—Stewart Udall, U.S. Congressman representing Arizona, 1955–1961

The geology that underlies the soil composition of the Planning Area provides an understanding of earth science and climate. Volcanic eruptions occurring over 15 million years ago created the geologic composition of the Planning Area. The areas where topography is pronounced are the foothills, Poston Butte and Picture Rocks. These characteristics limit the development potential of these areas, with shallow soil depth and largely rock with steeper slopes. The erosion and deposition of the Gila River has created additional flood hazards. This hazardous condition of the Gila River has resulted from transported alluvium from nearby mountains, which has deposited in and adjacent to the natural river channel. While the characteristics of this alluvium may not pose development constraints, these scour areas are prone to river flooding and are potentially hazardous.



**Sonoran Desert wildlife: side-blotched lizard, red-tailed hawk, king snake and black-tailed jackrabbit (clockwise from top left)**

and palo verde trees. However, since the damming of the river in 1928, the Gila River has been largely barren, with the exception of periods following heavy rainfall. Because of the damming and the current sand and gravel operations along the river corridor, the vegetation and wildlife of this riparian area has significantly decreased.

Along the Gila River, several miles east of SR 79, is the Ashurst-Hayden Dam. Here, the Gila River provides an example of the environment that once flourished near Florence. Opportunity exists to recreate the flow of the river, possibly on a smaller scale, to foster a return of the previous natural habitat in the Planning Area. Returning the previous natural habitat to the river and providing recreational opportunities along the corridor have the potential to be a unifying community amenity that would tie the north and south regions of the Planning Area together.

Some potentially sensitive habitats that could be included in a Conservation Land Use Overlay, described in more detail in

**OBJECTIVES**

**Protect the boundaries and tributaries of the Gila River and surrounding floodplain.**

**Identify and protect riparian habitat and the palo verde and saguaro.**

**Monitor the wildlife corridors in the Planning Area and in the Gila River.**

**Biological Habitats**

The natural habitats of the Florence Planning Area are located in the upper and lower Sonoran Desert region. Vegetation in this area of the Sonoran Desert consists of pockets of plant life, usually dominated by creosote bush, bursage and brittlebush scrub with mixed cacti. The Gila River area transitions into a riparian habitat that includes additional vegetation varieties such as mesquite



**Palo verde tree**



**Gila River riparian habitat east of Ashurst-Hayden Dam**



View from the conservation overlay area



Florence Canal

the Land Use Element are the Gila River Corridor, areas with slopes greater than 15 percent, some areas with natural washes, and areas found to contain rare and endangered species.

While a large portion of the Planning Area consists of agricultural land, there are still significant areas of natural desert that support native wildlife to be preserved and protected. The Sonoran Desert region supports a variety of animal and reptile species, including coyote, black-tailed jackrabbit, side-blotched lizard and king snake. A variety of birds also inhabit the area, including meadowlarks and red-tailed hawks.

Potentially endangered species in the Planning Area, as defined by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), include Longfin dace (a small, silvery minnow occupying relatively small streams), Sonoran Desert tortoise and Maricopa leafnose snake.

In 2006, the Arizona Wildlife Linkages Workgroup (a collection of nine public and nonprofit agencies, including the Arizona Department of Transportation and AGFD) completed Arizona’s Wildlife Linkages Assessment, which is an initial effort to identify potential linkage zones important

to Arizona’s wildlife and natural ecosystems that may be interrupted by large transportation infrastructure projects. The two main reasons for this project are highway safety and wildlife conservation. Consideration of wildlife corridors and connectivity can be integrated into the planning stages of transportation projects such as freeways. Through this process, significant wildlife linkages have the potential to be maintained or conserved.

The Planning Area has two main designated corridors: the Gila River area and the Central Arizona Project canal. However, the two canals located south of Downtown—Florence Casa Grande Canal and the Florence Canal—are natural wildlife corridors as well, and should be considered for conservation purposes. Arizona State Land and the Bureau of Land Management should also be engaged in land conservation efforts.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Protect and preserve cropland cultivation as a viable land use.**

**Agriculture**

Current agricultural production within the Planning Area is devoted to cotton, corn, grains, alfalfa and limited production of grapes. The land’s agricultural value can be quantitatively evaluated to determine its long-term viability for cultivated use. An evaluation tool called a Land Evaluation and Site Assessment (LESA), which is used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Natural Resources Conservation Service, rates the relative quality of the land based on five specific, measurable features. One feature is related to the soil quality, while the other four features relate to a proposed project’s size, water availability,



Town of Florence equestrians

surrounding agricultural land and surrounding protected resource lands. While the LESA is not a statutorily required mechanism at this time, its use could provide a valuable tool to determine the appropriate long-term protection of agricultural land.

#### OBJECTIVES

**Preserve, protect and/or mitigate impacts on prehistoric sites.**

**Continue to document, preserve and rehabilitate all structures on the National Register of Historic Places.**

### Cultural Resources

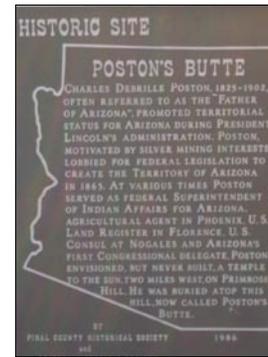
The Town of Florence supports studies conducted in the interest of documenting and preserving evidence of the prehistoric habitation of the area, such as the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument Resource Protection Study. If expansion of the monument occurs, the impact on the regional economy may be noteworthy. The Town is interested in promoting the region's heritage for ecotourism, and expansion of the monument would bolster that effort.

As defined by the NPS, cultural resources include any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure or object listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (maintained by the Secretary of the Interior). They also include all records, artifacts and physical remains associated with the historical properties. They may consist of the traces of all the past activities and accomplishments of people.

Cultural resources that are also protected under other authorities (such as the American Indian Religious Freedom Act) include 1) tangible traces such as districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects; 2) less tangible traces such as dance forms, aspects of folk life, landscapes, vistas and cultural or religious practices; 3) historical documents and 4) some landscapes, vistas, cemeteries (if they have historical or cultural value).

A review of archaeological data from AZSITE (Arizona's Cultural Resource Inventory) and the National Register of Historic Places identified 203 archaeological sites throughout the surveyed areas within the 125,440-acre (196-square-mile) Planning Area. These sites

are located within approximately 24,960 acres (39 square miles), or 20 percent of the Planning Area, averaging slightly over five sites per square mile (640 acres).



**Poston Butte Historic Site marker**

Other less commonly thought of historical elements in the Planning Area include five historical roads, two historical railroads (Magma Arizona Railroad and Phoenix & Eastern Railroad) and railroad spurs, three canals, seven aqueducts and Poston Butte ("F Mountain").

Currently, SR 79 represents a portion of the old US 80/89 highway alignment, which was built between 1915 and 1922. A map of Pinal County, dated 1922, shows approximately the first 3 miles of the alignment north of the Gila River located west of the current alignment, whereas the rest is more or less the same as the current alignment.

The Magma Arizona Railroad intersects SR 79 outside of the Planning Area, approximately 1 mile south of Florence Junction (US 60) and runs in a northeast to southwest direction connecting Superior to Magma Junction; the railroad has not been in service since 1997.

Copper Basin Railroad, formerly the Arizona Eastern Railroad, goes in a northwest to southeast and easterly direction and intersects SR 79 in the central part of the Planning Area, just south of the Florence Gardens community. The railroad connects the mining communities of Kearny, Hayden and Winkelman to Florence and Magma Junction.



**Historical railroad tracks, dating to the early 1900s**



In 1922, representatives from the seven states of the Colorado River Basin (Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico) and the United States government formed the Colorado River Compact to divide the Colorado River water between the Lower and Upper Basins. In 1946, the Central Arizona Project Association was created to inform the Arizona public about the CAP and to lobby Congress to approve the construction of the canal. Construction began on the canal in 1973 and was completed in 1993. Today, Arizona is allotted 2.8 million acre-feet of water annually from the Colorado River.

Before construction could start on the CAP canal, numerous archaeological and biological studies were conducted to find out how the natural environment would be affected by the construction and establishment of the CAP. Studies were also conducted to determine what mitigation measures could be carried out to minimize the effects of the canal construction, and these measures were conducted by local and federal agencies and organizations. The CAP passed over 40 inspections by the federal government with regard to the Endangered Species Act. All 336 miles from Lake Havasu City to Tucson are



Adamsville Cemetery marker

fenced to protect wildlife and people from drowning and to prevent contamination of the canal water.

Two canals of the San Carlos Irrigation Project were identified within the SR 79 right-of-way: the North Side Canal, which was constructed in 1929

and was located on the north side of the Gila River, and an unnamed secondary lateral canal located about 0.5 mile south of river. The North Side Canal and the unnamed secondary lateral canal were constructed to deliver water to Indian and non-Indian land along the Gila River. Authorization of the project in 1916 occurred after years of studies and efforts to develop water storage on the Gila River and restore water to the Pima Indians.

In addition to the archaeological resources within the Planning Area, the region outside its boundaries includes important resources worth protecting. In 1892, the Casa Grande Ruins became the nation's first archaeological preserve. This national monument is located about 11 miles west of Florence.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Support sustainable design techniques that accommodate the desert climate in the built environment.**

**Climate**

The Florence Planning Area is located in a region of the Lower Sonoran Desert where the climate is mainly sunny, hot and dry, with the exception of July and August. During late summer, the monsoon occurs and brings high winds, rain and humidity, along with high temperatures.

Winters are temperate, with a moderate amount of precipitation, as shown in Table 1. The area receives over 10 inches of rainfall each year, which drains into the Gila River. For 5 months of the year, the average high temperature is in the 90's and 100's.

Gradual long-term changes in climate for the Florence Planning Area can be expected over time and will be caused by natural occurrences and man-made activities. Climate change will alter the "average weather" of the

**Table 8-1. Monthly Climate Summary**

|                                      | Jan  | Feb  | Mar  | Apr  | May  | Jun   | Jul   | Aug   | Sep  | Oct  | Nov  | Dec  | Annual |
|--------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|-------|------|------|------|------|--------|
| Average maximum temperature (°F)     | 66.4 | 70.9 | 76.6 | 85.2 | 94.4 | 103.5 | 105.5 | 103.1 | 99.6 | 89.0 | 76.1 | 67.2 | 86.5   |
| Average minimum temperature (°F)     | 37.3 | 39.9 | 43.5 | 49.1 | 56.4 | 65.3  | 75.0  | 73.5  | 67.2 | 55.0 | 43.7 | 37.8 | 53.6   |
| Average total precipitation (inches) | 1.00 | 0.95 | 1.04 | 0.41 | 0.19 | 0.13  | 1.21  | 1.42  | 0.86 | 0.67 | 0.81 | 1.24 | 9.93   |

Source: Western Regional Climate Center, December 1892–April 2007; February 2008

Planning Area, which includes average temperature, wind patterns and precipitation.

Global warming is the increased average temperature of the Earth's surface and oceans. Under the global warming theory, average temperatures are expected to rise. The changing weather patterns and precipitation caused by the increase in average temperatures will affect agricultural yields for the Florence Planning Area.

#### OBJECTIVES

**Ensure that an adequate supply of water is available to serve existing and future needs of the Town.**

**Maintain and improve the quality of the potable water supply.**

### Water Quality and Supply

The Florence Planning Area is transected by the Gila River, which drains the Florence region of the Eloy Sub-basin from the northeast to the southwest. Currently, the Town of Florence water facilities system is operated in two pressure zones known as the north and south systems, which are divided by the Gila River. The Town of Florence relies entirely on groundwater to serve its municipal and industrial needs. A linked system of four wells, four water storage tanks and approximately 78 miles of piping comprise the existing system.

While Florence's current water facilities adequately serve the existing customer base, it is important to ensure a stable expansion of the water infrastructure as growth in the community occurs. The *Water Master Plan* (Fluid Solutions, 2007) provides a framework under which both the Town and developers are advised of the need for completing up-



**Crossing the Gila River**

Source: National Archives



**Wash located southeast of the Planning Area**

grades in order for the water utility to adequately provide safe, potable water at appropriate pressures and quantities throughout the community.

The existing wastewater infrastructure for Florence consists of collection mains and two treatment facilities. The Florence Gardens treatment facility serves the area north of the Gila River. The newly upgraded South Florence Water Reclamation Facility serves the area south of the Gila River.

Florence is using the *Wastewater Master Plan* (Fluid Solutions, 2007) to develop a strategy for working with developers to ensure the stable expansion of wastewater infrastructure as growth in the community occurs. This plan provides a framework under which both the Town and developers know the need for completing upgrades to the Town's utility to provide safe collection, treatment, reuse/recharge and disposal within the growing community.

Because of the region's drainage pattern, the Gila River has the ability to convey significant flows of surface water. Flooding has occurred in the past and has been mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). On September 7, 2006, President George Bush issued a Major Disaster Declaration for a series of monsoon storms that caused areas of the Gila River watershed to exceed its 1993 flood stages. On December 4, 2007, FEMA updated the public flood insurance rate maps to reflect the new 100-year flood boundaries of the Gila River.

The Town of Florence is the potable water provider for its residents. It uses groundwater for its entire supply. The supply source wells are monitored frequently and tested in compliance with state standards.

OBJECTIVE

Monitor and improve regional air quality.

**Air Quality**

Air quality is not only a community issue, but also a regional concern, as the population and traffic volumes continue to increase in northern Pinal County. Particulate matter such as dust and smoke, as well as automobile emissions, combine to degrade air quality and are referred to as air pollutants. Wood smoke decreases air quality during the winter months when wood-burning fireplaces and stoves are used.

Dust, another air pollutant, also affects air quality in the Florence Planning Area, especially during the warmer months because of the presence of many dirt roads and increased construction activities as previously undeveloped or agricultural land is converted to master planned communities. These effects have been exacerbated in recent years by continuing drought and recent construction on agricultural land.

Currently, there are no requirements for emissions testing in Florence. However, this is likely to change as Florence continues to grow in population. The Arizona Department of Transportation is likely to model the emissions testing after Apache Junction and Queen Creek.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established National Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for pollutants considered harmful to public health and the environment. The six principal air pollutants include carbon monoxide, lead, nitrogen dioxide, ozone, particulate matter, and sulfur dioxide (see Table 2). The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality monitors air quality throughout the state to ensure compliance with the NAAQS.

The six pollutants identified by the NAAQS are harmful to public health, including the health of “sensitive populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly if present in higher quantities than the standard.”

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that interferes with the delivery of oxygen to human organs and tissues. It is produced by the incomplete combustion of carbon in fossil fuels (i.e., on-road vehicles, off-road vehicles and commercial and residential heating).

Table 8-2. National Ambient Air Quality Standards

| Pollutant                                    | Time Duration | Primary Standard                   |
|--|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Carbon monoxide                              | 1-hour        | 35 ppm <sup>a</sup>                |
|  | 8-hour        | 9 ppm                              |
| Lead   | Quarterly     | 1.5 µg/m <sup>3</sup> <sup>b</sup> |
| Nitrogen dioxide                             | Annual        | 0.05 ppm                           |
| Ozone  | 8-hour        | 0.075 ppm                          |
| Particulate matter (PM <sub>10</sub> )       | 24-hour       | 150 µg/m <sup>3</sup>              |
| Fine particulate matter (PM <sub>2.5</sub> ) | 24-hour       | 35 µg/m <sup>3</sup>               |
|  | Annual        | 15 µg/m <sup>3</sup>               |
| Sulfur dioxide                               | 24-hour       | 0.14 ppm                           |
|  | Annual        | 0.03 ppm                           |

Source: U.S Environmental Protection Agency, 2008

<sup>a</sup> parts per million

<sup>b</sup> micrograms per cubic meter

Lead is a toxic metal that may be present in the air as a component of fine particulates. High levels of exposure to lead can damage human cardiovascular, renal and nervous systems.

Nitrogen dioxide is a reddish-brown gas formed as a byproduct of fuel combustion (i.e., on-road vehicles, off-road vehicles, and power plants).

Ozone is formed by the photochemical reaction of volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides in the presence of sunlight. This gas causes choking, coughing and irritated eyes.

Particulate matter includes solid particles and liquid droplets that become airborne and, through human inhalation, decrease lung function and alter the body’s defense systems. The NAAQS address two particle sizes: PM<sub>10</sub> (less than 10 microns in size) and PM<sub>2.5</sub> (less than 2.5 microns in size). The primary source of these larger particles is dust in the atmosphere caused by vehicles driving on paved and unpaved roads and soil disturbed through earth moving, construction and agricultural activities. Air quality monitors in Apache Junction have recorded violations for PM<sub>10</sub>.

Sulfur dioxide is an invisible gas that can exhibit a pungent odor in high concentrations (proximate to the smelting of sulfide copper ore) and affects the respiratory tract, causing wheezing, shortness of breath and coughing.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

The Environmental Planning Element is the foundation for outlining anticipated effects on environmental quality in Florence. Through the goals, objectives and strategies set forth in this General Plan, Florence strives not only to be sustainable by preserving its natural environment, but also to be a healthy community in which to live, work and recreate.

Community feedback gathered during the public process for this General Plan update placed significance on preserving and enhancing:

- Open space;
- Agricultural land;
- Natural resources;
- Environmentally sensitive areas;
- Public health; and
- Sustainability.

Specific comments included:

- The Town should take a leadership role in sustainable practices, setting a positive example of accomplishing environmental excellence in the built environment.
- The Town needs to embrace the Gila River and enhance its riparian environment.

## GOALS

Preservation and management of existing environmental resources is the foundation of land use planning. The stewardship of natural resources minimizes environmental degradation and enhances quality of life. Maintaining a high level of environmental quality, with an emphasis on safe, healthy and enjoyable environments, is fundamental in supporting Florence’s desire to retain its character and quality of life now and into the future.

### Environmental Planning Goals

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Goal 1</b> | <b>Maintain clean air, water and land.</b>   |
| <b>Goal 2</b> | <b>Care and respect for the community’s cultural and historical identity.</b>                              |
| <b>Goal 3</b> | <b>Protect and enhance valued environmental resources.</b>   |
| <b>Goal 4</b> | <b>Protect and enhance sensitive plant and wildlife areas.</b>   |
| <b>Goal 5</b> | <b>Maintain a healthy community by reducing the impacts of natural and man-made environmental hazards.</b> |

## ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy  |
|--|---|
| <b>Maintain and preserve significant land areas.</b> | Encourage, through open space easements, development rights transfers, acquisition or other incentives, the long-term maintenance of sensitive natural resources and environmental features in their natural condition. Encourage acquisition, a land exchange program or transfer of development rights as a means of preserving open space. |
|  | Evaluate the feasibility and desirability of developing an Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance, either jointly with the County for the entire Planning Area or solely by the Town for its incorporated area. If development of such an ordinance is determined to be desirable and feasible, proceed with its preparation and adoption. |
|  | Implement a program to identify and protect the Town’s historical and archaeological assets.  |
|  | Where possible, maintain the locations and appearance of natural drainage ways in new developments, putting priority on preservation and restoration ahead of channelization.   |
|  | Identify areas where earth fissures are highly probable and regulate new construction at these locations.   |
|  | Minimize light pollution in conservation and open space areas through the use of new technologies.  |
|  | Use and leverage the resources of national, state, regional and local public agencies, conservation organizations, corporations, nonprofit associations and benevolent entities to acquire environmentally sensitive lands and preservation areas.  |

## ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
| <b>Protect the boundaries and tributaries of the Gila River and surrounding floodplain.</b> | Protect the river corridor from incompatible land use and development encroachment through the establishment of a zoning overlay district.   |
|   | Work with landowners to support the implementation of a long-term open space corridor along both sides of the Gila River.  |
|   | Pursue state and federal grants to restore the riparian environment along the Gila River.<br><br>Provide for the return of water to the Gila River through flow from the dam or through conveyance of tertiary treated wastewater and stormwater runoff.   |
| <b>Identify and protect riparian habitat and the palo verde and saguaro.</b>                | Comply with the federal policy of no net loss of wetlands through avoidance and clustered development. Where preservation in place is not feasible (such as an unavoidable road crossing through habitats), require 1) on-site replacement of wetland areas, 2) off-site replacement or 3) restoration of degraded wetland areas at a minimum ratio of 1 acre of replacement/restoration for each acre of affected on-site habitat, such that the value of affected habitat is replaced. |
|   | Require appropriate setbacks adjacent to riparian areas to provide adequate buffers, ensuring the protection of biological resources.  |
|   | Ensure that new development is sited, where feasible, to maximize the permanent preservation of palo verde trees and saguaro cacti.  |
|   | Work with Pinal County and the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to prevent water erosion on paved roads and minimize the transport of sediments to the Gila River.<br><br>Develop a native plant preservation ordinance that would protect native plants, encourage native planting and maintain and preserve natural habitat corridors.  |
| <b>Monitor the wildlife corridors in the Planning Area and in the Gila River.</b>           | Adopt and acquire the wildlife corridors identified in Arizona's Wildlife Linkages Assessment within the Planning Area.  |
|   | Promote the protection and conservation of vegetation and animal species along the Gila River and in the Planning Area.  |
|   | Promote and protect wildlife linkages and wild horse corridors and coordinate with transportation infrastructure planning and major project planning efforts.<br><br>Use and frequently update information from state and federal sources on the status of threatened and endangered species, including their location and condition, for reference when evaluating development proposals.   |
| <b>Protect and preserve cropland cultivation as a viable land use.</b>                      | Preserve the integrity of rural residential neighborhoods and productive farmland within the Rural Ranchette Residential-designated areas on the Land Use Map.   |
|   | Support continued farming of agricultural land until such production is no longer viable.  |
|   | Avoid, where feasible, encroachment of urban development into economically viable agricultural areas through strategic Capital Improvement Plan programming, providing for orderly conversion of agricultural land to rural and urban uses where such rural and urban uses are designated in the Land Use Element.   |
|   | Promote continued agricultural use within floodplains and other natural hazard zones.<br><br>Evaluate the potential of voluntary (landowner-initiated) agriculture protection zoning for the long-term preservation of agricultural land in contiguous parcels greater than 160 acres in size.   |

## ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy  |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Preserve, protect and/or mitigate impacts on prehistoric sites.</b></p>   | <p>Work with the Arizona State Museum to monitor the results of future cultural resource investigations within the Planning Area.</p> <hr/> <p>As a standard condition of approval for new development, require that, if cultural resources are encountered during grading, alteration of landforms near the find will be halted until a qualified expert has evaluated the find and recorded cultural resources.</p>   |
| <p><b>Continue to document, preserve and rehabilitate all structures on the National Register of Historic Places.</b></p> | <p>Continue to prepare and submit grant applications to the State Historic Preservation Office for renovation and rehabilitation projects.</p> <hr/> <p>Evaluate the structures Downtown to determine whether they are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.</p> <hr/> <p>Preserve significant historical structures through review of demolition permits or alterations to the outside of such structures. Permit adaptive reuse of historical landmark structures for institutional, office or commercial uses, where improvements to the structure retain the integrity of the historical landmark and where such adaptive use will facilitate preservation of the structure.</p> <hr/> <p>Where new development occurs around a historical structure, encourage the new development to provide designs that are compatible with the integrity of the historical structure's setting.</p>  |
| <p><b>Support sustainable design techniques that accommodate the desert climate in the built environment.</b></p>         | <p>Encourage building designs that accommodate a hot, dry climate, including features such as shade structures, awnings, appropriate building orientation and xeriscaping. (See also the provisions contained in the Energy Element).</p>   |
| <p><b>Ensure that an adequate supply of water is available to serve existing and future needs of the Town.</b></p>        | <p>Where feasible, use non-potable water supplies for irrigation and other beneficial uses that do not require potable water.</p> <hr/> <p>Investigate the use of stormwater retention to prevent flooding, filter water, recharge the aquifer and leverage other potable water resources.</p> <hr/> <p>Implement a Town-wide program to retrofit existing homes with water saving devices.</p> <hr/> <p>Encourage existing residents not to plant winter rye grass in the winter months.</p> <hr/> <p>Require new nonresidential development to be provided with drought-tolerant landscaping (Low Water Use Drought Tolerant Plant List, Pinal Active Management Area, Arizona Department of Water Resources) and water conservation devices.</p> <hr/> <p>Encourage new residential developments to reduce the amount of grass in front yards with a limit of 10 percent or less grass in the front yards.</p> <hr/> <p>Conserve existing water resources by continuing to educate citizens about conservation and using tertiary treated water.</p> |
| <p><b>Maintain and improve the quality of the potable water supply.</b></p>   | <p>Protect the Town's water supply through updating and modernizing its wells and conveyance systems.</p> <hr/> <p>Protect areas where water infiltration, flood control, pollution reduction and other important natural processes are existing or planned.</p> <hr/> <p>Continue to regularly test and evaluate all municipal potable water sources.</p> <hr/> <p>Evaluate the implementation of a wellhead protection program to minimize reductions in the quality of the potable water supply.</p> <hr/> <p>Approve development proposals only when the protection of water resources has been accomplished in a manner satisfying applicable state and federal requirements.</p>  |

## ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Monitor and improve regional air quality.</b></p>      | <p>Support the efforts of the Pinal County Air Quality Control Division to implement the recommendations of its “Exceptional Events” air quality policy.</p>                           |
|  | <p>Evaluate the use of paved driveways to reduce particulate emissions where paved and unpaved surfaces intersect.</p>   |
|  | <p>Consider the preparation and acceptance of dust control/traffic rerouting/rapid clean-up plans for construction projects that disturb over 100 cubic yards of earthen material.</p> |
|  | <p>Participate in a regional study with Pinal County to determine the appropriate locations and topical treatment for off-highway vehicle uses.</p>                                    |
|  | <p>Coordinate with Pinal County to pave or chemically stabilize unpaved roads and permanent parking areas.</p>   |
|  | <p>Improve air quality through better monitoring of automotive, fireplace and industrial pollution.</p>  |
|  | <p>Promote, encourage and require adherence to all state and federal air quality environmental regulations.</p>  |
|  | <p>Promote the voluntary participation of agricultural providers in leaving fallow fields with plowed furrows.</p>   |
|  | <p>Support a multi-modal community and work with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality to monitor air quality disturbances related to new construction.</p>                  |
| <p>Acquire alternative fuel fleet vehicles for the Town.</p> |  |

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## PURPOSE

The Town of Florence seeks to provide long-term energy sustainability by using available energy resources in the most efficient way and by using new technologies and renewable energy sources. This Element sets forth the Town's energy policy. The intent of the Energy Element is to enhance the decision-making process on development and land use.

The intent of this Element is to support quality of life and strong economic development in Florence with the goal of creating an energy-efficient community. The State of Arizona recognizes the significance of energy resources and long-range planning. Florence's economic base and steady population growth can support energy efficiency and sustainability in the public and private sectors. The Town, in preparing for growth, understands and values the new technologies that result in less waste and a higher quality built environment.

This Energy Element addresses:

- Energy efficiency and conservation;
- Renewable energy use; and
- New technology.

In addition, by defining programs to increase energy efficiency and reduce energy use, Florence will, as a result, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to global climate change.

## BACKGROUND

### Current Programs and Desired Practices

Growth is both a major goal and a concern for the Town of Florence, and long-term energy sustainability will benefit everyone in the

*"I'd put my money on the sun and solar energy. What a source of power! I hope we don't have to wait 'til oil and coal run out before we tackle that"*

– Thomas Edison

Florence community by resolving concerns and achieving the desired goal. The purpose of the Energy Element is to discuss energy sustainability practices that will yield the economic benefits of reduced energy use, less waste and improved living and working environments.

Currently, the Town's Sanitation Department provides recycling of white goods, which are collected through un-containerized trash pickup collection on a monthly basis. The Town would like to expand the recycling program, but it is cost-prohibitive until a regional recycling center exists. Pinal County has a recycling program (bins are located at approximately 15 sites throughout the Town) for plastic bottles, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum, tin and magazines.

An indirect sustainable measure is the "Florence Emergency Response and Recovery Plan" that addresses multiple hazard responses and the handling of such issues as hazardous materials, floods, fire and terrorism. This plan has been approved by the State and is awaiting approval by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Recycling bins are located throughout the Town.



The Desert Edge High School Central Plant uses high-efficiency chillers and variable speed pumping for “free” cooling in the winter.



LEED Silver-rated Desert Edge High School in Goodyear, Arizona

The Town Clerk oversees this Plan, which was developed to address hazards that are unique to the Town in terms of identification, notification, response and recovery of potential and existing hazards. The Town also has an Emergency Response Plan for the Florence Flood Retarding Structure and the Florence Multi-Hazard Emergency Operations Plan. These are specialized plans designed to identify and notify the public of emergencies, as well as to respond to hazards not addressed in the Emergency Response and Recovery Plan.

The United States Green Building Council (USGBC) supports energy conservation through design enhancements. It established the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System. Implementation of the LEED program has become very common and continues to gain popularity throughout Arizona. Florence is considering adopting, along with other green building options, the LEED program for current and future buildings. Florence’s energy strategies must be consistent with strategic planning for residential, commercial and employment build-out.

Proposed programs and strategies to consider are: 1) enhanced conservation in the

form of both voluntary and required changes; 2) improved access to alternative energy sources; and 3) the relationship of technological advancement to Florence’s economic future.

#### OBJECTIVES

**Improve energy efficiency in the public sector.**

**Increase efficient use of energy resources.**

**Maximize use of renewable energy sources.**

**Encourage the development of clean energy technologies.**

### Efficiency and Conservation

Arizona law requires greater municipal responsibility for encouraging the efficient use of energy. Conservation can be achieved through improved design of the built environment, including homes, workplaces and public spaces.

Although voluntary, the benefits of green building are appealing to the expanding residential and commercial real estate markets. The establishment of a green building program in Florence is paramount to meeting energy conservation goals.

A newly emerging companion program, LEED-ND, focuses on sustainable neighborhood design and should be considered a possible expansion point once initial green building strategies are in place. The LEED-ND criteria are still in a draft stage, but provide a detailed array of sustainability initiatives that can be incorporated into new development. The smart growth principles described in the introduction to the Town of Florence 2020 General Plan and Arizona’s Growing Smarter legislation—both of which have been incorporated into the General Plan—also provide a framework for sustainable development.

Community commitment and momentum for establishing improved building practices, and hence energy conservation, can be provided by the Town of Florence in matters relating to construction of Town facilities. The Town should also make a LEED-accredited professional available to the development community.

As suggested by citizen input, strategies and incentives offered by the Town must be practical and cost-effective, and make progress



Alternative transportation vehicle

toward agreed-upon goals of conservation and sustainability.

### Renewable Energy Use

Florence is located in an area that receives more than 300 days of sunshine each year. As a result, development within the Town is in a good position to take advantage of passive and active solar energy systems. Passive solar systems consist of architectural and site designs that provide for shading of structures and windows during summer months, while providing for sunlight and natural heating during winter months. Simple techniques include orienting a building to lessen the impact of the sun's heat and installing skylights or clerestory windows to maximize the use of natural lighting. Active solar systems generally include systems for heating domestic and pool water and photovoltaic panels for solar-generated electricity.

### New Technologies

The rising cost of energy and a growing understanding of the necessity of developing alternatives to the use of fossil fuels is resulting in rapid advances in energy-related technology. Currently, photovoltaic energy production is land intensive, and not generally used except on a building-by-building basis. Advances in technology will make large-scale photovoltaic energy production feasible in some areas such as Florence that have very few cloudy days.

Advances in fuel cell technology will greatly increase the efficiency of using natural gas as a source of electricity. Longer term technologies include generation of energy by extracting hydrogen from water, extracting signifi-



Future fuel sources (diverted from a landfill) waiting for the biomass plant in Snowflake, Arizona



Arizona's planned solar farm, Solana



Aerial view of the planned Solana solar farm

cant amounts of energy and even irrigation water from municipal waste and others.

The need to continually develop new energy sources and enhancements to existing technology offers a significant opportunity for Florence. Florence is potentially the center of

research and development of renewable energy technologies for the Southwest. Existing infrastructure and technological expertise, coupled with the resources of three state universities, including the nearby Arizona State University and University of Arizona, create the opportunity to meet future energy challenges while supporting desirable economic expansion.

### COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

Town of Florence residents and business owners placed significance on the following issues during the public outreach conducted for the General Plan update:

- Florence should be a self-sustaining community.
- Public and private buildings should be energy efficient.
- The use of solar technology should be expanded.
- Development of a green building program for all new construction projects should be considered.
- The Town of Florence should take a leadership role in sustainable practices, setting a positive example of accomplishing environmental excellence in the built environment.

### GOALS

A sustainable and practical energy efficiency and conservation plan is a necessary component of the General Plan, particularly for growing communities established in environmentally sensitive regions. The goals of the Energy Element are listed below; they are intended to guide the development and execution of the type of sustainable and efficient energy plan that will ensure Florence’s continued healthy growth within the context of the desert environment.

#### Energy Goals

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| <b>Goal 1</b> | <b>Conservation of existing resources.</b>   |
| <b>Goal 2</b> | <b>Energy efficiency and sustainability in infrastructure and the built environment.</b> |
| <b>Goal 3</b> | <b>Energy self-sufficiency using new technologies.</b>                                   |



## ENERGY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Improve energy efficiency in the public sector.</b></p>  | <p>Provide leadership in energy conservation through Town projects and purchases.</p>  |
|  | <p>Use energy-efficient retrofits for existing public facilities and for new facilities to meet LEED, Energy Star and/or other comparable standards. Encourage all other public entities constructing facilities within the Planning Area to meet these standards.</p> |
|  | <p>Perform energy audits, assessing energy use of municipal facilities and programs.</p>   |
|  | <p>Use the most fuel-efficient fleet vehicles possible while being economically sensible and meeting the needs of the Town.</p>  |
|  | <p>Establish and maintain a green building program that uses recognized criteria and standards appropriate for the desert environment to achieve energy efficiency.</p>  |
|  | <p>Encourage vehicle trip reduction.</p>   |
|  | <p>Ensure that energy conservation measures being implemented are both practical and cost-effective.</p>   |
|  | <p>Purchase alternative fuel fleet vehicles where they will be cost competitive over the life of the vehicle when compared with standard fuel vehicles.</p>  |
|  | <p>Implement the International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), as adopted by the Town.</p>  |
|  | <p>Design new Town facilities to LEED standards or other emerging energy efficient standards.</p>  |
|  | <p>Convert traffic lights from incandescent light bulbs to energy-efficient LED lights.</p>  |
|  | <p>Provide a qualified professional to assist the development community with energy conservation technologies.</p>   |
|  | <p>Target existing public facilities and services for energy audits.</p>   |
|  | <p>Work with APS, SRP and other organizations to increase purchases of renewable energy.</p>   |
|  | <p>Work with the existing APS and SRP energy programs to facilitate the ability of homeowners, businesses and industries within Florence to sell excess energy generated on-site (e.g., photovoltaic cell, co-generation) to the energy grid.</p>                      |
|  | <p>Design and implement recycling programs to maximize the diversion of solid waste.</p>   |
|  | <p>Encourage vehicle trip reduction by maintaining a compact community that provides for a balance between jobs and housing by implementing mixed-use development.</p>   |
|  | <p>Ensure that energy conservation measures required by the Town are both practical and cost-effective.</p>  |
| <p>Address public concerns regarding energy efficiency by implementing a public education program that demonstrates the short-, mid- and long-term benefits of energy conservation and green building.</p>   |  |
| <p>Partner with APS, SRP and other organizations in promoting existing programs and establishing educational resources that emphasize energy efficient choices available to all citizens whether at work, school or play.</p>  |  |
| <p>Work with local commercial, industrial and agricultural operations for energy efficiency in the storage, transport, refrigeration and other processing of commodities, and require such operations to provide energy efficiency analyses in conjunction with required Town approvals.</p> |  |

## ENERGY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Increase efficient use of energy resources.</b></p>  | <p>Establish an incentive based green building program to facilitate construction of buildings to LEED, Energy Star and/or other recognized standard.</p>  |
|  | <p>Modify Town development standards to encourage energy efficiency, including provisions for night lighting of new development to be the minimum amount necessary to protect public safety.</p>   |
|  | <p>Encourage energy-efficient retrofitting for private development.</p>  |
|  | <p>Promote land uses that result in increased pedestrian and bicycle transportation opportunities.</p>   |
|  | <p>Consider development incentives related to site utilization, residential density or development intensity when significant energy efficiencies are available.</p>   |
|  | <p>Identify and remove regulatory or procedural barriers to producing renewable energy in building and development codes, design guidelines and zoning ordinances. Work with related agencies such as fire, water and health that may influence the use of alternative technologies. Develop protocols for alternative energy storage such as biodiesel, hydrogen and/or compressed air.</p>   |
|  | <p>Encourage a mix of housing. Balanced communities allow residents to fulfill shopping, business, recreational and educational needs within a reasonable distance of their homes and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion on roadways.</p>  |
|  | <p>Promote infill development. Encourage the development of vacant and under utilized parcels consistent with neighborhood character. These infill sites must be developed in a way that best adds value to an area.</p>   |
|  | <p>Promote green spaces. Encourage the creation of high-quality community plazas, squares, greens, commons, community and neighborhood parks and rooftop gardens.</p>  |
|  | <p>Incorporate multiple uses for infrastructure (e.g., recreational fields designed to capture stormwater and reduce urban runoff).</p>  |
| <p><b>Maximize use of renewable energy sources.</b></p>  | <p>Future developments should be designed to maximize energy efficiency and accommodate energy infrastructure (i.e., transmission lines, power plants, pipelines and fueling stations), including the potential for renewable energy generation.</p>   |
|  | <p>Encourage the use of renewable energy in residential, commercial and industrial applications.</p>   |
|  | <p>Demonstrate municipal leadership by developing or aiding in the development of an alternative energy project such as large-scale, roof-mounted solar panels or similar projects.</p>  |
|  | <p>Explore feasible incentives, whether local, state, federal, private or public, that increase green building certification and the use of renewable energy sources.</p>  |
|  | <p>Protect local renewable resources. Preserve opportunities for development of renewable energy resources. Identify possible sites for production of energy using local renewable resources such as solar, wind, small hydro and biogas. Evaluate potential land use, environmental, economic and other constraints affecting their development. Adopt measures to protect those resources, such as utility easement, right-of-way and land set-asides.</p> |
|  | <p>Protect solar access. Protect passive or active solar design elements and systems from shading by neighboring structures and trees.</p>   |
|  | <p>Support financial incentives for homeowners and businesses to employ solar energy technologies.</p>   |
| <p>Support the compatible retrofit of solar equipment on existing homes in cooperation with neighborhood aesthetic requirements.</p> |  |

## ENERGY OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy  |
|--|---|
| <b>Encourage the development of clean energy technologies.</b> | Actively pursue businesses specializing in “green energy.”  |
|  | Encourage new energy technologies in public and private project designs.  |
|  | Promote development of alternative energy development on appropriate sites within the Florence Planning Area.   |
|  | As part of the Town's economic development efforts, recruit companies that provide green products, services or research.  |
|  | Emphasize efforts to achieve a balance between jobs and housing within the community by providing appropriate sites, both large and small, for new industry and expansion of existing energy-based companies. |

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ago. These early natives resided near the Gila River and developed extensive canals and agricultural land that yielded various crops. Habitation by the Hohokam people came to an abrupt end during the fifteenth century. Early accounts by missionaries during the 1700s indicate that the land around Florence contained Apache, Papago and Pima tribal settlements.

During the early 1800s, the Florence region was under Mexican jurisdiction until the Gadsden Purchase of 1853, which placed land south of the Gila River under the authority of the United States. Levi Ruggles, who relocated to the area in 1866, is credited as the Town's founder. Ruggles was born in Huron City, Ohio, on April 27, 1824. He became a carpenter and part-time schoolteacher. He was also a Union soldier who was appointed as Indian Agent for the Territory of Arizona, holding this office from 1866 until 1869. Ruggles laid out the original town site of Florence. He gave Florence a unique urban geography by creating 125-square-foot lots with 60-foot-wide parallel streets, running north-south and east-west, and separating the square blocks. Not expecting one family to own an entire block, each one was divided into quarters.

In 1868, the first store, E. N. Fish & Co., was built in Florence. In 1869, the first post office opened in the same building. The first Pinal County Courthouse was designed and built by Levi Ruggles in 1877. The early pioneers were dependent on agriculture, and soon a series of ditches for irrigating crops were



First Pinal County Courthouse, circa 1899



The first Pinal County Courthouse today, as the McFarland State Historic Park



Restoration of the Chapel of the Gila began in 1989 and was completed in the early 2000s.

made along the Gila River. Water for domestic purposes was provided by deep wells. During this time, the harshness of the desert environment and struggles with the Apache were continuing issues.

In 1870, the first church/school was opened. In January 1870, a young priest, Father Echallier from France, became the first parish priest for the Town of Florence. Before the end of that year, the Chapel of the Gila had been constructed. This early church was the first in central Arizona and an important center from which the priest administered to the cities of Phoenix, Tempe and Tucson. The taxpayers petitioned the County Board of Supervisors for the formation of a school district, resulting in the creation of the Florence School District on December 12, 1871.

On January 26, 1875, Pinal County was created, with Florence designated as the County seat. Three months later, the famous Silver King Mine was discovered, resulting in rapid growth in Florence. The Silver King Hotel was built to provide temporary accommodations for the increased population resulting from the discovery of the silver mine. Business was thriving for the Town's 28 saloons, where the miners went to spend their



One of the 20 mule teams that hauled ore and supplies between the Silver King Mine and Florence, 1878–1884.





Before restoration



After restoration

**The William Clarke House was built in 1884 for William Clarke, a mining engineer for the Silver King Mine. Rehabilitated in the early 2000s, it currently houses the Florence Reminder and Blade Tribune newspaper.**

money. The mine closed in 1889, after which the area experienced an overall decline in population. The prosperity of Florence was recorded in the price of real estate. In no other town in the Territory of Arizona was the price of town lots higher than in Florence.

No history of Florence, or the American Southwest, would be complete without mentioning gunfights. One of Arizona's historic gunfights occurred in Downtown Florence in 1886, between Pete Gabriel (Pinal County Sheriff) and Joe Phy (his friend and deputy sheriff). There are several theories as to the reason for the quarrel between these two men, but one belief is that Phy intended to run for sheriff when Gabriel's term ran out, and that Gabriel had promised to help him. However, the friendship was broken when Gabriel had Phy removed from office because of his brutality to a prisoner. The gunfight took place in the Tunnel Saloon on Main Street, where Gabriel shot and killed Phy.

The Second Pinal County Courthouse, completed in 1891, now considered one of the finest surviving examples of American-Victorian style architecture in central Arizona, replaced the previous one that had been built by Levi Ruggles in 1877. This structure, along with the first courthouse that is now part of the McFarland State Historic Park, are key components of the Town's historic character.

Florence officially incorporated in 1900. In 1909, the territorial government moved the Arizona Territorial Prison from Yuma to Florence. During World War II, the federal government established a prisoner-of-war camp just north of Florence. During its existence, approximately 50,000 German and Italian prisoners of war spent time at this facility.

When Arizona received statehood in 1912, President Taft declared that 6,1661.2 acres north of Florence were to be provided to the National Guard for practice. Members of the Guard continue to practice on this land. The Guard's land and the immediately surrounding area are to be protected from development to maintain the land's integrity and util-

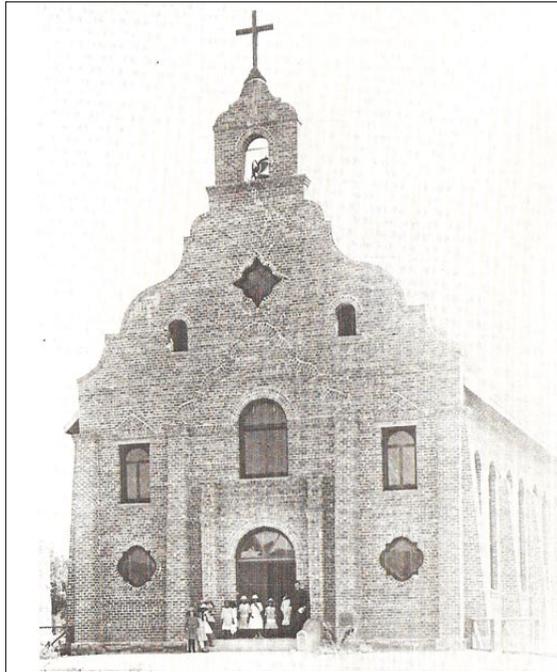


Historical photograph



The courthouse today

**Built in 1891, the Second Pinal County Courthouse is the most important architectural landmark in Florence and the most outstanding surviving example of American-Victorian style in central Arizona.**



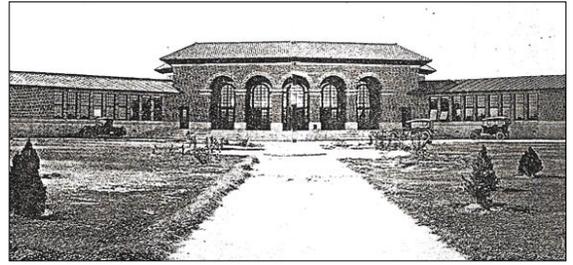
Historical photograph



The church today  
**The Second Catholic Church of the Assumption was built in 1912.**

ity for military training purposes. In 1968, the property came under the ownership of the Florence Industrial Development Authority (IDA). This group, in turn, sold the property to a developer who built a retirement community, selling lots for condominiums and manufactured homes and an RV park.

In 1982, with a portion of the funding from the sale of property, the Florence IDA hired architect Harris Sobin to prepare an inven-



Historical photograph



The high school today  
**Florence High School**

tory of Florence housing for the purpose of establishing a historic district. The result was the Florence Town site A.T., which contains the most comprehensive research work done for any town or city in Arizona, with numerous buildings and sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The majority of the listed properties are located within the Florence Town site Historic District in Downtown.

Currently, Florence is redeveloping the historic district with the intent of promoting its place in Arizona history as a regional cultural destination. The Main Street Program and the Florence Chamber of Commerce, as well as many community volunteers, are all contributing to the ongoing efforts to educate the community and revitalize the district.

### Historic Preservation Efforts

The preservation of Florence's historical resources is guided by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and various programs and plans created by federal, state and nonprofit agencies. These guidelines all contribute to efforts to preserve Downtown Florence, including 11 historic properties currently in the rehabilitation process or awaiting funding for rehabilitation.

### National Historic Preservation Act

The NHPA 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 preservation. It is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historical and archaeological resources. The NHPA was amended in 1980 to create the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, administered through the State Historic Preservation Office. This program allows for direct local government 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.

**Certified Local Government Program**

The CLG program is a partnership among local governments, the State Historic Preservation Office and the National Park Service. The CLG program integrates local governments with the national historic preservation program through activities that strengthen decision making regarding historical places at the local level. The program encourages the direct participation of local governments in the identification, evaluation, registration and preservation of historic properties within their jurisdictions and promotes the integration of local preservation interests and concerns into local planning and decision making. The CLG program allows for participation by qualifying local governments in the statewide historic preservation planning process. It also allows these governments to compete for federal preservation funds allocated by Congress and awarded to each state. In 1985, Florence was one of the first towns in Arizona to receive the CLG designation.

**Arizona Historic Preservation Plan 2006**

The State’s 2006 preservation plan contains a statewide analysis of historic preservation issues and a framework for action. It includes eight goals (see below). The Town of Florence supports this statewide preservation plan.

**Main Street Program**

The vision for Downtown Florence is an eco-

**State Historic Preservation Goals**

- Goal 1** Better resource management

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- Goal 2** Effective information management

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- Goal 3** Maximized funding

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- Goal 4** Partnerships in planning

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- Goal 5** Proactive communities

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- Goal 6** An informed, supportive public

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- Goal 7** Informed, supportive policy makers

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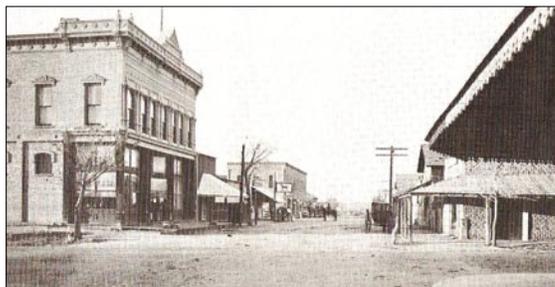
- Goal 8** Informed, trained professionals

nomically vibrant community that embraces its history, encourages innovation and maintains Florence’s hometown character. The Main Street Program, through its volunteers and public-private partnerships, seeks to create an environment that reinforces Downtown as the center of the community. The organization focuses on programs and projects that increase Downtown’s physical appeal, support a balanced mix of uses, celebrate the community’s history and create a common sense of place.

**Arizona Centennial Legacy Projects**

In 2004, Governor Janet Napolitano announced the creation of the Arizona Historical Advisory Commission for the purpose of developing, encouraging and coordinating the State’s plan for the Arizona Centennial in 2012. One of the commission’s responsibilities is to recommend and fund activities and projects that will ensure lasting legacy accomplishments to commemorate the Centennial.

Through a competitive process, two projects submitted by the Town of Florence have been approved and designated as Legacy Projects as part of the celebration of the



Main Street in the early 1900s

Arizona Centennial. These projects are the rehabilitation of the Silver King Hotel and the acquisition and development of Adamsville Cemetery. Because of their significance at both the local and state level, the completion of these projects is considered a high priority, not only from the perspective of historical preservation and protection, but also from the perspective of economic development and its role in creating a healthy and diverse community.

### Historic Downtown Advisory Commission

Florence has established a Historic District Advisory Committee whose members are appointed by the Town Mayor with consent by the Town Council. The Committee is responsible for approving project requests within the Historic District. Projects are reviewed for their consistency with the Town's adopted design guidelines for the Historic District. The Committee has also installed monuments in the Historic District.

### Downtown Historic District

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. It is part of a national program to support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect our historical and archeological resources. Created in 1966, the National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

In the early 1980s, a major portion of the old Florence community was added to the National Register of Historic Places as the Florence Townsite Historic District. As part of the designation process, each National Register listing includes a rating for its "level of significance," being local, state or national. The Florence Town site Historic District currently holds a local significance designation and has numerous buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places benefits the Town of Florence in its pursuit of grant funds to pay for the restoration, rehabilitation and preservation of buildings within the Historic District. Some of the buildings and their past occupants appear to have significance beyond the local level. Because a higher level of significance



**Sonoran Traditional building**



**Early Transitional building**



**Neo-Classical building**

increases the number of potential funding sources, the Town considers it important to conduct the research necessary to make an application for a designation of state or national significance. Examples of architectural periods occurring in the Florence Town site Historic District, as identified by architect Harris Sobin, include:

- Sonoran Tradition (1866–1950);
- Early Transitional Tradition (1871–1947);
- Late Transitional Tradition (1878–1949);
- American-Victorian Styles (1885–1922);
- Bungalow Style (1908–1950);
- Mission Revival Style (1912–1943);
- Early Twentieth Century Commercial/ Neo-Classic Revival Style (1913–1936);
- Spanish Colonial Revival Style (1916–1931); and
- Moderne Style (1920–1931).

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

Florence possesses a rich history and unique architectural identity that establish its “sense of place” in the region and distinguishes it from its neighbors. Although not always easily identifiable, these historical and architectural resources, with their inherent ability to evoke the past, represent important aspects of the community of Florence and the region. The great pride and involvement that the community has in Downtown makes this Historic Preservation Element essential to the General Plan. The strong desire to retain Florence’s connection to the past and integrate its future growth is a top priority of government officials and residents.

Input received from the public during the update of the General Plan included:

- Maintain the historic Downtown as a showcase of historical buildings and shops.
- Promote Florence as a cultural destination with arts and open space amenities throughout the community.
- Continue to celebrate Florence’s cultural diversity with the annual multi-cultural festival and Junior Parada Rodeo (the world’s oldest sanctioned junior rodeo).
- Recognize and preserve areas of the Town based largely upon their historical and cultural resources.
- Protect and replicate the pattern and character of Florence’s unique and traditional neighborhoods.

- Promote designs for development that are compatible with the scale and character of existing neighborhoods.
- Preserve and protect important historical and cultural resources that serve as significant, visible reminders of Florence’s history.

## GOALS

The extensive and varied historical and cultural resources of Florence include buildings, structures, objects, sites, landscapes, the Florence Town site Historic District, archaeological sites and traditional cultural properties that possess historical, scientific, architectural, aesthetic, cultural or ethnic significance. Although not always easily identifiable, these resources, with their inherent ability to evoke the past, represent important aspects of the history of Florence and the region.

### Historic Preservation Goals

**GOAL 1** Promote the preservation and adaptive reuse of historical structures, features and amenities throughout the Town.

**GOAL 2** Create a vibrant Downtown that showcases the historical and architectural uniqueness of Florence.

**GOAL 3** Maintain a sense of community that draws upon a shared knowledge and understanding of Florence’s past.

## HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Actively pursue the creation of a first-class Historical and Cultural Resources Preservation Program.</b></p>  | <p>Use financial resources from state, federal and private programs that assist in identification, designation and preservation of public historical and cultural resources.</p>   |
|  | <p>Ensure consistency between the General Plan and any subsequent planning documents or public works projects affecting Downtown.</p>  |
|  | <p>Ensure adequate funding is included in the Town budget for the staffing and maintenance of a Historic Preservation Program in compliance with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office's Certified Local Government program.</p>  |
|  | <p>Use historic preservation as a tool for "smart growth," supporting complementary mixed-use development in Downtown.</p>   |
|  | <p>Ensure that, through the planning and project review process, any potential Native American burial sites and/or associated funerary objects of archaeological significance are protected to ensure compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.</p>  |
|  | <p>Maintain updated design guidelines that support positive, creative and/or innovative design solutions for appropriate development. Using these design guidelines, through the design review process, encourage any new construction in Downtown to be compatible in scale and character with cultural resources in the Historic District.</p> |
|  | <p>Pursue a comprehensive program to document and preserve historic buildings and structures within and outside of the Florence Town site Historic District, as well as cultural sites (including archaeological sites), objects, landscapes and natural resources.</p>  |
|  | <p>Maintain up-to-date identification and designation of cultural resources that are eligible for listing in local, state and national registers in a manner consistent with the need to protect the confidentiality of the location of such cultural resources.</p>   |
|  | <p>Provide information to the public about what to do upon the discovery of archaeological resources.</p>  |
|  | <p><b>Fully integrate cultural resources as a major component of the Town's planning, permitting, and development activities.</b></p>  |
| <p>Encourage use of the Secretary of the Interior's <i>Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties</i> for any construction involving historic properties, and ensure the Town's building code requirements do not compromise the integrity of significant historical and cultural resources.</p> |  |
| <p>Discourage the demolition of historic buildings, both inside and outside the Historic District, by promoting adaptive reuse as a preferable option.</p>   |  |
| <p>Develop regulations to govern the relocation of historic buildings.</p>   |  |
| <p>Require that emergency procedures be included in the Town's Emergency Response Plan to protect damaged or endangered designated historic structures.</p>  |  |
| <p>Design the development review process to ensure that historical and cultural heritage concerns are identified at an early stage and addressed throughout the process.</p>   |  |
| <p>Encourage and support the preservation of cultural resources owned by both private parties and other government agencies.</p>   |  |
| <p>Apply code enforcement, zoning ordinances and building safety/construction regulations as tools for helping to protect cultural resources.</p>  |  |



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy  |
|---|---|
| <b>Promote the Town's cultural resources as a means to enhance the Town's identity as an important center of Arizona's history.</b> | Develop a public art master plan that celebrates Florence's history throughout the Planning Area (such as a town-wide mural project) for the benefit of residents and visitors.   |
|   | Promote understanding of the criteria used for historic designation selection, Florence's historic design review processes, building permit requirements, and methods and funding sources for rehabilitating and preserving historic buildings, sites and landscapes. |
|   | Continue to support and expand special events that promote historic and cultural values and lifestyles.   |
|   | Promote and encourage the community's heritage through educational awareness, exhibits and events.  |
|   | Promote and encourage historic preservation as a tool to enhance economic development and tourism.  |

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## PURPOSE

Arizona's *Growing Smarter* legislation provides for inclusion of growth areas that specify potential target locations for future development. The Growth Areas Element is central to the concept of Smarter Growth because it identifies the locations with the greatest potential for more intense land uses because of their location in relation to existing development and available of transportation, infrastructure and services. This Element also identifies areas where the most beneficial development should occur in order to achieve the broad array of community goals set forth in the General Plan. The Growth Areas Element will assist the Town of Florence to strategically expand its development pattern and promote infill of under utilized properties. Managed expansion, revitalization and redevelopment will maximize investments in infrastructure and public services through the integration of residential, employment and supportive land uses.

Existing housing and employment sector development trends (and an understanding of future infrastructure and public facilities investments) provide the basis to determine appropriate growth areas within the Planning Area. It is important for Florence to use recommended strategies in this Growth Areas Element to protect the small-town character that residents value, while attracting housing growth and economic expansion and diversification.

Directing growth to specific portions of the planning area involves important economic considerations. As Florence strives to grow in an organized and sustainable manner, one of the most important issues it will face is the impact of growth and development. Unlike many other growing communities that develop roughly around a community center,

Florence is expanding primarily in the far northern portion of its Planning Area. This separation from the Town's historic core is one of the primary risks that the community faces as it works to retain and enhance its Downtown as the center of community life.

Additionally, the fast-growing northern portion of the community is currently constrained by weak transportation infrastructure. While the growth to the north presents challenges, it is also a notable asset. New development will bring new residents with higher incomes, additional amenities and, if planned properly, some additional employment opportunities.

Increased municipal facilities and services will be required. Because the Town is changing so rapidly, it is important to identify whether simply maintaining the existing level of service presently provided by the Town will be adequate.

## BACKGROUND

Within the expanded Florence Planning Area, there are six areas that will assist the Town in meeting its growth areas goals. These areas were identified because their development will greatly shape the Town's character and are vital to its expanding economy. The areas are listed below and illustrated in Figure 1.

**North Employment** provides the opportunity to diversify the Town's economy and protect its character through a fiscally responsible annexation strategy that focuses on employment.

**Middle Suburban** was identified because of its ability to encourage residential growth that does not overtax the Town's infrastructure. Development within this area will also

support commercial growth that provides diversity in services available in the Town.

**AZ Farms Corridor** will ensure that land along the rail corridor is preserved for needed employment-generating development.

**East Employment** was selected as a growth area to maximize the economic potential of existing prison uses and encourage needed sales-tax- and employment-generating commercial development along the highway corridor.

**Freeway** was identified as a growth area to support development of the north-south freeway, and to maximize the economic development opportunities the freeway provides for the Town. Development within this growth area will also be critical to answering challenge of maintaining community cohesion once a freeway is constructed bisecting the community.

**Central** was identified because of its opportunities to create a vibrant Downtown with a diversity of shops, restaurants and professional services that will draw people from all parts of the Town and the region. It is the main route between Florence and Coolidge. Development of this area will provide critical retail and commercial business operations

that need land that is suitable or available in the other areas and that will support the other growth areas.

### North Employment

The North Employment area encompasses a linear region lying north of Arizona Farms Road in the Town's northern Planning Area that captures portions of the Union Pacific Railroad, Magma Arizona Railroad and the Magma Junction area. While there is a great deal of existing development along Hunt Highway, the area as a whole is still largely undeveloped and has the potential to accommodate many thousands of new residents. According to the land-use plan, the area is primarily low to medium residential with commercial corners and some employment uses along the railroad. The North Employment area has not yet been incorporated into Florence.

**Opportunities:** This area is closest in proximity to Maricopa County and was one of the first parts of Pinal County to experience the substantial housing boom that began in 2004. Like many parts of the metro area, new housing development has been significantly curtailed in 2008.

Nonetheless, this growth area is well positioned to boom again during the next expansion cycle, considering that it now has infrastructure and amenities in place that were non-existent five years ago. Because it is closer to the southeast valley's existing job centers than most other parts of Pinal County, it will continue to be a popular location for many years.

Existing residents within this area have considerable spending power that, if captured, would be fiscally beneficial to the Town. There is retail planned throughout the region that would capture resident spending, reduce leakage and contribute to the Town's sales tax base.

**Challenges:** Recent development along Hunt Highway has encountered significant infrastructure issues, particularly as related to transportation. There are not enough local transportation corridors to efficiently move residents

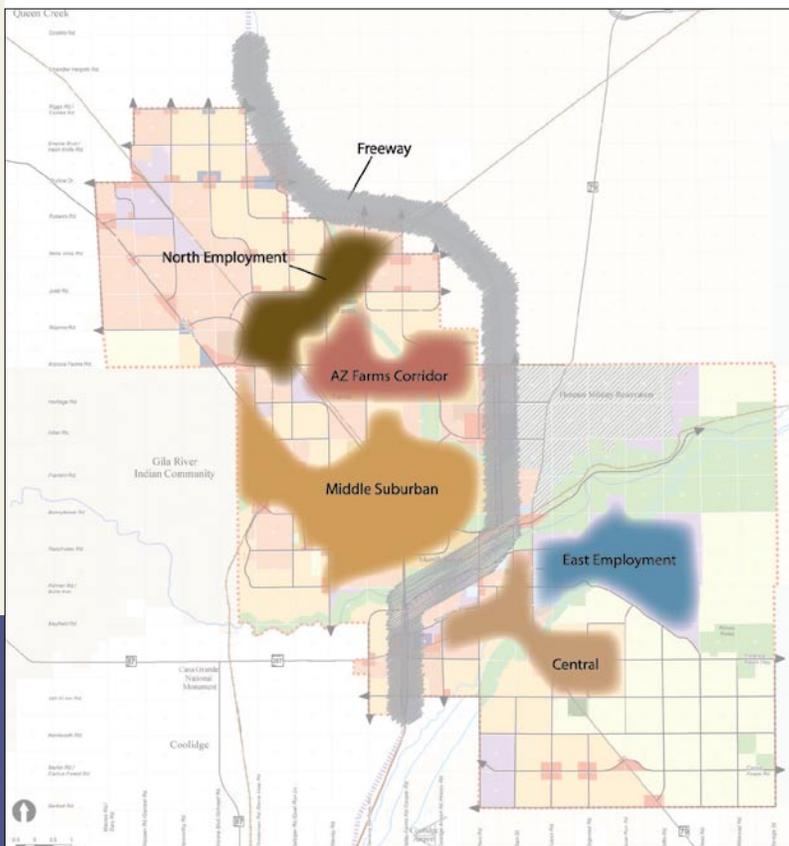


Figure 11-1. Growth Areas



to and from their jobs. This ultimately limits connectivity within Florence as congestion makes it difficult to travel from the northwest portion of the planning area to Merrill Ranch or the Downtown area.

As the Town considers annexing portions of this area, infrastructure and utility needs of existing and future development will need to be addressed. By expanding the municipal boundaries, the Town will take on responsibility and obligations to a greater number of residents and businesses, and the Town will be expected to provide new residents and businesses with levels of service commensurate with the rest of the Town. In keeping with the goals in the Cost of Development Element, it is preferred that new development essentially pay its own way in terms of infrastructure and utilities. The potential for increased property and sales tax collections must be weighed against the costs to provide ongoing services to the region.

There may also be challenges related to integrating this area into Florence while maintaining the Town's character.

**Solutions:** The North Employment area will begin to rapidly expand again when the housing market and economy in Greater Phoenix recover from the current downturn. The Town will devise and implement a fiscally responsible annexation strategy that is feasible as a means of gaining control over and coordinating the types of development that occur in this area.

### **Middle Suburban**

Merrill Ranch is a large master-planned development located northwest of the existing Downtown area, approximately between Hiller Road and Ranchview Road from north to south and between Quail Run Road and Plant Road from west to east. The community has capacity for more than 26,000 planned residential units and over one-fifth of the land is designated for employment uses, according to the most recent plans available.

The Middle Suburban area will contain the majority of the single-family housing development that will occur within the Town of Florence during the next several years. The impetus for this growth has been the expansion of the Greater Phoenix housing market. Development has significantly slowed in re-

cent months because of the cessation of the housing expansion. This is affecting all areas within Pinal County, not just the Town of Florence. Once the market stabilizes, likely by 2010, strong rates of housing growth should endure within the region but the rate of growth will not be as intense as the housing boom of 2005 and 2006.

Middle Suburban is also home to the large age-restricted communities. The winter visitors and full time residence are responsible for much of the retail activity and volunteer base of the Town. As the baby boomers enter retirement this could provide for another area of growth and development.

**Opportunities:** Merrill Ranch has amenities that are unique to the area and enjoys an established brand name, particularly in its Anthem community. The area is desirable for residential development because of its topography, views and amenities that include a water park, community center and golf course. The railroad essentially bisects the project, which is flanked by Hunt Highway to the west and the alignment for the future freeway to the east. There is employment land set aside along these corridors and it is anticipated that Merrill Ranch will develop into a major employment center for the Town. A hospital is being considered for the community that would help diversify the Town's employment base and could accelerate the development of certain kinds of office uses. Additionally, the hospital should make the area more attractive to winter visitors who want to relocate or remain in the area. Additional opportunities exist that relate to tourism, particularly if a scenic railroad route were to allow visitors to experience the region's material beauty and historic character.

It is recommended that the Town implement a program of incentives intended to attract future commercial development that would be supportive of an economically diverse and vibrant downtown environment. The incentives could include appropriate partnerships between the Town and the private sector, as appropriate. These types of new downtown commercial developments would serve as attractors to other businesses to relocate to the Merrill Ranch area, thereby providing a core of retail, entertainment, employment and service destinations, to support the growing residential community at Merrill Ranch.

**Challenges:** The lack of roadway infrastructure and, as a result, extended commute time into the Phoenix-Mesa area need to be addressed. Transportation infrastructure is becoming a development challenge. Improvements to the roadways will be costly for the Town, and the extent to which the State and County will make improvements is unclear. The Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Area employment centers also offer challenges in that the development of the area could dampen employment growth within this growth area of Florence.

Growth within unincorporated county areas along Hunt Highway will also be a challenge. This will add competition for housing stock and retail locations. Other challenges will be the cost of transportation to employment centers in the Valley. As the cost of gasoline increases residents may reconsider long commute times and dealing with the congestion of Hunt Highway. Care must be taken to ensure that development in this area does not overburden Town infrastructure. While some utilities are being provided by the developer, additional transportation infrastructure may be required to maximize connectivity between the Middle Suburban area and other parts of the Town.

**Solutions:** The significant residential growth that will occur will be leveraged to attract business opportunities so that the area can offer a local alternative employment center to the Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Area. A strong Town economic development strategy will be implemented to support this mission. The development of a major north-south freeway through the area will also expand business location opportunities. The Town will work with land owners to ensure land in and around the rail corridor is used properly and does not crowd out industrial uses in favor of residential.

### **AZ Farms Corridor**

Arizona Farms Road is a future west-east major arterial roadway in the Town and the Town's Planning Area that is designated for a variety of mixed, commercial, office, employment and residential land uses. The western edge of this growth area has future Employment/Light Industrial land use areas set aside because of the close proximity to the Union Pacific and Copper Basin Railroad lines. These rail corridors are also possible

corridors for future inter-city and/or commuter rail service lines that would connect the Florence area to the larger metropolitan areas to the north and south.

**Opportunities:** Florence has extensive rail line frontage, which may provide it with the unique ability to capture employment opportunities in the future. Rail is not the prominent method of transportation that it once was, but trains are still the preferred mode of shipping and distribution for many industries and are experiencing a renaissance for long hauls of containerized goods. There is relatively little available rail-served industrial land throughout the State and this creates opportunities for the Town to attract users able to take advantage of large parcels of industrial land with rail access. The Town of Florence will ultimately be able to capitalize on Arizona Farms Road being a major west-east arterial of regional significance that connects Hunt Highway to SR 79. The area along Arizona Farms Road in the proximity of Felix and Attaway Roads is envisioned as a vibrant mixed-use development area with significant commercial and service-based jobs.

**Challenges:** As previously stated, railroads are not the economic driver they once were but can still be useful for shipping large volumes of goods. As trains become more efficient and the price of gasoline increases, this transportation model is changing. Rail access has proven to be most useful in southwest Phoenix, where trains unload goods shipped from long distances into adjacent warehouses before being distributed throughout metro Phoenix.

Florence does not have the central location that would make it a desirable distribution hub. It will likely attract heavy manufacturers that will use the train to import raw materials and send out finished product to other markets. The Town will have to compete for these users with other cities such as Mesa, Casa Grande and Eloy. Another challenge is to protect the land around the rail corridor and protect it from residential encroachment. If too many homes emerge along or near the rail track it could discourage the development of industrial parcels.

While the Town will pursue annexation of the central portion of the AZ Farms Corridor area, other outlying portions of the growth area may fall within the jurisdiction of Pinal County and some areas may be under the control of the

State Land Department. Arizona Farms Road expansion plans must also be coordinated with CAP (Central Arizona Project). Thus, coordination with other governmental entities and private land owners will be necessary to allow for the ultimate build out of Arizona Farms Road to serve as a road regional of significance.

**Solutions:** The Town will work to attract rail-related employment by bringing infrastructure and utilities to the industrial sites with rail frontage. Town economic development staff will maintain contact with the large railroad companies and industrial firms that typically use rail to inform them of the available sites and the advantages to locating in Florence. The Town will work with land owners to ensure land in and around the rail corridor is used properly and does not crowd out industrial uses in favor of residential. The Town will coordinate with other governmental entities, private property owners and developers to ensure that Arizona Farms Road is programmed for development as a major west-east road of regional significance. The Town will encourage employment and mixed-use land uses along this corridor through the use of more flexible Planned Unit Development zoning, while also working to ensure the highest compatibility of proposed land uses.

## East Employment

State Route (SR) 79 runs south from the US 60 into the Town Core area before heading southeast from Florence to Tucson and will be one of the important transportation corridors used to bring visitors into Florence from the north. While the entire highway is an important asset, the East Employment area is focused on the region immediately east of the Town Core. This area currently contains several prison facilities and some limited commercial development along the highway.

**Opportunities:** There are County, State and Federal inmates held in Florence. These prisons are among the strongest economic drivers for the Town and County. The Town has the opportunity to determine the number and size of correctional facilities that it wants to have located in its jurisdiction.

The commercial corridor along SR 79 presents opportunities for retail and other commercial development. This area is underdeveloped, when considered in relation to its high exposure from SR 79. As I-10 between

Phoenix and Tucson becomes more congested, SR 79 may be increasingly important as a reliever roadway. Traffic counts will continue to grow as the area increases in population.

**Challenges:** While expanding the number of prison facilities could be an economic boon, it could also have longer-term consequences relating to the perception of the community. Proximity to correctional facilities is not an amenity that many prospective homeowners desire. The Town will have to find a way to counteract any perception that Florence is solely a prison town. Examples of communities successfully accomplishing this include the City of Folsom and Marin County (home to San Quentin), California.

A major challenge to developing commercial projects along the highway is the fact that virtually all of the Town's future residential and commercial development will be located west of the Town Core because of the land constraints east of the highway.

**Solutions:** The Town will weigh the advantages and disadvantages of attracting additional prison facilities to the community. The Town will monitor increasing traffic volumes along SR 79 and be realistic as to the extent of commercial development that can be expected to occur along the highway.

## Freeway

The current conceptual freeway alignment has a future north-south freeway running down from Maricopa County along the planning area boundary and cutting down through Florence along Plant Road before veering west between the Town Core and Merrill Ranch. There are a number of planned interchanges that would allow for traffic to more efficiently move in and out of the Town.

**Opportunities:** The completion of a freeway along this alignment would be a very strong economic driver for the Town. It would allow businesses to access a larger labor force and could be a major distribution route from the southeast valley to southern Arizona and other markets.

The freeway would also make Florence more attractive for development because it would reduce traffic congestion and commute times, and provide residents with easier access to a wider variety of amenities. The addition of a freeway through Florence would be an enor-

mous asset for the local economy especially considering the current problems with transportation infrastructure.

**Challenges:** Because of current market conditions, it is unclear when the freeway will be built. Construction is unlikely to begin for many years as a result of a lack of funding and demand. Because the alignment has not been finalized, land cannot yet be assembled for right-of-way, and locations for new development cannot be precisely determined.

As a result of the uncertainty surrounding this project, the completion of the freeway should not be counted on as an economic driver for short- and possible mid-term economic development strategies.

**Solutions:** Though there is uncertainty regarding the freeway's timing and precise alignment, the construction of this facility will have far-reaching effects that have been considered in the Town's plans to manage future growth and change. Florence will work with the Arizona Department of Transportation and their consultants to finalize an alignment as soon as possible.

The General Plan has created a Freeway Mixed Use designation designed to take advantage of the development and economic opportunities that the freeway will bring to Florence. This designation will not be applied to any specific land area until a precise freeway alignment and interchange locations have been determined to maximize the freeway's positive impact. Once an alignment is finalized, the Town can expect an increase in land value and a rush of entitlement requests for the land surrounding the freeway corridor. This will initially focus on interchange areas, and is expected to occur in advance of completion of freeway construction.

## Central

The Central area is located within the Town of Florence's original grid. The first part of its boundaries are the Gila River to the north, SR 79 to the east, SR 287 to the south, and Plant Road to the west. Based on the recommended land use pattern of the Land Use Element, the Central Area is generally divided equally between residential, employment and other uses. The largest employers within the area are government-related and include Town, County, State and Federal employees, in addition to the Florence Unified School District employees.

The Central area also extends west of Downtown Florence, bounded by the Gila River to the north, Plant Road to the east, SR 287 to the south, and Valley Farms Road to the west. This area, extending to the Coolidge planning boundary, has opportunity for additional residential and commercial development.

The development of a freeway on the west side of this region may be required to advance the stalled development. This area is well suited for large lot single family homes and horse properties. The ability to create and maintain the rural lifestyle that has attracted people to this region can be preserved. By encouraging this type of development it will further diversify the housing stock and life style choices in Florence. The areas directly around SR 287 should be preserved for commercial development. This area, to a lesser extent, is suitable for the same types and style of businesses as the north area of SR 79.

**Opportunities:** Historic Downtown Florence has a sound development theme. The location of some of the region's largest employers affords additional daily traffic flow throughout the area. The influx of new residence to the north of the Central area creates a new source of consumers than can work, shop and start businesses in this area. Through the implementation of a thorough redevelopment plan, the Town Core has an opportunity to become a destination of choice for local residents and tourists.

The opportunity to have a low-density agricultural lifestyle close to the Town core should not be passed up. This lifestyle is still highly prized. The growth in the northern boundaries of the Town will allow for many of the amenities people desire close enough to the rural lifestyle many people seek. The commercial corridor along SR 287 will develop slower than SR 79 which provides the opportunity to grow responsibly and the opportunity to preserve and protect the rural lifestyle of the area.

**Challenges:** This area will face challenges in terms of maintaining its historic character and existing businesses as substantial new growth occurs. The large amount of development that is anticipated to occur to the north may create, in many people's minds, a relocated Town center. Some current lower density development patterns in this region may ultimately create challenges in the provision of municipal services to an expected urban or suburban standard.

To ensure that the historic Downtown does not become an afterthought, aggressive marketing will be undertaken, and development within the Town Core will be specifically encouraged. Proactive efforts will be made to attract more people to the Downtown core, both new development that will place a larger number of residents within the Downtown and through establishment of specialty retail and entertainment uses that will bring residents from other areas to the community to the Downtown.

The Town will work with the Main Street Program and owners of historic properties to address the challenge of the cost of maintenance and repairs for the historic buildings on Main Street. To a significant degree, the solution to this challenge will be to enhance economic activity within the Downtown, and increase revenues on a per square foot basis. Because developers may find it difficult to assemble tracts of land on which to build larger residential and commercial projects, such efforts may require assistance from the Town. Older infrastructure within the Downtown Core may need replacement over time as the area grows.

Without the proposed freeway, the area will not realize significant growth for a number of years. Much of the land in this area is not located within the Town which makes controlling the growth a challenge. Also the low-density land use is not currently attractive to many developers. There are some wild cat developments in the area that could limit the full utilization of the area. SR 287 has many fewer trips than SR 79 and other major highways, which will lead to slower growth.

**Solutions:** Attract people to the Downtown area through the creation of a branding strategy. Part of this strategy should include special events marketing and advertising programs that define Florence as a place to visit, live, work, and invest. Develop business development services specifically designed to assist the development of entrepreneurs to occupy the Town Core area. Create a visually interesting downtown that draws people in and capitalizes on the historic nature and charm of Florence.

Additional housing in mixed-use types of projects will be considered in Downtown Florence. Other housing strategies include infill, higher-density developments and rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. Adding residents to the

area will create the necessary consumer density to sustain the Downtown commercial area. This will be easier to promote after the area to the north is more fully developed and residents demand a unique lifestyle.

Because of other regional competition, In the second Central area the Town needs the north-south freeway to be developed in order to maximize its opportunities in this area. Until this occurs, even the best promotion of the area may not yield significant results.

Encourage developers to develop large lot properties that have horse trails and other types of western rural features that maintain the charm and sense of place that could be lost if Florence grows like the rest of the valley. SR 287 frontage should be preserved as commercial until such time that the land reaches a stage in which it needs to be developed.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

Community input gathered for the public process for the General Plan identified community vision and placed significance on a number of principles that need to be considered as the community grows:

- As the County seat, Florence will continue to be the most important town in the region and function as the center of government, employment and cultural activity for an area much larger than Florence.
- The Town's economy will continue to strengthen, diversify and play a larger role in Pinal County's economy.
- The Town's economy will provide a broad range of jobs in all industry sectors, including those related to small and local businesses.
- Neighborhoods will be desirable because of walkable streets; a broad range of housing choices; mixed-use neighborhood centers; and great schools, parks, and recreation facilities.
- Florence will be connected to the greater region by an efficient and safe network of roadways, including the north-south freeway that will provide easy access to the southeastern Phoenix metropolitan area.
- The Town of Florence will take a leadership role in sustainability in Pinal County, continuing to strive for environmental excellence in the built environment.
- The Town will maintain its small-town feel and cultural identity, particularly by utilizing the Downtown area.

These principles of smart and sustainable growth are particularly important to consider in light of the expanding planning area. The larger area will provide opportunities for the Town’s residents through enhanced employment centers. Additional challenges will also arise in preserving the character of the Town and maintaining connectivity and a sense of community.

Figure 2-1 in the Land Use Element shows how the new planning area compares to the previous planning area and existing incorporated Town boundaries can be seen in.

## GOALS

The goals and objectives of the Growth Element are intended to guide a Smart Growth

approach to the definition and development of diverse, sustainable and economically viable future growth areas throughout the Town’s Planning Area. These goals and objectives, developed through consensus among the Town’s participants in the General Plan update, are listed below.

## Growth Areas Goal

**Goal 1** Concentrate development and associated infrastructure and service expansions within designated growth areas to reduce the fiscal impacts of growth, ensure the highest compatibility of land uses and better protect environmentally sensitive areas and areas that are less ideal for new growth and urbanization.

## GROWTH AREAS OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
|   | Work with the Arizona Department of Transportation to finalize an alignment and conceptual design for the proposed freeway, including a sufficient number of interchanges and crossings to maximize the freeway’s economic benefits and minimize its impact on community cohesion. |
|   | Ensure that the land use and development patterns shown on the land use map contained in the Land Use Element and mapping of growth areas for this Element are supportive of the Town’s intent to establish transit service within the community.                                  |
|   | Implement consistent themes that evoke the community’s historic character in the design of street signs, lighting, streetscapes, and community entries.  |
|   | Implement the improvement programs set forth in the Circulation Element to maintain ease of movement throughout the community.   |
| <b>Encourage connectivity among the Growth Areas.</b> | Work with the Arizona Department of Transportation to finalize an alignment and conceptual design for the proposed freeway, including a sufficient number of interchanges and crossings to maximize the freeway’s economic benefits and minimize its impact on community cohesion. |
|   | Ensure that the land use and development patterns shown on the land use map contained in the Land Use Element and mapping of growth areas for this Element are supportive of the Town’s intent to establish transit service within the community.                                  |
|   | Implement consistent themes that evoke the community’s historic character in the design of street signs, lighting, streetscapes, and community entries.  |
|   | Implement the improvement programs set forth in the Circulation Element to maintain ease of movement throughout the community.   |
|   | Maintain a land use map in the Land Use Element that will facilitate retention of the Downtown area as the center of community life.   |
|   | Recognize historic Downtown Florence as a central growth area.   |
|   | Evaluate each development plan to assess its physical and visual connectivity to the surrounding community.  |
|   | Evaluate the use of regional transit to connect with other communities or activity areas.  |
|   | Explore opportunities to create a local transit circulator system.   |



## GROWTH AREAS OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective  | Strategy   |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Encourage growth that has an efficient and cost-effective use of public infrastructure and services.</b></p>   | Focus new development into the growth areas defined by this Element.   |
|  | Encourage both infill development and growth that can use existing infrastructure or public facilities and services capabilities.  |
|  | Promote short-term growth in areas with infrastructure capacity or plans.  |
|  | Encourage residential and commercial densities appropriate to the Growth Areas.  |
|  | Regularly update the five-year Capital Improvement Program to ensure an efficient and well-managed expansion of public infrastructure.   |
| <p><b>Provide a mix of settings for future development that can provide for the diversity of housing, commercial, employment- and sales tax-generating, and recreation uses desired for the Town's future, maintaining a high quality of life for existing and future residents.</b></p> | Develop an annexation policy for unincorporated areas within the planning area   |
|  | Discourage development in areas without infrastructure or utilities  |
|  | Ensure that the land use map contained in the Land Use Element focuses development into the growth areas defined in this Element.  |
| <p><b>Direct growth to areas in a manner protective of sensitive environmental resources and supportive of a sustainable community.</b></p>  | Ensure that the land use map contained in the Land Use Element appropriately distributes a variety of residential densities, commercial uses, employment-generating development, and recreational and public uses into the growth areas defined in this Element. |
|  | Provide a land use plan that designates ample land for a variety of employment types and that is flexible enough to accommodate Florence's future economic development opportunities.  |
| <p><b>Direct growth to areas in a manner protective of sensitive environmental resources and supportive of a sustainable community.</b></p>  | Implement the provisions of the Economic Development Element.  |
|  | Direct growth to areas in a manner protective of sensitive environmental resources and supportive of a sustainable community.  |
| <p><b>Direct growth to areas in a manner protective of sensitive environmental resources and supportive of a sustainable community.</b></p>  | Ensure that the land use and development patterns shown on the land use map contained in the Land Use Element and mapping of growth areas for this Element are consistent with the provisions of the Environmental Planning and Energy Elements.                 |

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## PURPOSE

The Water and Wastewater Element considers water demand and wastewater generation in relation to land use, anticipated growth areas and infrastructure required to provide reliable service in the future. The goals, objectives and strategies associated with the Water and Wastewater Element are interdependent and closely linked with those of the Environmental Planning and Cost of Development Elements, and they reflect policies to be adopted by the Town of Florence to increase the efficient use and management of water, sustain a high level of service, provide adequate infrastructure and prioritize spending.

The Water and Wastewater Element provides guidance in planning for the long-term supply of potable and non-potable water to serve the Town's existing needs and its future growth. This element links the population and employment centers identified in the Land Use Element with the future provision of a stable and high-quality supply of water.

The Water and Wastewater Element acknowledges that a significant portion of the Town's Planning Area is within the Johnson Utilities service area, or outside of any utilities service area. This element focuses on water and wastewater systems owned and operated by the Town.

The following categories are discussed:

- **Water resources** – the continuous and reliable availability of water to meet the demands of projected population growth
- **Infrastructure adequacy** – the sufficiency of existing and planned infrastructure to produce and deliver water, and to collect, treat and manage wastewater to accommodate projected growth and land uses

- **Cost implications** – the identification of priority projects, their costs and methods to finance necessary infrastructure

## BACKGROUND

### Water Resources

In 1980, the State of Arizona passed the Groundwater Management Act, which established the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) and created the Groundwater Code to reduce reliance groundwater and to bring the Phoenix, Prescott, and Tucson AMAs into Safe Yield by 2025. The code also provided that groundwater use in the Pinal AMA would be managed such that agriculture could continue to use groundwater to a depth of 1,000 feet below ground surface, and that groundwater below 1,000 feet and above 1,200 feet would be reserved for M&I uses.

The Code went on to specifically provide water conservation as a major tool in achieving these goals. The Code further defined five management periods, each to provide guidance towards achieving the goals of each AMA. Each of the AMAs is currently operating under its Third Management Plan, with the Fourth being written and published in the near future.

ADWR uses its Third Management Plan for the Pinal Active Management Area (AMA) for the period from 2000 to 2010 as guidance for achieving the Groundwater Management Act goals. The Pinal AMA is one of five AMAs designated within the state. The Third Management Plan identifies the activities necessary to achieve reductions in groundwater withdrawal, particularly through water conservation measures.

A key provision of the Groundwater Code as it relates to the Pinal AMA is its unique

*"We never know the worth of water 'til the well is dry"*

– Thomas Fuller, 1732

goal to “allow development of non-irrigation uses and to preserve existing agricultural economies in the AMA as long as feasible, consistent with the necessity to preserve future water supplies for non-irrigation uses.” This provision is commonly referred to as the “Planned Depletion” management goal for the Pinal AMA because it encourages the preservation of agriculture in the area for as long as possible and targets the groundwater currently being used by agriculture to ultimately be used for municipal and industrial purposes (subject to physical availability).

The continued expansion of urban areas within Maricopa County (most of which is within the Phoenix AMA) and the spill-over growth into northern and central Pinal County and the Pinal AMA will continue to foster the transition of agricultural water supplies to municipal and industrial uses.

#### OBJECTIVE

**Maintain compliance with the assured water supply rules.**

### Assured Water Supply

Another key consideration for the Town of Florence is the Groundwater Code’s Assured Water Supply program. Developers within an AMA located in an area that will not be served by a water provided that is designated as having its own Assured Water Supply are required to apply for their own Certificate of Assured Water. However, the Town of Florence elected to obtain its own Designation of Assured Water Supply. As a result, developers who have projects located within the Town’s service and planning areas will not have to obtain their own Certificate.

To obtain a Designation of Assured Water Supply, the Town must demonstrate that it has met the following criteria:

1. The water supply must be physically, legally and continuously available for the next 100 years.
2. The water must meet water quality standards or be of sufficient quality.
3. The proposed water use must be consistent with the AMA management goal.
4. The proposed water use must be consistent with the current management plan of the AMA.

5. The Town must demonstrate the financial capability to construct any necessary water storage, treatment and delivery systems.

Florence currently has an assured water supply designation that demonstrates compliance with the above-listed criteria for projected growth through 2014 or when water demands approach the amount of water that has been determined by ADWR to be available under the terms of the Designation. Because of recent rapid population growth, many water providers in AMAs throughout Arizona, including Florence, are in the process of updating their assured water supply designations based on current population projections and water supply portfolios.

One of the criteria for obtaining and maintaining a Designation, consistency with the management goal, has a profound consequence and triggers a specific set of requirements. In order to demonstrate this consistency, it must be shown that water supplies will increasingly become entirely renewable non-groundwater supplies. Since many water providers cannot economically access renewable water supplies, and since many developers in non-designated water provider service and planning areas cannot economically access renewable water supplies, a special district was formed. On April 22, 1983, Governor Symington signed into law Senate Bill 1425, which authorized the formation of the Central Arizona Groundwater Replenishment District (CAGRDR).

The District is governed by the same board as the operators of the Central Arizona Project—the Central Arizona Water Conservation District. The CAGRDR provides landowners, developers and water providers with the ability to pump and use groundwater by replenishing aquifers for a fee.

The Town of Florence has elected to be a member of the CAGRDR, but strives to maintain its own stored water account such that the Town does not have to rely on the District to replenish its groundwater supplies. In addition to being less expensive, it permits the Town to use the revenue saved to pursue additional water supplies to enhance its renewable water supply portfolio.

### Surface Water

The Town of Florence has an existing sub-contract for 2,048 acre-feet of CAP water. The

Town has not included a water filtration plant in its current capital improvement budget, but constantly evaluates opportunities to have a filtration plant constructed as part of development agreements and opportunities to potentially participate in a more regional plant solution. Currently, the Town banks its water underground to help extend its assured waters supply and avoid reliance on the CAGR for replenishment. The Town also consistently evaluates opportunities for expanding its renewable water supply portfolio and will likely acquire supplies if and when they are affordable and appropriate.

### Groundwater

ADWR, under the provisions of the Third Management Plan, provides a groundwater allowance of 125 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) to designated water providers in the Pinal AMA, including the Town of Florence.

Florence works with developers (through the final platting process and in development agreements) to transfer and extinguish Type 1 Irrigation Grandfathered Rights (IGFRs) to develop additional groundwater credits that can be used to increase the amount of water available under the Town's Assured Water Supply, and, if needed in the future, to reduce its obligation to the CAGR.

Florence has also been purchasing Type 2 IGFRs, which can be extinguished but are more valuable intact. These rights can be used by the Town to expand its water service area, be leased to another water user anywhere in the Pinal AMA to generate revenue for the Town for purchasing other renewable water supplies, or be leased to water users who may locate in areas where the Town has not yet determined it is ready to extend its services.

### Reclaimed Water

Reclaimed water is produced by two wastewater treatment plants in Florence and is currently being used to supply irrigation water to golf courses and farms. Reclaimed water in excess of that being directly used is currently used to recharge or replenish the regional aquifer for the development of additional storage credits. Reclaimed water availability will increase in direct correlation to population growth and will likely be available at a rate of approximately 65 gpcd. The Town will con-

tinue to build its water portfolio with this increasing renewable supply through direct use and underground storage and recovery.

### Stormwater

As land transitions from open space associated with agriculture to impervious materials including rooftops, roads and parking lots, stormwater management will become increasingly important. Storms are relatively infrequent in Florence, but are often characterized by high intensity in terms of the amount of precipitation that occurs in a short period of time. With careful forethought and planning, in conjunction with stormwater and floodplain management, stormwater can be captured as an additional renewable supply for the area.

#### OBJECTIVE

**Efficiently manage water resources.**

### Water Resources Summary

The Town's 2007 population was estimated at 22,137, and the total average daily water use was 129.52 gpcd (Town of Florence's *Annual Withdrawal and Use Report, 2007*, to ADWR). The Town is targeting reductions in groundwater demand to get as close to 125 gpcd for its groundwater demand as reasonably possible. This will be accomplished through a combination of an effective water conservation program and the reuse and underground storage and recovery of reclaimed wastewater supplies.

The Town's assured water supply designation is applicable through 2014 or when it approaches its current determination of physically and legally available groundwater of appropriate quality in the amount of 82,437 to 85,438 acre-feet per year (AFY) for 100 years.

At the time of the preparation of this document, the Town is updating its assured water supply designation to add approximately 23,000 AFY of groundwater supply.

- At the 2007 demand rate of 129.52 gpcd, 25,340 AFY would serve nearly 128,000 people.
- At a target demand rate of 125 gpcd, 25,340 AFY would serve nearly 181,000 people.

The projected build-out population for the Town of Florence ranges between 588,900

and 761,000, depending on the density of future development. The employment population, which would mostly consist of commercial and light industrial employees, is projected to range from 277,400 to 360,000.

Table 12-1 summarizes potential water demand for the future population range using the 2007 demand rate of 129.52 gpcd and the conservation goal demand rate of 125 gpcd.

The annual groundwater allowance is 125 gpcd, and it is anticipated that reclaimed water will likely be available at a rate between 55 and 65 gpcd. If the conservation-influenced demand rate goal of 125 gpcd is not reached at build-out, additional renewable supplies will be needed to meet demand.

Reclaimed water, managed through underground storage and recovery and used to meet large demands not requiring potable water quality, offers great potential to meet additional demand. The Town’s CAP water can also be used to meet demand above 125 gpcd at build-out.

Additional water supplies are likely to be developed on a regional and statewide scale in the foreseeable future. The Town of Florence is committed to being an active and vocal participant, and a beneficiary, in the development of these regional supplies.

The most effective water conservation strategies are those controlled by the infrastructure established for the water use. For example, low water use plumbing fixtures and installation of properly designed xeriscape (desert-appropriate plants and compatible irrigation systems) are effective at limiting water use independent of user behavior.

Also effective is the use of inclining block rate structures to provide monetary incentives for achieving water use goals and disincentives for exceeding “normal” demand.

Inclining block rate structure boundaries are usually based on a community’s ability to pay for higher than targeted water use. That is, a community-specific study would be appropriate for establishing the rate levels associated with water use levels.

**OBJECTIVE**

**Maintain service levels and compliance with environmental and public health rules and regulations at all times.**

**Infrastructure Adequacy**

The Town of Florence wants to ensure the sufficiency of existing and planned infrastructure to produce and deliver water and collect, treat and manage wastewater for projected growth and land uses. Adequately sized and properly functioning infrastructure, when coupled with an adequate number of properly trained staff, will enable the Town to provide a high service level that protects public health and maintains compliance with environmental and public health rules and regulations. The Town manages, operates, and maintains three infrastructure systems related to water resources:

- Water production, storage, and transmission
- Wastewater collection and treatment
- Reclaimed water storage and distribution

A strategy for expanding and upgrading all three systems was addressed by the recently completed *Water Master Plan* (Fluid Solutions, June 2007) and the *Wastewater Master Plan* (Fluid Solutions, January 2008).

**Water System**

The Town’s water system adequately serves the existing customer base, although some portions of the system in older areas of Town are in the process of being modernized to increase water service efficiencies. The Town’s water system is being expanded in response to growth, largely funded by development.

However, some facilities must be installed by the Town. The *Water Master Plan* presents a logical and sound plan for the expansion of the system and provides conservative cost estimates for major infrastructure needs. Water production is currently accomplished entirely through groundwater wells and chlorine disinfection. All water produced from

**Table 12-1. Potential Water Demand**

| Demand factor (gallons per capita per day) | Demand with smaller population (acre-feet per year) | Demand with larger population (acre-feet per year) |
|--|---|--|
| 125  | 82,457  | 106,554  |
| 129.52                                     | 85,438  | 110,406  |



the Town wells meet primary drinking water standards. Future treatment may be needed for reduction of nitrogen, arsenic, fluoride and total dissolved solid concentrations. Storage and pumping facilities have been sized according to peak day and fire flow requirements and for redundancy within pressure zones to maintain service levels in case of infrastructure failure. It is the Town's service level goal to maintain water pressure in the range of 50 to 85 pounds per square inch at all times, from the high to low ends of the pressure zones.

### Wastewater and Reclaimed Water Systems

The Town's wastewater and reclaimed water systems adequately serve the existing customer base. However, the existing sewer mains are not sufficiently sized to accommodate the wastewater flows for the current Planning Area, and the Florence Gardens Water Reclamation Facility is too small and lacks sufficient land for expansion. The South Florence Water Reclamation Facility is a viable location for continued wastewater treatment, and two new reclamation plants are planned (Merrill Water Reclamation Facility and Canal Water Reclamation Facility).

The *Wastewater Master Plan* presents a logical and sound plan for the expansion of wastewater and reclaimed water systems, and provides conservative cost estimates for major infrastructure needs (with the possible exception of the lift station cost estimates, which appear to be low). The *Wastewater Master Plan* provides recommendations for treatment to produce reclaimed water of adequate quality (Arizona Class A reclaimed water) for aquifer recharge, which must not degrade the aquifer water quality. Additional comprehensive planning will be required to evaluate and develop expanded recharge facilities and associated conveyance systems.

### Cost Implications

Water resources-related infrastructure is among the most costly for most municipalities. Therefore, it is necessary to properly identify project priorities, their costs and mechanisms for financing. Preparing and updating infrastructure master plans regularly (every 4 to 6 years, based on historical growth rates for municipalities on the cusp of major development) is critical to the success of a

sound financial plan upon which the public can base its trust and confidence.

### Financing

Repair and replacement or upgrading of existing infrastructure to meet existing demand is normally borne by the current ratepayers. Infrastructure assets can be "pledged" as collateral for the issuance of debt that can be repaid by the ratepayers. For this reason, it is important to have a good assessment of existing infrastructure assets. An attractive debt finance option in Arizona is the Water Infrastructure and Finance Authority, which offers 100 percent financing with below-market interest on loans through State revolving funds. The Water Infrastructure and Finance Authority loans can be used to repair existing infrastructure or install new infrastructure.

Arizona law allows for new development to fund the infrastructure it requires for service. This practice is commonly adopted as most elected councils reflect their constituent values requiring that new growth pay for itself. However, it is important to have established and equitable standards and specifications prior to asking developers to front the costs for new infrastructure. Developers in new areas could pay the initial cost of infrastructure and establish a buy-in agreement with the Town whereby future developers reimburse the initial developer a proportionate share of the original cost.

Alternatively, the Town could cost share in this type of agreement, but doing so may encourage incontinuous growth patterns because developers no longer have a cost incentive to stay close to existing infrastructure. It also may not be a popular option for the existing customers to "front" the money for new development through their water and wastewater rates.

Another alternative is the establishment of development or impact fees that are paid by developers based on the sharing of costs associated with a fixed, projected set of capital improvement projects for a growth area. In this scenario, the developer pays the Town to install new infrastructure based on a development's proportional need and the Town, therefore, has more control over the infrastructure's design and installation. The Town currently uses impact fees to fund infrastructure needed for new development.

Combinations of these alternatives are common, especially where large water transmission, sewer trunk lines or regional pumping stations must be installed before significant development occurs. Combinations of alternatives will require an administrative process handled by the Town for the issuance of credits on development or impact fees, reimbursements through buy-in agreements and management of cost-sharing agreements. It may be appropriate for the Town to establish regional impact fees or combinations of funding alternatives to provide equitable sharing of costs associated with major infrastructure (such as wastewater treatment facilities serving independent growth areas).

It is recommended that the planning, design, and construction oversight of regional and large facilities (such as pump stations, reservoirs and treatment facilities) remain in the control of the Town. Most other infrastructure can be installed by developers as needed, according to established standards and specifications and subject to inspection by the Town (or contractor).

#### OBJECTIVE

**Establish a comprehensive water and wastewater Capital Improvement Program for the deployment and financing of needed infrastructure.**

#### Project Priorities and Costs

Town operations staff and the Water and Wastewater Master Plans have identified areas in need of modernization in the existing water and wastewater systems (mainly in the older parts of Town). These should be the first priority for funding because increased efficiency in these areas can enhance and protect service levels for the existing water customers. These projects will be funded by revenues from existing ratepayers who will benefit from the modernization of their systems.

The Water and Wastewater Master Plans provide cost estimates for the infrastructure requirements at build-out, but do not prioritize projects based on growth patterns or time frame. The Town's current Major Capital Improvement Program (2007–2013) includes

timing and cost information for growth-related water and wastewater infrastructure, but does not incorporate information from the recently completed Water and Wastewater Master Plans. If it is assumed that development pays for and constructs what it needs within the development, the larger facilities required for regional service are discussed below.

#### ■ Water Infrastructure

- A new 1,500 gallon per minute well—at a 2007 cost of \$2.4 million—will be needed for every 10,000 new Town residents.
- A new reservoir and booster pump station—at a cost of \$2.3 million per million gallons of capacity—will be needed every time service is required in a new pressure zone.
- Water transmission mains will cost an average of approximately \$150 per linear foot (more than double for larger pipes, less than half for smaller pipes).

#### ■ Wastewater Infrastructure

- Decommission the Florence Gardens Water Reclamation Facility.
- Design and construct the first phase of the Merrill Water Reclamation Facility (15 million gallons per day) at a cost of \$190 million.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

Community feedback gathered during the public process for this General Plan placed significance on preserving and enhancing the Town's resources and infrastructure. Specific comments include:

- Encourage sustainable levels of energy and resource consumption.
- Provide quality public services, facilities, and infrastructure that are distributed equitably throughout the Town.
- Use the existing assets of infrastructure and public facilities to increase infill and reuse, while maintaining important qualities of community character.
- Actively promote the coordination and cooperation of public and sovereign entities within the Town's Planning Area.
- Proactively work to ensure an adequate supply of potable water for existing and future residents.

## GOALS

The state’s Growing Smarter legislation seeks to connect water resources availability and cost implications with the land use planning process. Water is a natural resource that is enjoyed by the public throughout the natural and built environment and is necessary for the sustenance of life. It is a critical limited resource that must be managed effectively in the desert environment.

Therefore, a sound water resources plan and portfolio that considers a balance between public and private uses will ensure a long-term, safe and reliable water supply. Such a

plan can also efficiently and effectively manage the water after it has been used, making it necessary to preserve Florence’s character and quality of life well into the future.

### Water and Wastewater Goals

- Goal 1** Ensure a renewable, high-quality water supply to serve the Planning Area.
- Goal 2** Build and maintain high-quality infrastructure to serve the Town.
- Goal 3** Promote sustainable practices in the use and reuse of water resources.

## WATER AND WASTEWATER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy  |
|---|---|
| <b>Maintain compliance with the assured water supply rules.</b> | Continue acquiring Type 2 GFRs and acquiring and extinguishing IGFRs.   |
|   | Continue participating in groundwater storage programs to bank surface water supplies.  |
|   | Identify and implement the highest and best use of the Town’s reclaimed water.  |
|   | Plan wastewater treatment capacity improvements and levels of treatment to achieve water quality consistent with water resources plans.   |
|   | Evaluate locations for future underground storage of renewable water supplies.  |
|   | Regularly evaluate the physical availability and quality of groundwater as land urbanizes, and adjust water resource portfolio plans accordingly.   |
|   | Monitor availability and cost of surface water supplies (CAP and Gila River) for possible acquisition to supplement groundwater and reclaimed water supplies.                               |
| <b>Efficiently manage water resources.</b>                      | Participate in regional water supply development efforts.   |
|   | Continuously modernize water infrastructure to maintain high levels of service quality and efficiency.  |
|   | Continuously modernize water infrastructure to maintain high levels of service quality and efficiency.  |
|   | Ensure a high-quality inspection program for new water, wastewater and reclaimed water infrastructure installations.  |
|   | Enforce the implementation of and adherence to the International Plumbing Code for plumbing installation and the ADWR low-water-use plant list for landscaping.                             |
|   | Manage water demand by preparing and implementing conservation programs.  |
|   | Coordinate with Pinal County, Central Arizona Association of Governments, and ADWR to increase customer awareness and involvement in ongoing water conservation programs and opportunities. |
|   | Monitor groundwater quality and manage groundwater supplies to preserve, protect and enhance the quality of delivered water.  |

## WATER AND WASTEWATER OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Maintain service levels and compliance with environmental and public health rules and regulations at all times.</b></p>                       | Update infrastructure master plans commensurate with growth (every 4 to 6 years).  |
|   | Develop comprehensive water and wastewater infrastructure standards and specifications and a standardized process for inspection, testing and start-up of new facilities.  |
|   | Align Town codes and ordinances with objectives and strategies in the General Plan.  |
|   | Develop and implement a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan in conjunction with necessary roadway projects.   |
|   | Update impact fees regularly according to the updated Capital Improvement Plans, and consider regional impact fees based on demand characteristics of each growth area.  |
|   | Conduct comprehensive assessments to determine adherence to applicable rules and regulations (the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Capacity, Management, Operations, and Maintenance regulations, cross-connection control, pretreatment program, etc.). |
| <p><b>Establish a comprehensive water and wastewater Capital Improvement Program for the deployment and financing of needed infrastructure.</b></p> | Prepare for a transition of specialization for water, wastewater and reclaimed water operators, and a segregation of their equipment and tools.  |
|   | Implement an asset management program while the infrastructure inventory is relatively manageable and define goals for inspection, testing, repair and replacement of systems and appurtenances.   |
|   | Prioritize projects based on growth patterns, and distinguish between developer and Town projects.   |
|   | Evaluate water and wastewater project needs in conjunction with roadway improvements.  |
|   | Revise the development fee structure based on a prioritized and segregated Capital Improvement Plan.   |
| Develop a financing plan for Town projects.   |  |
| Use operating funds to correct deficiencies in existing infrastructure.   |  |



Johnson Utilities



## PURPOSE

The Cost of Development Element provides guidance for ensuring that new development requiring expansion of existing facilities and services bears an appropriate and proportionate share of the additional costs of those facilities and services. This Element also considers options for financing additional public infrastructure improvements needed by the Town.

## BACKGROUND AND FUNDING OPTIONS

Florence currently provides the following services, infrastructure and facilities:

- Road construction and maintenance;
- Drinking water supply and conveyance;
- Wastewater collection and treatment;
- Storm drainage collection and detention;
- Public safety (police, fire and emergency medical service);
- Solid waste collection;
- Parks and recreation;
- Cemetery;
- Courts; and
- General governmental services.

In order to provide these services, the Town has capital and operating expenses that must be funded. Florence has numerous funding options at its disposal. There are four primary revenue sources that the Town may have access to that are not tied to new development. These include sales taxes, other transactional taxes, property taxes and user fees. These revenues are to be used for operating expenses and maintaining or increasing the Town's level of service.

**Sales taxes** are generated by qualified retail and restaurant spending within the Town's municipi-

pal boundaries. Revenues can be expanded by increasing the number of successful retail and restaurant establishments and by attracting more patronage into the Town. It is important to attract retailers to the region. However, retail businesses typically follow population regardless of incentives, so establishing a desirable place to live will naturally induce higher retail sales tax collections.

**Transactional taxes** such as the bed tax are dependent on local consumer spending and tourism. The bed tax can be increased by attracting additional tourist dollars. As the number of hotel rooms in Florence continues to increase, the Town has an opportunity to raise additional revenue through a bed tax. The burden of this tax is largely borne by out-of-town visitors.

**Property taxes** provide a stable revenue stream, but due to limitations in rate increases, cannot be counted on to necessarily match increases in costs to deliver Town services. Secondary property taxes are used to secure bond capacity for capital projects. Other types of bonding will be discussed below.

Property taxes can affect the Town's competitiveness. Changes in the tax rates could disproportionately affect businesses. The competitive consequences must be considered when adjusting the Town's property tax rates.

**User fees** vary, from water and sewer rates to permit fees, and are often intended to cover costs associated with a specific operating expense. However, it is important to continuously monitor the fees in order to ensure that the fees accurately reflect the costs of the service. Some user fees are dedicated to particular expenditures and others go into the general fund.

*"There can be no real individual freedom in the presence of economic insecurity."*

– Chester Bowles

In addition to the above taxes and fees, the Town may wish to borrow money to complete necessary capital improvements.

**General obligation (GO) bonds** are the most common form of bonding and are backed up by the Town's property taxes. Under Arizona law, municipalities may issue GO bonds for water, wastewater, open space and parks projects up to an amount not exceeding 20 percent of the Town's secondary assessed value. Other types of projects may also qualify if their cost does not exceed 6 percent of the secondary assessed value. Repayment of GO bonds can come from any or multiple sources within the Town.

**Revenue bonds** are a similar method of financing capital projects whose repayment is tied to a specific future source of revenue such as sales taxes, user fees or government transfers. Access to this future revenue stream is legally pledged to the bond issuer. Revenue bonds are considered to be riskier by lenders and will often carry a higher interest rate.

One of the greatest challenges the Town will face is apportioning the costs associated with growth and development to that new development, both residential and commercial. In addition to requirements for construction of infrastructure within a project, the most common manner in which new development is required to pay for its share of new capital projects is in the form of development impact fees. Municipal improvement districts and community facilities districts are also commonly used to fund infrastructure in a specific area. The following principles are important to consider related to funding new development:

- Establish level of service standards and determine to what extent existing facilities and infrastructure will support future development.
- Estimate the impact and requirements of new development.
- When possible, require new development to pay for its fair share of costs.
- Consider benefits and costs to future residents when developing financing strategies for infrastructure.

**Development impact fees** are determined by a municipality based on a calculation of costs for capital expenditures needed to maintain its current level of service for a unit of new de-

velopment. The Town defines a "unit" as one dwelling unit or 1,000 square feet of commercial development. The fees are then assessed to the builders of the residential or commercial building when they apply for a building permit. Impact fees can be assessed for water, wastewater, transportation, public safety, parks and other public facilities. The Town recently completed an impact fee study that will guide its implementation of new fees. This is an important first step in ensuring that new development is responsible for the burden it places on Town infrastructure.

From an economic development standpoint, care must be taken when imposing taxes and fees in a small but fast-growing community such as Florence. This will be true for both residential fees and commercial fees. The imposition of impact fees that are noticeably higher than fees charged by competing cities may cause shifts in development patterns. When alternative development options exist, these shifts could be severe. When fewer alternatives exist, more moderate shifts will occur. Because the Town of Florence has many economic development competitors, the imposition of competitive fees is necessary.

In this case, the provision of competitive commercial fees is particularly important. Commercial development will be very sensitive to artificial price increases that would result from the imposition of the noncompetitive development fees. With the exception of some captive neighborhood retail and possibly some limited office development that is demanded closer to the Town Core or in developing areas that are not near the Town's borders, businesses will reject any requested rent increases and will opt for more affordable communities. Thus, there must be a thoughtful balance between forcing new development to pay for itself and avoiding disincentives for that development to occur. One advantage Florence will enjoy is the fact that Pinal County recently enacted noncompetitive development fees for commercial property. This could have the effect of redirecting commercial growth into the Town's incorporated areas.

**Municipal improvement districts and community facilities districts** are special areas within a municipality whose residents and businesses pay increased property taxes to fund a specific capital project within the designated boundaries of the district. The Town would is-

sue the bonds and place an assessment on the property owners. These types of arrangements are beneficial because municipalities can almost always receive better bond rates than a private entity. The Town has not floated a municipal bond since 1991. Municipal improvement districts are often smaller projects that are initiated and ratified by landowners in a particular area. These projects might include road or utility improvements.

**Community facilities districts** are similar to municipal improvement districts in that the Town would issue bonds secured by an assessment on the district's property owners. A community facilities district would be granted by the Town to a developer in order to fund larger capital projects such as wastewater treatment plants or other significant infrastructure. Developers prefer this mechanism over paying for the infrastructure up front and recovering the costs over time through home or commercial building sales.

**Development agreements** allow developers to directly build their share of public infrastructure in lieu of paying a development fee. Developers will often do this out of necessity if roads or utilities must be in place ahead of residential and commercial development in a particular community. The Town must be careful in negotiating development agreements because residents and businesses in new developments place a burden on infrastructure, particularly related to transportation, outside of their immediate vicinity.

**Dedications and exactions** are a way for a municipality to ensure that new developments set aside land for public uses. By mandating that a certain percentage of a new community be dedicated for schools or public parks, the Town would make certain that a current level of service is met or exceeded. In smaller communities where it is not practical for a full-size site to be dedicated, developers could be required to pay in-lieu fees that may be reimbursed to another developer who is willing or able to place the public site on his or her property. Exactions, like development fees, must be exercised with care because of the potentially dampening effect that excessive requirements could have on economic development.

A final source of funding is government transfers and grants.

**Intergovernmental transfers** are revenues from the State or Federal governments that are usually based on population and are often linked to specific uses such as roads. The State of Arizona redistributes a portion of its collections from sales, bed, HURF and other taxes to its cities and counties. These state-shared revenues are based on the population distribution calculated from the most recent U.S. Census. Fast-growing cities and towns such as Florence will be at a disadvantage during the years in between each Census because they will not get credit for their population growth, which will be faster than the State as a whole.

One advantage Florence has relative to many other communities is the existence of local prisons. Each inmate is considered a resident of Florence and, as such, the Town receives additional state-shared revenue. As the prisons expand, it will become even more important to consider an official mid-year Census to fully capture the additional residents in the area.

**Grants** also come from the State and Federal governments. They are almost always tied to a particular project or study and cannot be counted on as recurring revenue. The Town should actively pursue government grants that can assist in a variety of initiatives ranging from affordable housing to infrastructure planning and expansion.

### Current Fiscal Profile

For the fiscal year 2007–2008, the Town of Florence general fund had three sources that accounted for nearly 93 percent of its revenue (see Table 13-1). Nearly half of all revenues (\$6.2 million) came from intergovernmental transfers. The next largest sources were sales tax collections (\$4.9 million) and general fund user fees (\$798,881).

Over time, the Town will need to rely less on government transfers and more on the local tax base. Intergovernmental transfers rose only by approximately 4 percent from fiscal year 2000–2001 to fiscal year 2006–2007. In contrast, non-dedicated user fees grew by 45 percent and sales tax collections grew by 127 percent during the same time period.

Decisions to raise additional revenue through increased taxes and fees must be weighed against potential negative reaction throughout the community. Possible avenues through which the Town could increase revenue are described below.

**Table 13-1. Town of Florence General Fund Fiscal Year 2007–2008 Actual Revenues<sup>a</sup>**

| Category                   | Revenues (\$)     | Percentage of Total (%) |
|----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Sales tax                  | 4,890,000         | 38.1                    |
| Licenses and permits       | 701,225           | 5.5                     |
| Intergovernmental transfer | 6,226,229         | 48.5                    |
| User fees                  | 798,881           | 6.2                     |
| Other                      | 223,225           | 1.7                     |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>12,839,560</b> | <b>100</b>              |

Source: Town of Florence 2008–2009 Budget

<sup>a</sup> Includes actual revenues recognized on the modified accrual or accrual basis as of the date the proposed budget was prepared, plus estimated revenues for the remainder of the fiscal year.

**Sales Tax:** The Town’s existing sales rate is 2 percent. Eloy and Coolidge currently have sales tax rates of 3 percent. Other municipalities in Pinal County have tax rates ranging between 2% and 3.5%, with most communities closer to the 2% rate. Any increases in the local tax rate must be weighed against the potential negative competitive consequences of that increase.

**Bed Tax:** A bed tax is often used by communities to pay for a wide variety of uses from development to tourism. This tax is usually born by those that live outside the Town. The current rate of 2 percent is low when compared to other cities and towns with hotels. Florence has over 100 hotel rooms. By increasing the bed tax rate, the additional revenue could help pay for tourism related amenities, downtown redevelopment and/or road improvements.

**Property Tax:** Property taxes are not general fund revenues and, therefore, are tied to specific types of projects that are budgeted by the Town. The Town’s current rates are consistent with other municipalities in the county. Any increase in rates could decrease the Town’s competitive position.

**User Fees:** The Town should periodically review its user fees. It is not expected that all fees charged will cover the cost of services; however, the Town needs to ensure that a proper and reasonable value is assigned to the fees and that the fees are consistent throughout the fee schedule.

**Bonding:** The Town has untapped bonding potential based on the existing value of its real property and anticipated future revenue streams. Bonding is not free money and most issuances require voter approval.

The Town is fortunate to be on a pay-as-you-go model. If Florence does pursue bonding, it must make sure that the debt service amount does not erode the level of service that the Town provides to the existing citizens. This balancing act requires sound financial planning. The Town is well suited to issue debt, if it chooses so, in a responsible manner.

**Development Fees:** The Town is currently considering the adoption of development impact fees that would allocate the costs associated with future development to those new communities and commercial buildings.

## COMMUNITY INPUT AND VALUES

The Town of Florence faces challenges in accommodating future growth and development in a fair and economically sustainable manner. Community input gathered through the public outreach effort for the General Plan focused on the following issues with regard to the cost of development:

- Use the existing assets of infrastructure and public facilities to increase infill and reuse, while maintaining important qualities of community character.
- Provide quality public services, facilities and infrastructure that are distributed equitably throughout the Town.
- Promote joint use of public facilities to optimize the use of public funds.
- Support high-quality education and schools.

## GOALS

Florence’s recent growth brings challenges in how to pay for new development. The goals of the Cost of Development Element are to:

### Cost of Development Goals

- GOAL 1** Provide superior services and facilities to existing and future development in a cost-effective manner.
- GOAL 2** Equitably allocate the cost of growth between the public and private sectors.



## COST OF DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

| Objective   | Strategy   |
|---|--|
| <b>Evaluate the Town’s level of service standards.</b>        | Study the existing level of service for infrastructure and Town services and evaluate whether current service levels will be sufficient for the anticipated future population and businesses.  |
|   | Identify the cost of services and explore cost-effective solutions to expanding infrastructure and services.   |
| <b>Seek to improve the quality of public services.</b>        | Maintain clear performance standards for infrastructure and services. Identify levels of service that should be improved in the interest of public health, safety and welfare.   |
|   | Use the Town’s Capital Improvement Program to plan for future infrastructure and service enhancements.   |
| <b>Require new development to pay for itself</b>              | Clearly define appropriate private and public sector costs and responsibilities.   |
|   | Assess the impact that potential development impact fees would have on economic development, and maintain fees at appropriate levels to ensure meeting level of service standards and staying competitive with other communities.  |
|   | Require areas seeking annexation to bear the costs of bringing infrastructure and services up to Town standards.   |
|   | Develop and implement a financial model that will effectively evaluate the costs of annexation for both undeveloped land and land with residential and commercial development.<br><br>Enter into development agreements with developers only if it is demonstrated that they are equitable and in the best interest of the Town. |
| <b>Identify and consider a variety of funding mechanisms.</b> | When financing a capital improvement, thoughtfully consider each of the funding methods at the Town’s disposal and weigh their benefits against the goals of the community as a whole. Carefully plan for short- and long-term capital and operations expenditures that should be undertaken.                                    |
|   | Consider implementing special taxing districts in order to allow new development requiring improvements to pay for itself.   |
|   | Continue to seek revenues from State and Federal sources.  |
|   | Efficiently use the Town’s bonding capacity if it is necessary for the completion of crucial infrastructure improvements.<br><br>Aggressively seek out and pursue public-private partnerships for development when the situation is warranted.   |
| <b>Maintain long-term fiscal responsibility.</b>              | Maximize the capacity of existing infrastructure and facilities.   |
|   | Conduct an annual review of the five-year Capital Improvement Program.   |
|   | Avoid the use of interim facilities when feasible. Conduct an analysis when constructing infrastructure and buildings so the improvements can accommodate growth, both in population and staff. Consider the relative costs when determining whether to use a phasing approach.  |
|   | Maintain and update a long-range financial plan.<br><br>Monitor local property and sales tax rates relative to regional and statewide municipal tax rates and keep them at competitive levels.   |

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## GENERAL PLAN ADOPTION

The adoption of this General Plan by the Town Council establishes a new vision for Florence's future and provides developers with the expectations and requirements for proposed new developments. However, the plan may be changed in the future. It is anticipated that, as conditions change over time and the Town of Florence grows, amendments to the General Plan may be needed to keep the document up to date.

The Town Council and Town staff will monitor the plan to ensure that it continues to reflect the desires and goals of Florence's citizens. Coordination will ensure that the General Plan is consistent with new plans (transportation, economic development, parks, etc.) that may be developed in the future.

## GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENTS

In order to ensure a clear and consistent application of Town policy, any proposed change to the General Plan must reflect the provisions of the General Plan text, maps and exhibits.

Amendments to the General Plan may be initiated in two ways: (1) by the Town Council as a comprehensive update, re-adoption of the General Plan or amendment to a portion of the General Plan; or (2) by an outside party as an application filed for a General Plan Amendment.

General Plan amendments will be reviewed and processed in accordance with State law and Town ordinances and administrative procedures, and will occur only after careful staff review. Adoption by the Town Council will occur if the findings of fact support the proposed revisions.

Three types of modifications to the General Plan may occur: Major and Minor Amendments and Technical Revisions, as shown in Table 14-1.

## Major Amendments

In the case of Major Amendments, the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission will hold at least two public hearings to gather public input. After that, the Planning and Zoning Commission may forward a recommendation for approval, approval with modifications or denial to the Town Council.

Upon receipt of a recommendation by the Commission, the Town Council will hold at least one public hearing. The Town Council will approve, approve with modifications or deny the application. Approval of any Major Amendment requires an affirmative vote by at least two-thirds of the members of the Town Council.

**Table 14-1. Types of General Plan Amendments**

### Major Amendments

Major Amendments are any changes that would substantially alter the Town's planned mix or balance of land uses or significant textual changes that would alter the vision or goals of the plan. By State law, Major Amendments may occur only once per calendar year.

### Minor Amendments

Minor Amendments include mapping or simple textual changes that do not substantially alter the Town's mix or balance of land uses or alter the vision of the plan. Minor Amendments clarify or further promote the vision of the General Plan and will be considered on an ongoing basis and will be grouped together, as needed, to form individual amendments for final action by the Town.

### Technical Revisions

Technical Revisions may be made administratively because they are not considered amendments to the General Plan. Revisions of this nature include mapping changes to reflect developments permitted by General Plan policy, factual changes to the databases/statistics used in preparation of the General Plan and corrections that do not change the meaning of policies and actions as adopted by the Town Council. These revisions will be processed on an ongoing basis. Because Technical Revisions are editorial rather than substantive in nature and are not considered to be amendments, they may be approved administratively.

## Minor Amendments

For a Minor Amendment to the General Plan, the Town's Planning and Zoning Commission will conduct at least one public hearing. The Commission may forward a recommendation for approval, approval with modifications or denial to the Town Council.

Upon receipt of a recommendation by the Commission, the Town Council will hold at least one public hearing. The Town Council will approve, approve with modifications or deny the application.

## Technical Revisions

Technical Revisions may be made administratively because they are not considered amendments to the General Plan. Revisions may include map changes to reflect developments permitted by General Plan policy, factual changes to the databases/statistics used in preparation of the General Plan and corrections that do not change the meaning of policies and actions as adopted by the Town Council. These revisions will be processed on an ongoing basis.

## 10-Year Updates

State law requires that a comprehensive update of the General Plan be undertaken at least once every 10 years. Changing conditions may, however, warrant a comprehensive update or amendments to portions of the plan on a more frequent basis as determined by the Town Council.

## Review of Amendments

Amendments to the General Plan will be reviewed with respect to the following considerations:

- Suitability of the current land use or circulation classification
- Extent to which the proposed change in land use or circulation:
  - supports the goals and objectives of the General Plan
  - conforms to the proposed range of land uses, densities and intensity of uses
  - conforms to the hierarchy of transportation systems set forth in the General Plan

- results in compatible development patterns
- avoids creation of isolated uses that will place a burden on services and circulation systems
- Unique physical characteristics of the site that present opportunities or constraints for development under the existing and proposed classifications
- Ability of water and sewer systems to accommodate development resulting from the proposed amendment without system extensions or improvements
- Ability of existing police and fire department personnel to provide adequate emergency services according to acceptable response standards set by the community
- Ability of existing and proposed public and private open space and recreation facilities, schools, and library facilities to meet the projected demand of future development without reducing services below community standards
- Fiscal impact of the proposed development based on evaluation of projected revenues and additional costs of providing public facilities and services to accommodate projected increases or decreases in population and development that could occur as a result of the General Plan amendment
- Impacts on the ability of the community to sustain its physical and cultural resources, including air quality, water quality, energy and natural and human-made resources necessary to meet the demands of present and future residents
- Changes, if any, in physical conditions or Federal or State laws or policies that may substantiate the proposed amendment

Table 14-2 defines potential revisions to the General Plan as Major or Minor Amendments based on the size of the change.

Because of potential land use compatibility issues, certain General Plan revisions will require a greater level of evaluation. Table 14-3 identifies instances where a proposed revision of land use designation will require a Major Amendment regardless of the number of units or acreage involved.

**Table 14-2. Requirements for Type of General Plan Amendment Based on the Extent of Change**

| Current Designation   | Result of Proposed Amendment (increase or decrease) | Minor Amendment | Major Amendment |
|---|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Residential Land Uses   | Up to 500 units                                     | X               |                 |
|   | More than 500 units                                 |                 | X               |
| Commercial/Professional Office Land Uses                            | Up to 50 acres                                      | X               |                 |
|   | More than 50 acres                                  |                 | X               |
| Employment/Light Industrial Land Uses                               | Up to 50 acres                                      | X               |                 |
|   | More than 50 acres                                  |                 | X               |
| Heavy Industrial Land Uses  | Up to 40 acres                                      | X               |                 |
|   | More than 40 acres                                  |                 | X               |
| Mixed Land Uses*  | Up to 50 acres                                      | X               |                 |
|   | More than 50 acres                                  |                 | X               |
| Public/Governmental, Parks and Recreation, and Open Space Land Uses | Up to 20 acres                                      | X               |                 |
|   | More than 20 acres                                  |                 | X               |
| Prison and Military Reservation Land Uses                           | Any increase or decrease                            |                 | X               |
| Overlay Land Use Areas  | Up to 20 acres                                      | X               |                 |
|   | More than 20 acres                                  |                 | X               |

Note: The cumulative impact of amendments will be taken into consideration.

A special exception is established for the area encompassed by the proposed Gila River Floodplain Study Area. Proposed amendments to the General Plan Future Land Use Map that would bring positive benefit to land included in the Gila River floodplain boundary modification study would be addressed as Minor Amendments, and would not require a Major Amendment to the General Plan.

\* Any application of a Master Planned Community land use category will occur through a Minor or Major Amendment.

**Table 14-3. Requirements for Major General Plan Amendments Based on Land Use Compatibility**

A Major General Plan Amendment will be required if a proposed revision would place any of the land use designations in the left-hand column physically adjacent to or separated by a roadway from any of the designations in the right-hand column, regardless of the number of units or acreage involved.

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Rural Ranchette Residential (RRR)   | MDR 2, HDR1, HDR2, CC, PO, E/LI, HI, MPC, DMU, HMU, P, MR                 |
| Low Density Residential (LDR)       | HDR2, E/LI, HI, P, MR   |
| Medium Density Residential 1 (MDR1) | RRR, HI, P, MR  |
| Medium Density Residential 2 (MDR2) | RRR, HI, P, MR  |
| High Density Residential 1 (HDR1)   | RRR, LDR, HI, P, MR   |
| High Density Residential 2 (HDR2)   | RRR, LDR, HI, P, MR   |
| Neighborhood Commercial (NC)        | HI, P, MR   |
| Community Commercial (CC)           | RRR, HI, MR   |
| Professional Office (PO)            | RRR, HI, MR   |
| Employment/Light Industrial (E/LI)  | RRR, LDR, DMU, HMU  |
| Heavy Industrial (HI)               | RRR, LDR, MDR1, MDR2, HDR1, HDR2, NC, CC, PO, MPC, DMU, HMU, P/G, P/R, OS |
| Master Planned Community (MPC)      | HI, P, MR   |
| Downtown Mixed Use (DMU)*           | RRR, E/LI, HI, P, MR  |
| Highway Mixed Use (HMU)*            | RRR, HI, P, MR  |
| Public/Governmental (P/G)           | Not applicable (addressed by policy)                                      |
| Prison (P)                          | All land uses   |
| Parks/Recreation (P/R)              | P, MR   |
| Open Space (OS)                     | P, MR   |
| Military Reservation (MR)           | All land uses   |
| Overlay Land Use Areas*             | Not applicable (addressed by policy)                                      |

\* Proposed land use will typically be contiguous to the same land use area.

## GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### INTERRELATIONSHIP OF GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

The General Plan is intended to be an integrated statement providing direction for management of the Town's future. Although the General Plan is organized into separate elements, each with its own goals, objectives, and strategies, no one element, goal, objective or strategy stands alone. The General

Plan is intended to be reviewed as a whole in order to determine the General Plan's direction regarding community direction.

It is also important that all parties using the General Plan recognize that resources are not unlimited, and that not all community objectives can be achieved concurrently. In addition, there are often trade-offs between community objectives. Thus, implementing the General Plan requires a balance between competing objectives. Where competition between competing values may result in seemingly incompatible policy direction, Town decision-makers will determine the relative priorities of competing needs and objectives, and act based on that determination.

### MONITORING OF GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The Town Planning Department will monitor implementation of the General Plan. On an annual basis, the Planning Department will provide a report to the Town Council on the status of the General Plan and its implementation.



General Plan public meeting