



TOWN OF SAHUARITA

GENERAL PLAN

Council Approved Draft

February 23, 2026

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INTRODUCTION

Rooted in the values of community connection, environmental stewardship, and quality of life, the Town of Sahuarita's General Plan reflects the shared vision and aspirations of its residents. It provides a framework for thoughtful, balanced growth that preserves the town's unique character while enhancing opportunities for all who live, work, and visit. The Plan supports a vibrant, resilient future by guiding decisions on land use, transportation, housing, economic development, parks, and public services. With a focus on long-term sustainability and community well-being, the General Plan ensures that Sahuarita continues to thrive as a place people are proud to call home.

PURPOSE & SCOPE

1 | WHAT IS A GENERAL PLAN?

The General Plan serves as the principal framework for guiding the Town's future. Anchored in a shared community vision, the General Plan is supported with subsequent Goals and Policies to ensure decision-making in a manner that is consistent with the long-term aspirations of the Town. The General Plan also informs the formulation and management of various Town codes, regulations, departmental plans, initiatives, and focus areas, thereby ensuring that near-term decisions are consistent with the plan's strategic outlook.

2 | WHY DO WE NEED IT?

In accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS §9-461.05), the primary purpose of a general plan is to establish guiding policies for the management and future growth of the Town across various mandated elements (i.e. chapters). Developed through extensive public engagement, this plan serves as the community's foundational framework for land use and zoning decisions, while also outlining strategies for public investment and private development. State law requires every community to maintain a General Plan and update it every 10 years. The Town of Sahuarita's most recent General Plan update was completed in 2015. This state-mandated update process



compiled with all statutory requirements as specified by ARS §9-461.05, incorporating the following required (indicated with *) and elective elements: Land Use*, Growth Areas*, Transportation*, Public Services & Facilities*, Open Space*, Environmental Planning*, Water Resources*, Energy, Economic Development, and Cost of Development*.

3 | HOW WILL IT BE USED?

Per Arizona law, the General Plan serves as the guiding framework for the Town's land use and zoning decisions. While it does not modify existing zoning, any future zoning changes must align with the General Plan. The public is encouraged to consult the General Plan for detailed information on the types of land use, transportation, and open spaces the Town supports. It also offers valuable insights and recommendations to Town decision-makers regarding the quality of life and lifestyles enjoyed by residents and visitors. Beyond the Town's government, the General Plan is a resource for various stakeholders, including residents, local businesses, and community groups to understand the Town's future vision.

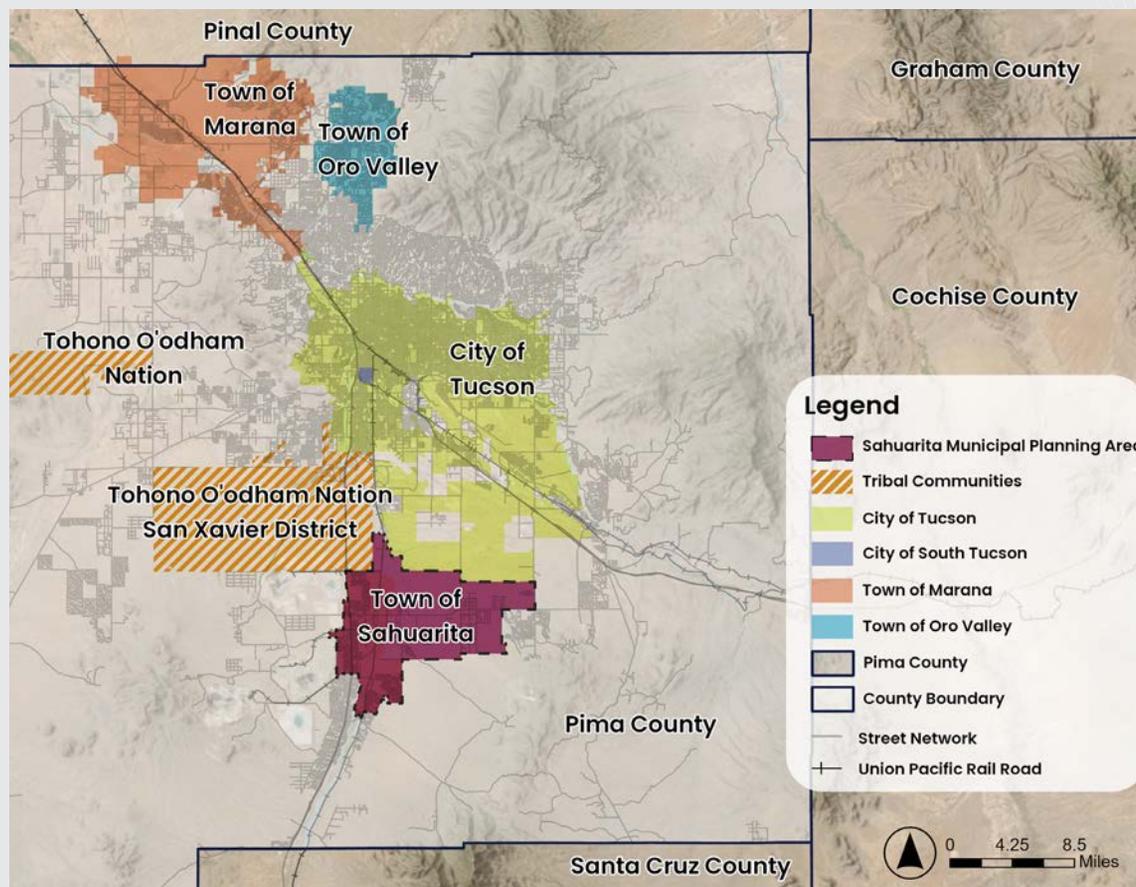
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REGIONAL CONTEXT, MUNICIPAL LIMITS, PLANNING AREA & GOVERNMENT

Regional Context

The Town of Sahuarita is located in the eastern portion of Pima County and is bounded by the Tohono O’odham Nation to the north and by unincorporated County land, including Green Valley to the south, on the remaining sides. Approximately 20 minutes south of downtown Tucson and approximately 40 minutes north of the US/Mexico border along Interstate 19, Sahuarita is uniquely positioned to capture 24 million annual visitors from Mexico and is also a viable center for companies and employers to conduct business with Mexico. The full regional context for the Town of Sahuarita is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Regional Context Map



Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

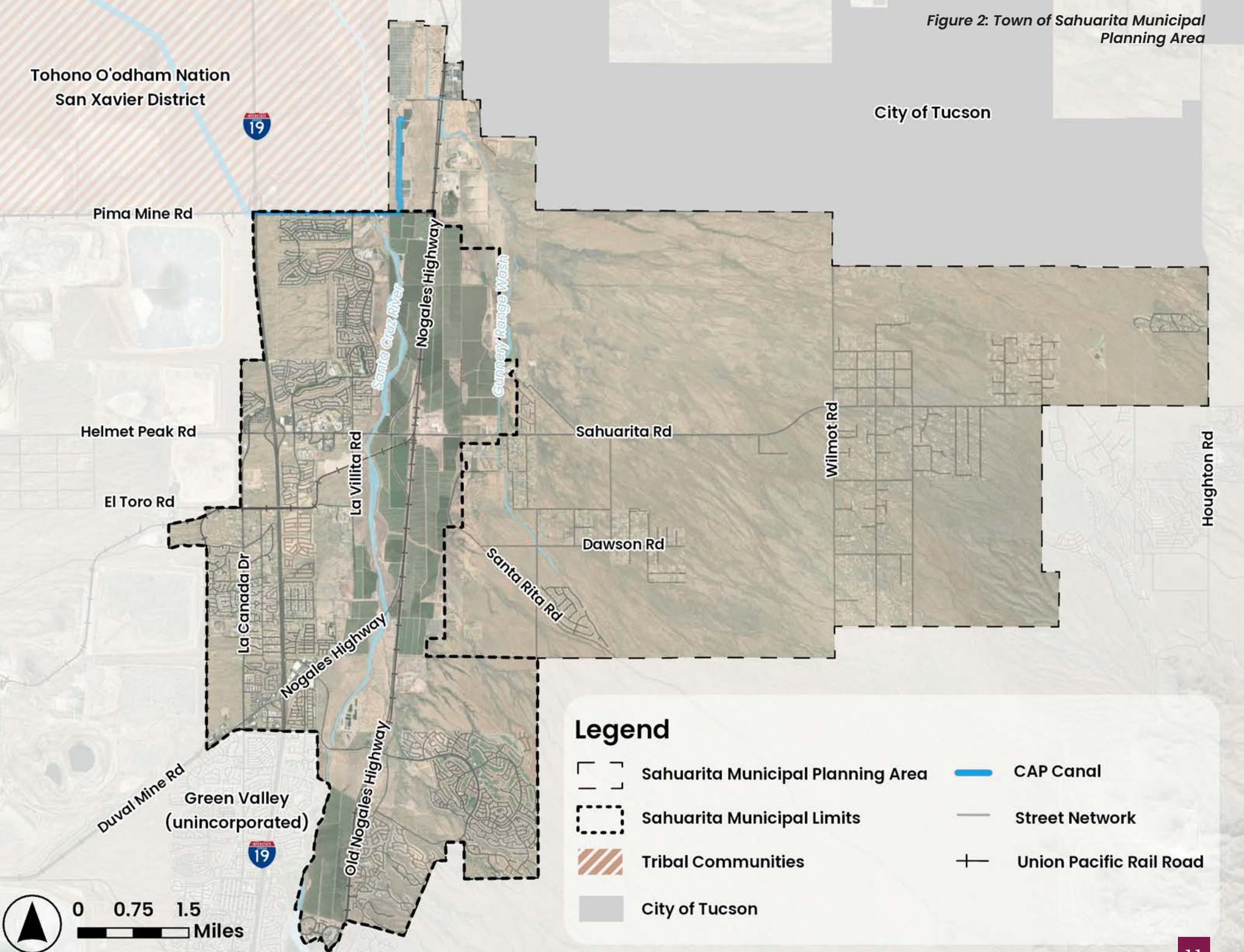
Municipal Limits & Planning Area

Currently 31.3 square miles in area, the Municipal Limits outline the incorporated area of the Town of Sahuarita where it has direct jurisdiction. The Municipal Planning Area (MPA) is the regional area to where Sahuarita’s planning influence extends, including the SECAP special planning area, and the area from where annexations to Sahuarita can originate. The entirety of the Sahuarita MPA and its Municipal Limits are shown in **Figure 2**.

Government

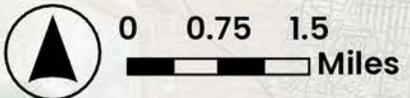
The Town of Sahuarita uses a council-manager form of government. The Sahuarita Town Council, which consists of seven members, including a Mayor and Vice Mayor, who are selected from among the elected council members, handles policy decisions, while the town manager manages staff and daily operations. The Town Council addresses all matters related to Sahuarita, such as residential and commercial development and natural preservation.

Figure 2: Town of Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area



Legend

	Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area		CAP Canal
	Sahuarita Municipal Limits		Street Network
	Tribal Communities		Union Pacific Rail Road
	City of Tucson		



Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

TOWN HISTORY

Although Sahuarita is a “young” Town, the earliest human inhabitation of the Tucson Basin area dates back to the “Paleo-Indians” (circa 11,500–11,000 B.C.) – small, nomadic groups of hunter-gatherers who likely followed herds of big game into North America across the Bering Strait. Over time, Indigenous occupations in the Tucson Basin became increasingly diverse and sedentary. From approximately A.D. 1 to 1450, the area was part of what is often referred to as the Hohokam archaeological tradition, characterized by canal-based irrigation systems, agriculture, and regional exchange networks. While this tradition reflects shared technological and cultural practices across the region, it encompassed diverse communities rather than a single unified group. This continuity and variation over time are linked to present-day Tribal Nations, including the Tohono O’odham Nation, Akimel O’odham, and Pascua Yaqui Tribe, among others. As the Hohokam tradition declined around the mid-15th century, new cultural influences and population movements began to shape the region, marking the transition to later periods of O’odham presence and, eventually, European contact.

Spanish exploration began in the early 1500s, with significant activity by Jesuit priest Eusebio Kino between 1691 and 1702. In 1775, Spanish Captain Juan Bautista de Anza led an expedition through Sahuarita forging alliances and receiving assistance from tribes and groups of native peoples along the way. Anza and his group reached their destination of San Francisco, and their route is now the 1,200-mile-long Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, which runs through Sahuarita along the Santa Cruz River. The trail was designated by Congress in 1990 through an amendment to the National Trails System Act.

Sahuarita and the surrounding areas were under Spanish control from about the time of Anza’s expedition until after the Mexican War of Independence in 1821, at which point the region came under Mexican control. The land was eventually sold to the United States as part of the Gadsden Purchase in 1854.





Following the 1854 Gadsden Purchase, Sahuarita became part of the Territory of New Mexico in the United States of America. In that same year, Andrew B. Gray traveled the region on behalf of the Texas Western Railroad in order to run a preliminary survey of the region. Meanwhile, the Native American peoples of the region were being pushed onto each other's land through American expansionism. In 1857, the Sobaipuri vacated the area, generally moving westward to Papago territory. Sahuarita was part of the Confederate Arizona Territory between 1861 and 1862 before being captured by the Union and incorporated into Arizona Territory in 1863.

Sahuarita was founded in 1911 and incorporated in 1994. The earliest known reference to the Town can be found on a German map from 1875, which labels the Town "Sahuarito". The first known US map to list the town came in 1879, by the US Department of Interior, calling the Town "Saurita". The Saurita town name would continue to be found on successive maps of 1880 and 1890. Finally, a 1925 map of "Auto Trails" (e.g. roadways) of Arizona and New Mexico lists "Continental" instead of Sahuarita. The roadway at the time was an "improved road", one step inferior to a "paved road". Today this road is the Old Nogales Highway.

The Continental Farm of Sahuarita plays a central role in town history. In 1915, worried about the possibility of a German blockade of rubber imports, Bernard Baruch, Joseph Kennedy, and J.P. Morgan founded the farm along the Santa Cruz River with hopes of growing guayule: plants that provide rubber. The project was abandoned after the end of World War I, and in 1922 the land was sold to Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands. The Queen rented the land to cotton farmers, in what would be the primary crop for the following four decades. In 1948, R. Keith Walden relocated the Farmers Investment Co. (FICO) from California to Arizona, buying the Continental Farm lands from the Queen. In 1965, over fears of a fall in demand for cotton - resulting from the advent of synthetic fibers-Walden switched his crop to pecans.

The Town also played a key role in both World War II and the Cold War. During World War II, Sahuarita was home to the Sahuarita Airstrip which was used to train bomber pilots for service in the war. Camp Continental, a labor camp for German prisoners of war was also located in Sahuarita. The Town was also home to one of the country's Titan II Missiles, built in 1963 during the height of the Cold War. Today, the Town contains the Titan Missile Museum, which is the only Titan Missile site in the world accessible to the public. The actual Titan II missile, the most powerful nuclear missile on standby in the US, remains in the silo for visitors to see. The Town of

Sahuarita was officially incorporated on September 13, 1994, following a closely contested election in which 273 residents voted in favor and 259 opposed. At this time, the Town's population stood at approximately 1,600. Municipal operations initially took place in the home of Councilmember Lee Parrish, with Anne Parrish serving as the Town's first Clerk. In December 1995, the Town transitioned to a rented office space on La Cañada Drive.

A 1996 petition to disincorporate did not receive sufficient support to qualify for the ballot, and the Town subsequently entered a period of significant growth. In 1997, Sahuarita annexed 645 acres, which is now home to Sahuarita Lake Park and North Santa Cruz Park. The Madera Highlands area was added to 1999, and in 2000, the Town doubled its geographic footprint by annexing the pecan groves and the future site of Quail Creek. The most recent annexation occurred in 2018, when La Posada joined the Town's boundaries.

From its initial population of 1,600, Sahuarita surpassed 10,000 residents by 2005, rising from the 80th to the 34th largest municipality in Arizona. To support this rapid development, the Town constructed a new municipal complex on Sahuarita Road, completed in 2008. By 2011, population demands led to the opening of a second high school, which welcomed over 400 students in its first year.

Over the past decade, Sahuarita's population has grown to more than 30,000. Residents are served by a range of community resources, including a locally operated food bank (established in 2018), a small hospital (opened in 2019), and a permanent branch of the Pima County Library (opened in 2021). The Town also offers a variety of recreational amenities and programs, such as the annual Fiesta Sahuarita celebration (first held in 1999) and several parks, including Man in the Maze Park, which opened in 2024.

Among the Town's most notable recent additions is the Sahuarita letter installation outside Town Hall, created in 2023 as part of a regional youth art initiative. Sahuarita has participated in this program for over 25 years, with its influence visible in public art throughout the community.

In the more 30 years since incorporation, Sahuarita has continued to evolve, guided by strategic planning and commitment to delivering high-quality services, programs, and amenities that reflect the values and aspirations of its residents.



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SAHUARITA TODAY

Existing Demographic Profile

Existing and Projected Population

The Town’s population growth has historically surpassed that of both Pima County and the State, with the most notable increase occurring between 2000 and 2010, as shown in **Table 1**. Over the past four years, the Town has experienced a growth rate exceeding 10%, or approximately 2.5% annually, outpacing Pima County (4.2%) and the State (7.0%). Today, Sahuarita’s population is 37,690, according to the Pima Association of Governments (PAG), making it the fourth most populous municipality in Pima County. Projections by PAG estimate that Sahuarita’s population will reach 41,837 by 2030, 47,833 by 2040, and 52,531 by 2050, as illustrated in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Population Projections

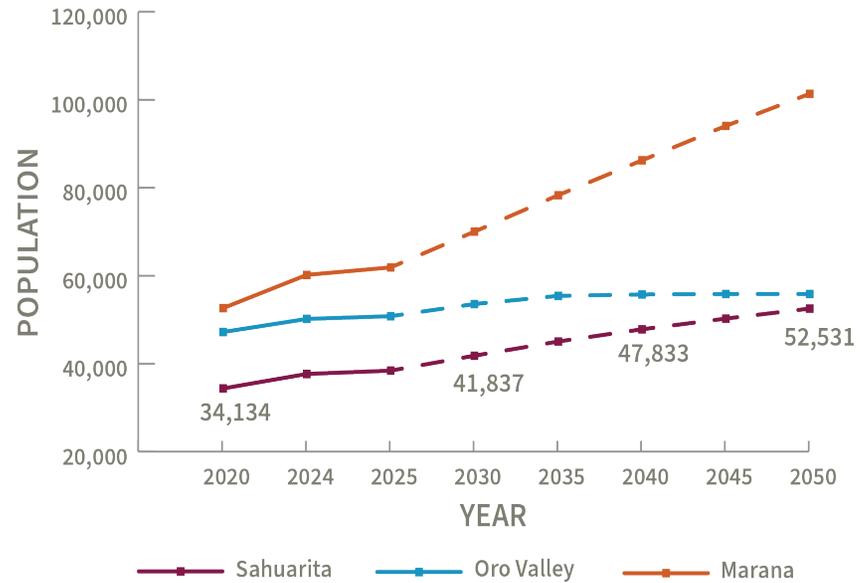


Table 1: Historic and Projected Population Growth

Jurisdiction	Historic				Existing	Projected		
	2000	2010	2020	2022	2024 (est.)	2030	2040	2050
Sahuarita	3,242	25,259	34,134	36,179	37,690	41,837	47,833	52,531
Marana	13,556	34,961	51,908	56,758	60,204	70,024	86,235	101,359
Oro Valley	29,700	41,011	47,070	48,906	49,573	53,573	55,751	55,850
Pima County	843,746	980,263	1,043,433	1,057,597	1,087,948	1,129,414	1,195,070	1,249,828
Arizona	5,130,632	6,392,017	7,151,502	7,359,197	7,658,633	8,313,814	9,206,879	9,961,322

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010, and 2020 and Pima Association of Governments

Population by Income & Unemployment Rate

Sahuarita exhibits a notably higher median household income compared to both Pima County and the State. However, when compared to other similar communities in Pima County, Sahuarita’s median income is lower, illustrated in **Figure 4**.

Additionally, Sahuarita experiences a higher unemployment rate than all comparison areas, highlighted in **Figure 5**.

Figure 4: Median Income

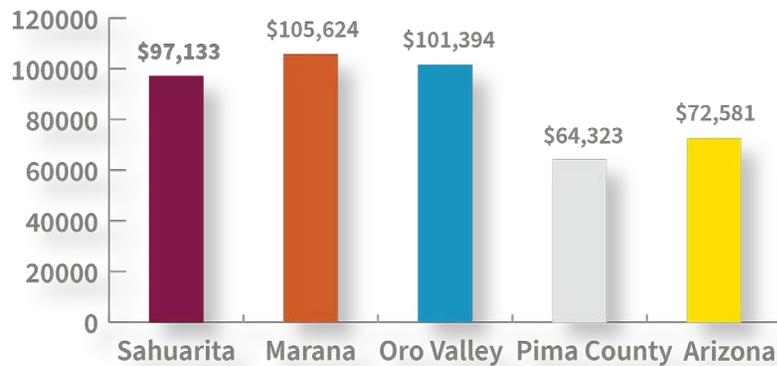
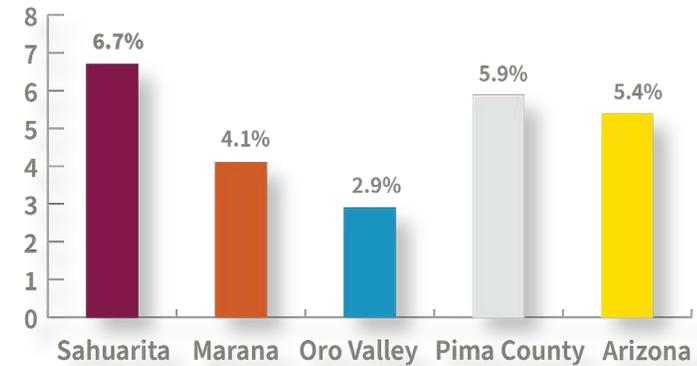


Figure 5: Unemployment Rate



Population by Age

The largest age cohorts in the Town of Sahuarita fall within the ranges of people under 19 years old and the 35–54-year cohorts shown in **Figure 6**. These age cohorts make up 31.1% and 24.0% of the Town’s population, respectively. This aligns with the Town’s median age, which is 37.1, which is younger than the median ages of the County, State and similar communities as **Figure 7** shows. Additionally, Sahuarita’s median age increased from 35.5 as reported in 2015.

Figure 6: Age Cohorts

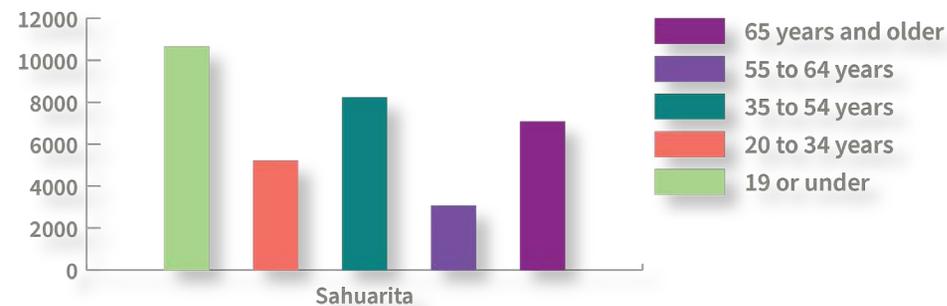
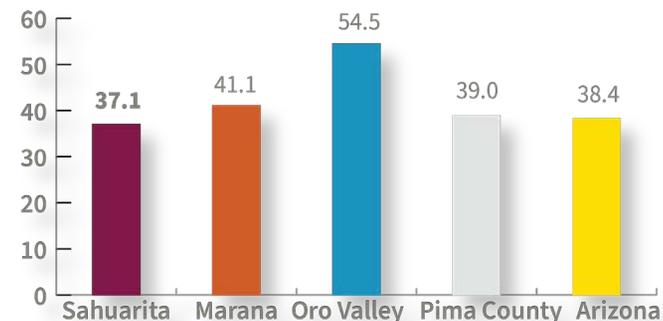


Figure 7: Median Age



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022

Educational Attainment and Employment Industry

Along with a growing population, the Town of Sahuarita has a well-educated and diverse employment base, shown in **Figure 8**. The educational attainment levels of the Town’s residents exceed those of both the County and the State, with higher percentages of high school and college graduates. The previously presented income data further substantiates the advanced educational qualifications of Sahuarita’s residents.

Figure 8: Educational Attainment

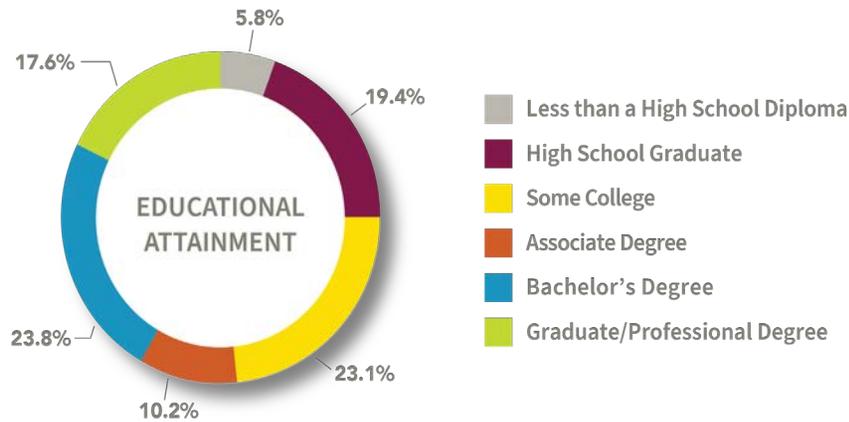


Figure 9: Workforce Industries



Approximately 3,222 individuals, representing nearly 24.4% of Sahuarita’s workforce, are employed in educational services, and health care and social assistance. Followed by public administration (11.9%); and professional scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (10.7%). The next three largest industries are retail trade; manufacturing; and construction, which together make up an additional 26.78% of the workforce, as illustrated in **Figure 9**. The Town’s five largest employers include Sahuarita Unified School District, La Posada, Walmart, Fry’s and Town of Sahuarita, shown in **Table 2**.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022

Table 2: Top Employers

Employer	Employees	Percentage of Total Town Employment
Sahuarita Unified School District	805	22.90%
La Posada	472	13.42%
Walmart	364	10.35%
Fry's	271	7.71%
Town of Sahuarita	198	5.63%

Source: Sahuarita Annual Comprehensive Financial Report 2024

Race & Ethnicity

According to the 2022 American Community Survey (ACS), 73.1% of Sahuarita’s population is White. The second highest race category percentage is those who identify their race as Two or More at 15.4% of the total population. The share of the population who are a race Other than listed is 7.1%, and the share of the population who are Black/African American is 2.7%. The Asian, American Indian/Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander populations comprise 1.0%, 0.7% and 0.0%, respectively, of Sahuarita’s total residents. The comprehensive view of the race of the population of Sahuarita is shown **Figure 10**.

The U.S. Census Bureau recognizes ethnicity and race as distinct attributes. According to **Figure 11**, over 39% of Sahuarita’s population identifies as Hispanic or Latino. This group includes individuals with heritage from Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and other regions in Central and South America that have historical ties to Spanish cultural influences.

Figure 10: Race Distribution

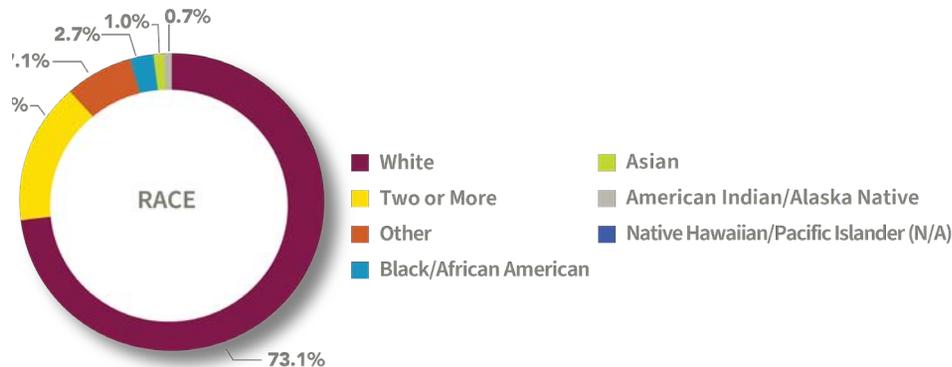
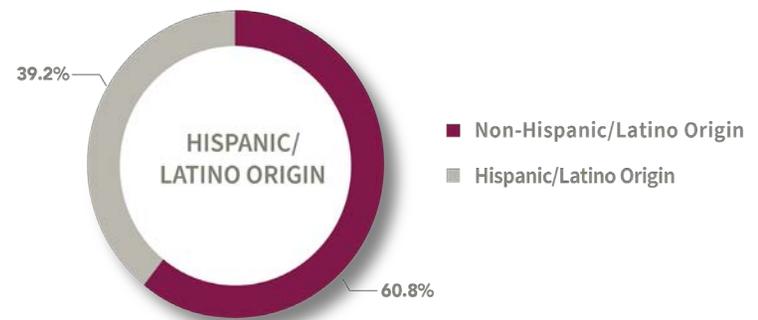


Figure 11: Hispanic/Latino Distribution



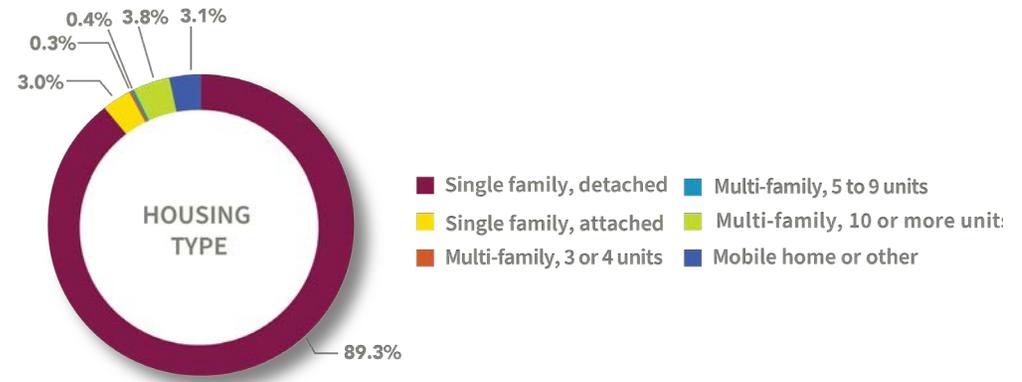
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022

Housing

Housing Type

Single-unit housing types, which include detached and attached single-family homes, make up a substantial 92.3% of the housing stock in Sahuarita. The remaining 7.7% of the housing stock is comprised of various other housing types. This includes multi-family housing like apartments and condominiums, and mobile homes or other non-traditional housing options, shown in **Figure 12**.

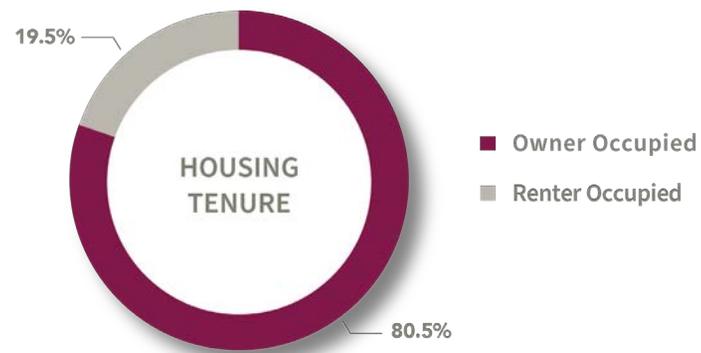
Figure 12: Housing Type



Housing Tenure

The majority of the housing stock in the Town of Sahuarita is owner-occupied, accounting for over 80% of total housing units, as shown in **Figure 13**. In contrast, renter-occupied units constitute only 19.5% of the housing stock.

Figure 13: Housing Tenure



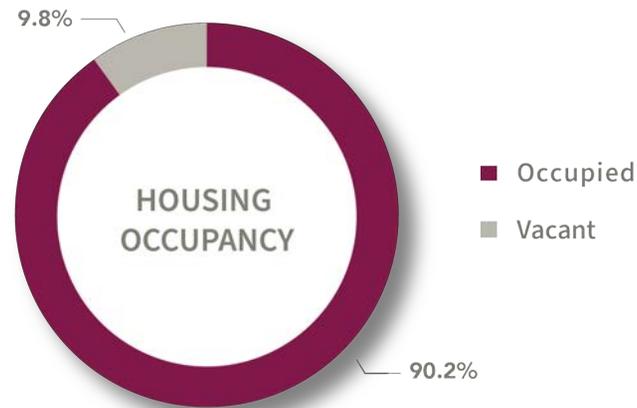
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022

Housing Occupancy

Over 90% of the housing units in Sahuarita are occupied, reflecting a high level of residential stability and demand, as shown in **Figure 14**. The U.S. Census Bureau categorizes vacant housing units, as those with no one living in them, or those used as seasonal or second homes. Of the estimated 9.8% of vacant units in Sahuarita, 58.3% are designated for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, indicating a significant number of vacant properties that serve as vacation homes or temporary residences.

Additionally, 14.5% of the vacant units are available for rent, providing opportunities for new residents or those seeking rental accommodations. Another 14.0% are classified as 'other vacant', which may include properties undergoing renovations, or awaiting new occupants. Furthermore, 9.3% of the vacant units are listed for sale, while 3.9% of the vacant units are rented but not currently occupied

Figure 14: Housing Occupancy



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates 2022



Public Facilities & Services

Existing Conditions

As the Town of Sahuarita continues to experience growth, it is crucial to ensure the provision of high-quality public services and facilities for its residents. The following section offers a comprehensive overview of the various public services and facilities that are provided and maintained by the Town of Sahuarita, as well as by private entities. These services and facilities, which are also depicted in **Figure 15**, play a vital role in supporting the community's well-being and enhancing the overall quality of life for all residents.

Fire

The Santa Rita Fire District provides fire protection to the Town of Sahuarita. There are two stations within the Town boundaries, with one – Santa Rita Fire District Station #154 – being located near the Town center, and the other – Santa Rita Fire District Station #155 – located southeast of the Old Nogales Highway and W Quail Crossing Boulevard intersection.

Medical Services

The Northwest Medical Center, a full-service hospital located near the Town Center provides emergency and medical care. Northwest Medical Center also operates the Northwest Specialty Care at Duval Mine, in addition to a number of private, one-doctor clinics.

Libraries

The Sahuarita Branch Library, located at 670 Sahuarita Rd W, opened in September 2021 after relocating from its previous location which also housed Town Hall. The library is part of the Pima County system, providing a range of resources and services to local residents. For those seeking additional library facilities, the nearest alternative is located at the Government Center on La Canada in Green Valley, which is also a part of the Pima County library system.

Police Stations

The Sahuarita Police Department (SPD) is currently comprised of 63 sworn officers and 19 civilian staff. The SPD is organized in two divisions, each led by a police commander and comprising multiple bureaus such as Patrol, Traffic, School Resource Officers, Criminal Investigators, Records, and Crime Scene Specialists. The Department also has police dispatch services through an intergovernmental agreement with the Pima County Sheriff's Department.

Accredited by the Arizona Law Enforcement Accreditation Program (ALEAP), the SPD serves a population of approximately 38,000 residents and collaborates with various local, state, and federal agencies to address crime and quality of life issues.

Post Office Sites

The Post Office serving the Town is located at the Town Center at 815 West Via Rancho Sahuarita. This post office provides a range of essential postal services to the local community, including mail and package delivery, PO Box rentals, and various retail services.

Schools

The Sahuarita Unified School District (SUSD) serves approximately 6,000 students across a 606 square mile area, offering education from kindergarten through high school. The district includes eight schools, such as Copper View Elementary, Walden Grove High School, and Sahuarita High School, among others. Additionally, the Continental Elementary School District serves students in Green Valley and the southern portion of Sahuarita, providing classes from pre-school through eighth grade. Sahuarita also hosts private and charter schools such as Great Expectations Academy and Edge High School, which collaborate with local public schools to enhance educational opportunities.

Water

The Town of Sahuarita does not provide water services, and there are several different water providers in the area including: Community Water Company of Green Valley, Global Water Company, Las Quintas Serenas Water Company, Quail Creek

Water Company, Sahuarita Village Water, Sahuarita Water Company, and Valle Verde Del Norte Water Cooperate, Inc. There are also water cooperatives that serve the Town, and all water companies and cooperatives currently serving potable water within the Town are regulated by the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC).

Sewer

The Sahuarita Sewer Service Area encompasses various regions within the Town. Pima County and the Town jointly provide sewer services for different areas, with some regions designated as Joint Planning Areas that can be served by either entity. Additionally, certain areas within the town utilize private septic systems.

The Sahuarita Wastewater Division manages the collection and treatment of wastewater, ensuring the system operates through regular maintenance serving over 5,500 customers. The division maintains 50 miles of pipeline, 1,178 manholes and various treatment facilities, ensuring compliance with regulations and responding to service requests. They also support new developments by overseeing infrastructure design and construction, ensuring proper connectivity and service.

Solid Waste

During Sahuarita's Town Council meeting on January 27, 2025, Waste Connections was selected as the Town's sole-source provider, with service beginning for most residents on September 1, 2025. Since the last General Plan, the Sahuarita Landfill has been converted into a transfer station. This transition was part of the Town's efforts to improve waste management infrastructure and services.

Electricity

The two primary electricity providers are Trico Electric Cooperative, Inc. and Tucson Electric Power (TEP), depending upon location. The Town is serviced by several electrical substations, with the primary ones including: the South Loop Substation, the Hartt Substation, the substation north of Sahuarita Road, and another one located in Green Valley which also serves part of the Town.

Other Utilities

Century Link provides telephone service, while Cox Communications provides cable television. Natural gas for the Town is provided by Southwest Gas.

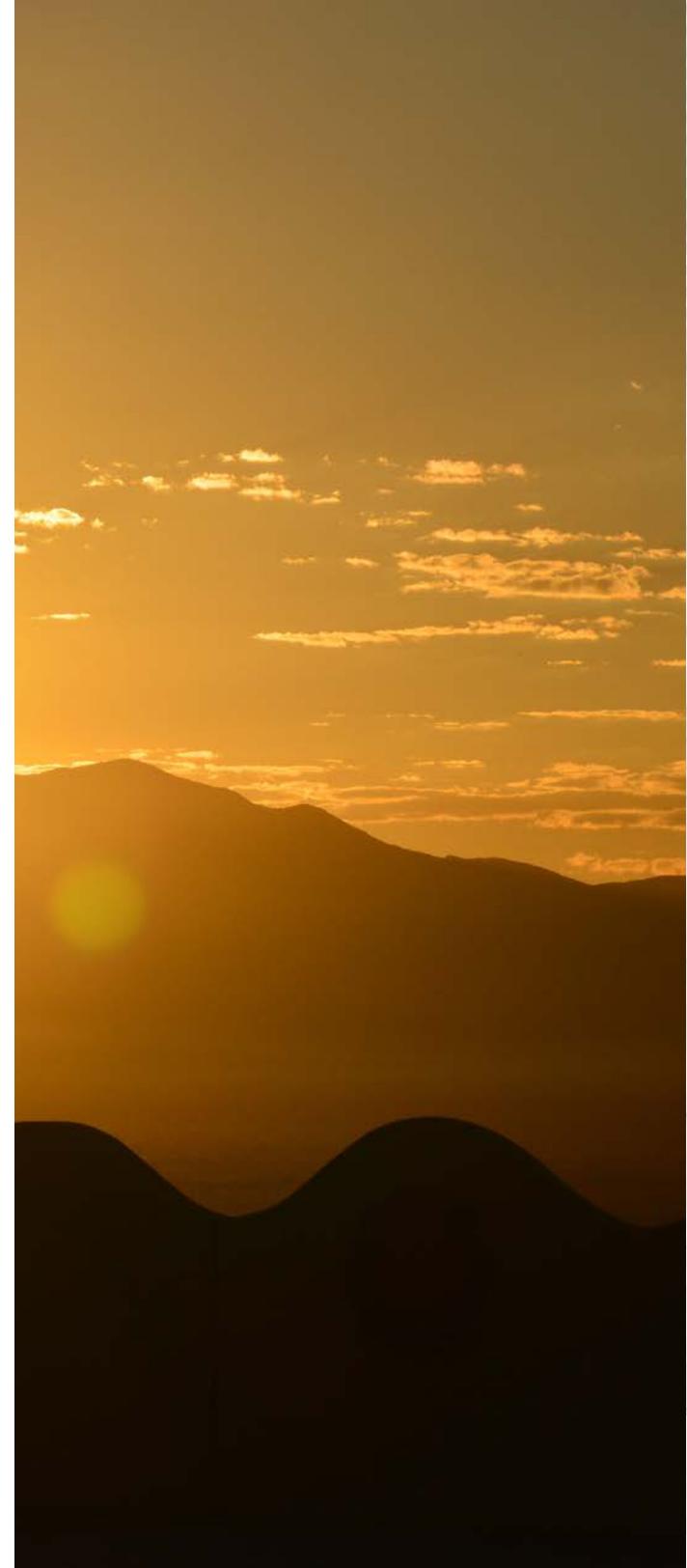


Figure 15: Public Facilities & Services



Tohono O'odham Nation
San Xavier District



Pima Mine Rd

Nogales Highway

Santa Cruz River

San Xavier Wash

Helmet Peak Rd

Sahuarita Rd

El Toro Rd

La Villita Rd

Wilmot Rd

La Canada Dr

Dawson Rd

Santa Rita Rd

Nogales Highway

Old Nogales Highway

Duval Mine Rd

Green Valley
(unincorporated)



0 0.75 1.5
Miles

Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

City of Tucson

Legend

- Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area
- Sahuarita Municipal Limits
- Tribal Communities
- City of Tucson
- CAP Canal
- Street Network

Public Facilities

- Fire Stations
- Hospitals
- Libraries
- Police Stations
- Post Office Sites
- Schools



LAND OWNERSHIP

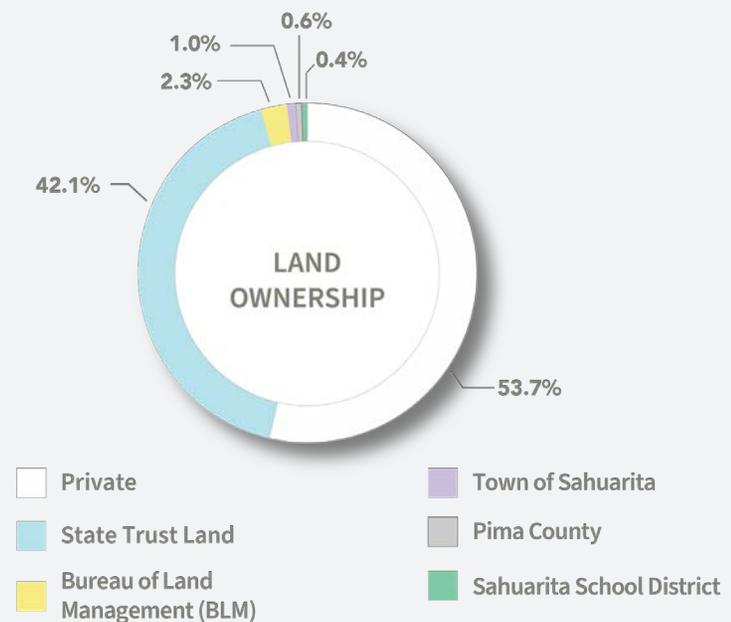
Land ownership across the Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area is primarily Private owned, accounting for 56.0% of the land. The State owns 41.1% of the planning area, followed by Bureau of Land Management (BLM) at 2.3% to round out the top three landowners (**Table 3**). Much of the land within the Municipal Planning Area is owned by State Trust, with a portion of it being BLM land, whereas most of the land within the Town’s current municipal limits is Private, with a portion being owned by the County and BLM, which is illustrated in **Figure 16** and **Figure 17**.

Table 3: Land Ownership

Land Ownership	Acres	Sq. Miles
Private	28,387.8	44.3
State Trust Land	22,177.7	34.7
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)	1,188.9	1.9
Town of Sahuarita	522.2	0.8
Pima County	300.3	0.5
Sahuarita School District	172.2	0.3
TOTAL	52,749.1	82.4

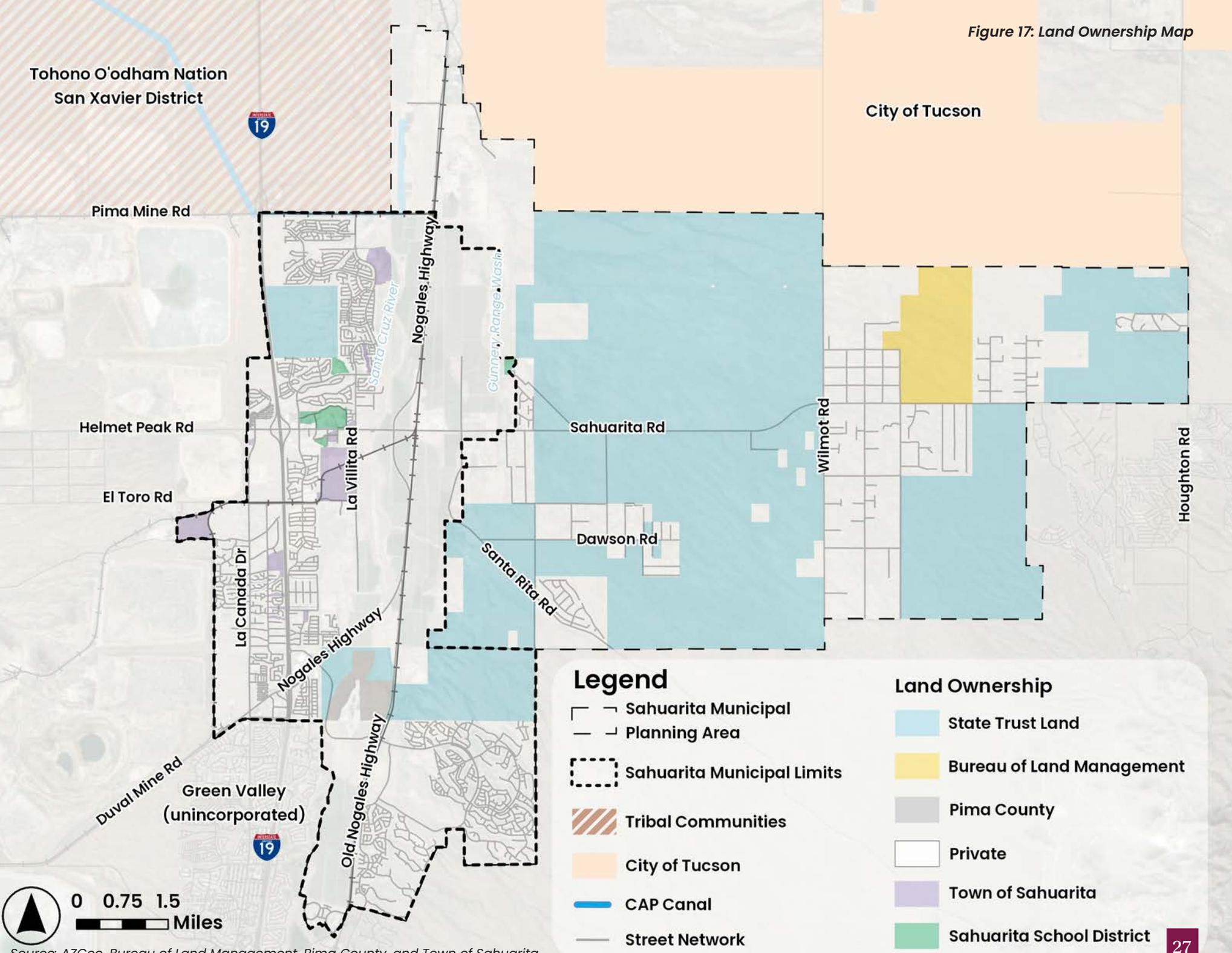
Source: Bureau of Land Management, Town of Sahuarita

Figure 16: Land Ownership Distribution



Source: Bureau of Land Management, Town of Sahuarita

Figure 17: Land Ownership Map



Source: AZGeo, Bureau of Land Management, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT/OUTREACH

Public input is crucial to the development of this General Plan. To ensure broad community involvement, the General Plan Update included a comprehensive public engagement strategy. This strategy employed various methods such as public workshops, community surveys, pop-up workshops, and online platforms to gather diverse perspectives and insights, ensuring the plan reflects the community's needs and aspirations.



The first community workshop focused on defining the desired community vision and understanding the current conditions in the Town through an introductory presentation followed by interactive activities organized around three stations for attendees to engage with. This initial phase also included the first community survey, which received approximately 225 responses, providing valuable insights into residents' perspectives on aspects of the town's vision and future growth and development.



A youth workshop was also held with the Sahuarita Teen Advisory Council to gather valuable insights and perspectives from the younger population regarding the town's General Plan, ensuring the plan addresses long-term needs and aspirations, making the town more resilient and adaptable to future changes.



Building on this foundation, the workshop aimed to evaluate the General Plan goals and identify critical community topics, with participants being able to partake in interactive activities after an introductory presentation. This was also paired with a second community survey, which garnered 224 responses across five distinct topical surveys. This survey was also used to gather feedback from residents on a revised vision as well as revised General Plan goals. During this phase of engagement, a pop-up booth was set up at Winterfest 2024 to encourage attending residents to partake in the second community survey, which provided an opportunity to reach a broader audience and collect diverse viewpoints.

The final phase of community outreach took a “go-to-them” approach, bringing engagement directly to residents rather than asking them to attend a separate event. During this phase, the project team hosted a pop-up booth at the Town’s annual Fiesta Sahuarita, a well-attended community celebration that draws thousands of participants each year. This setting provided an ideal opportunity to gather feedback on key themes identified throughout the planning process. Using a fun, carnival-style bucket game, the team encouraged residents to share their input on major themes from previous outreach (results shown in **Figure 18**) and also directed them to complete the final community survey. Together, the game and survey generated responses from approximately 500 residents, helping to shape the final direction of the project.

Figure 18: Fiesta Sahuarita Responses





GENERAL PLAN FRAMEWORK

Nestled in the heart of southern Arizona's Santa Cruz Valley, Sahuarita is a vibrant and growing town surrounded by the natural beauty of the Sonoran Desert and the Santa Rita Mountains. Since its incorporation in 1994, Sahuarita has grown with intention, guided by a strong commitment to quality of life, environmental stewardship, and a deep sense of community.

Sahuarita's identity is shaped by its rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and welcoming neighborhoods. Parks, trails, and open spaces connect the town, reflecting community values and encouraging active, healthy living. With a blend of small-town charm and access to regional economic and transportation networks, Sahuarita offers a well-rounded lifestyle for families, professionals, and retirees alike.

At the core of Sahuarita's vision is a commitment to thoughtful planning. The Town's General Plan provides a roadmap for sustainable growth, supporting a variety of housing options, vibrant commercial centers, and opportunities for education, employment, and recreation. Strategic investments in infrastructure, transportation, and public services aim to preserve the town's character while preparing for the future.

The General Plan also emphasizes civic engagement and shared responsibility. By working together, residents, businesses, and local leaders can shape a future that honors Sahuarita's roots while embracing innovation and opportunity. Through collaborative, community, driven decision-making, Sahuarita is poised to grow with purpose, thriving as a distinctive town in the desert Southwest that welcomes all who call it home.

Vision

This vision statement encapsulates the community's desires and needs, as identified through the comprehensive planning process and extensive public outreach efforts. The vision statement is as follows:

"We envision a future where the Town of Sahuarita is known as a community with a high quality of life driven by its commitment to social, economic, and environmental sustainability; where Sahuarita is a vibrant, safe and diverse community that attracts new residents and businesses through sustainable growth; where Sahuarita's appeal is enhanced through the recognition and protection of its cultural, historic, and environmental resources that define its character, as well as its natural open space, dark skies and scenic views."

GENERAL PLAN STRUCTURE

Chapters

To realize the Town vision and underscore the community's values, the General Plan employs a comprehensive chapter-based structure. This method integrates traditional General Plan Elements to highlight the interconnected aspects of the community, extending beyond individual topics to reflect the Town's core values. Each chapter addresses multiple General Plan Elements, emphasizing the interdisciplinary nature of planning and more thoroughly addressing the community's needs.

Developed from public input around the vision, three collective chapters emerged:

- Sustainable Growth & Connectivity
- Conserve Today to Thrive Tomorrow
- Economic Vitality & Fiscal Stability

Each chapter consists of elements or 'topics' related to planning, operation, and development. State-mandated General Plan Elements are marked with an '*'. Each Chapter is further supported by a series of goals and policies designed to implement the Town's vision:

Goals – Goals are intended results, expressed in simple terms, for the plan's primary themes and elements. They represent overarching desired results of the plan.

Policies – A specific statement that guides activities in the Town, informs decision-making, and directs implementing actions to achieve a goal. Policies marked with a dagger icon (†) may also serve as action items, providing a direct path toward implementation.



02

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH & CONNECTIVITY

Effective community planning lies at the nexus of development and sustainability, shaping how cities grow while ensuring the needs of both current and future generations are met. This chapter establishes a strategic framework to guide future decisions on land use and transportation patterns, with the goal of preserving Sahuarita's high quality of life and distinctive small-town character—without compromising the ability of future generations to thrive.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Preserving Sahuarita's Character



While residents expressed multiple reasons they were initially drawn to Town, it is the strong sense of community that keeps them rooted—a sentiment consistently echoed throughout the General Plan's public engagement process. Consequently, thoughtfully balancing Sahuarita's cultural and historical heritage with modern development needs is vital to the Town's quality of life and growing economy. Historic neighborhoods, landmarks, and cultural institutions provide a sense of identity and continuity, fostering social cohesion and pride within the community. Integrating these assets will help Sahuarita attract tourism, create jobs, and maintain a unique character that distinguishes the Town from other cities.

Responsible Growth Management



The type and pattern of development within Sahuarita play a critical role in shaping the daily experiences of residents and visitors. Thoughtful land use and growth planning—addressing both the process and its outcomes—is essential to creating well-designed spaces where people can live, work, shop, recreate, and connect. This requires careful consideration of how current and future development is arranged and functions to support a vibrant, cohesive, and sustainable community.

Enhancing Connectivity



Transportation systems serve as more than just physical connectors—they are vital to economic development, community well-being, and environmental sustainability. Well-planned transportation infrastructure can influence land use patterns, support job growth, and improve emergency response times. By applying smart transportation planning principles, Sahuarita can expand mobility options, ensuring all residents have access to safe, efficient, and reliable transportation.



ELEMENTS

LAND USE

The Land Use Element integrates this plan’s Vision Statement with community input and technical analysis to guide future development. It considers a range of factors, including land ownership, projected population growth, economic development goals, open space preservation, environmental constraints, and current and anticipated development pressures. This comprehensive information informs the creation of land use designations that define the Town’s envisioned future land use pattern. Additionally, the element identifies distinct areas within Sahuarita that possess unique characteristics and establishes policies to preserve and enhance their value.

Framework

Sahuarita’s existing land use pattern reflects a mix of residential neighborhoods, commercial corridors, employment centers, parks and open spaces, and areas designated for future

Figure 19: Town Land Use Distribution*

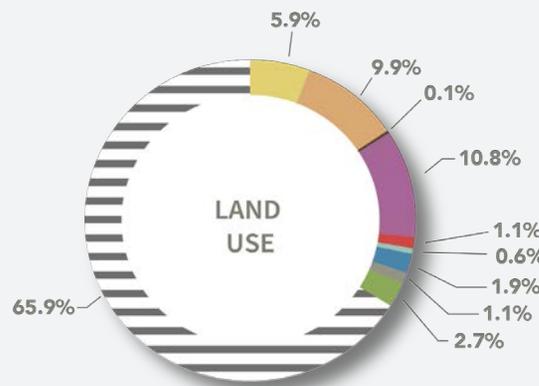
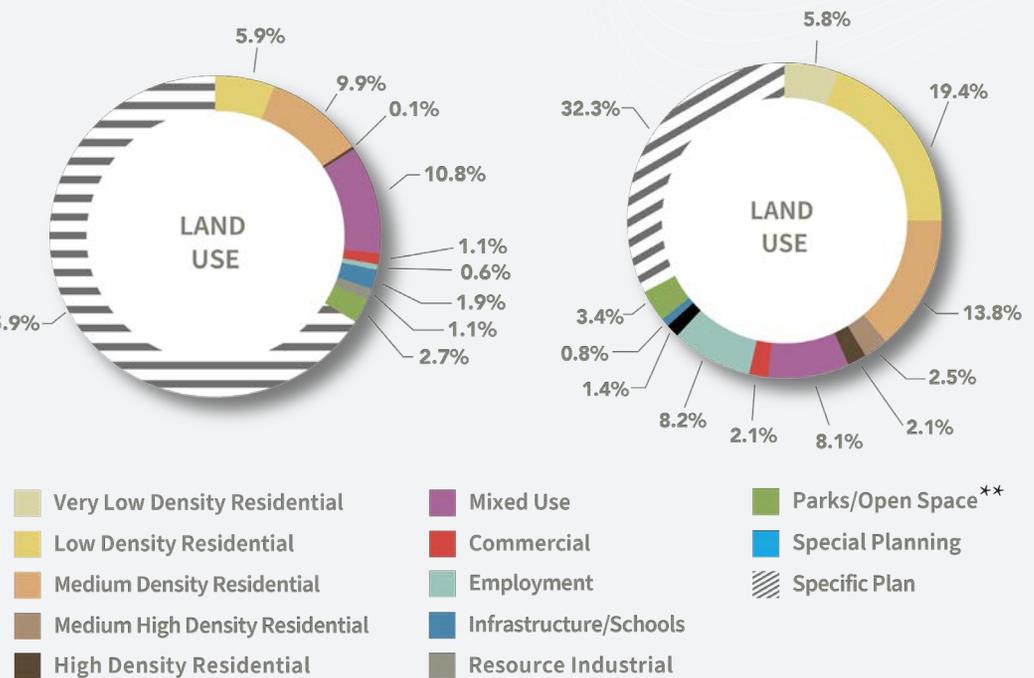


Figure 20: Municipal Planning Area Land Use Distribution*



*Excludes those portions of planning area east of Wilmot and south of Sahuarita Road

**It is expected that total acreage for parks and open space will exceed the acreage and percent shown here. Parks and open space will be provided in all planned land use areas.

development. Residential uses dominate much of the developed area, ranging from low-density single-family homes to higher-density housing near key corridors. Commercial and mixed-use areas are primarily concentrated along major roadways such as I-19 and Sahuarita Road, supporting retail, services, and local businesses. Industrial and employment uses are located in designated zones to the west and south, providing space for economic development while maintaining compatibility with surrounding uses. The town also includes significant open space and recreational areas, including natural open space and community parks, which contribute to its scenic character and quality of life.

The Land Use Map outlines the desired long-term physical development pattern for Sahuarita's Municipal Planning Area (MPA). It organizes the town's land use structure through various classifications. These classifications define the intended character for each area and are detailed in the following pages and shown on the map in **Figure 21**. Each classification is color-coded to match the map, with additional details provided in **Figure 19**, **Figure 20**, and **Table 4**.

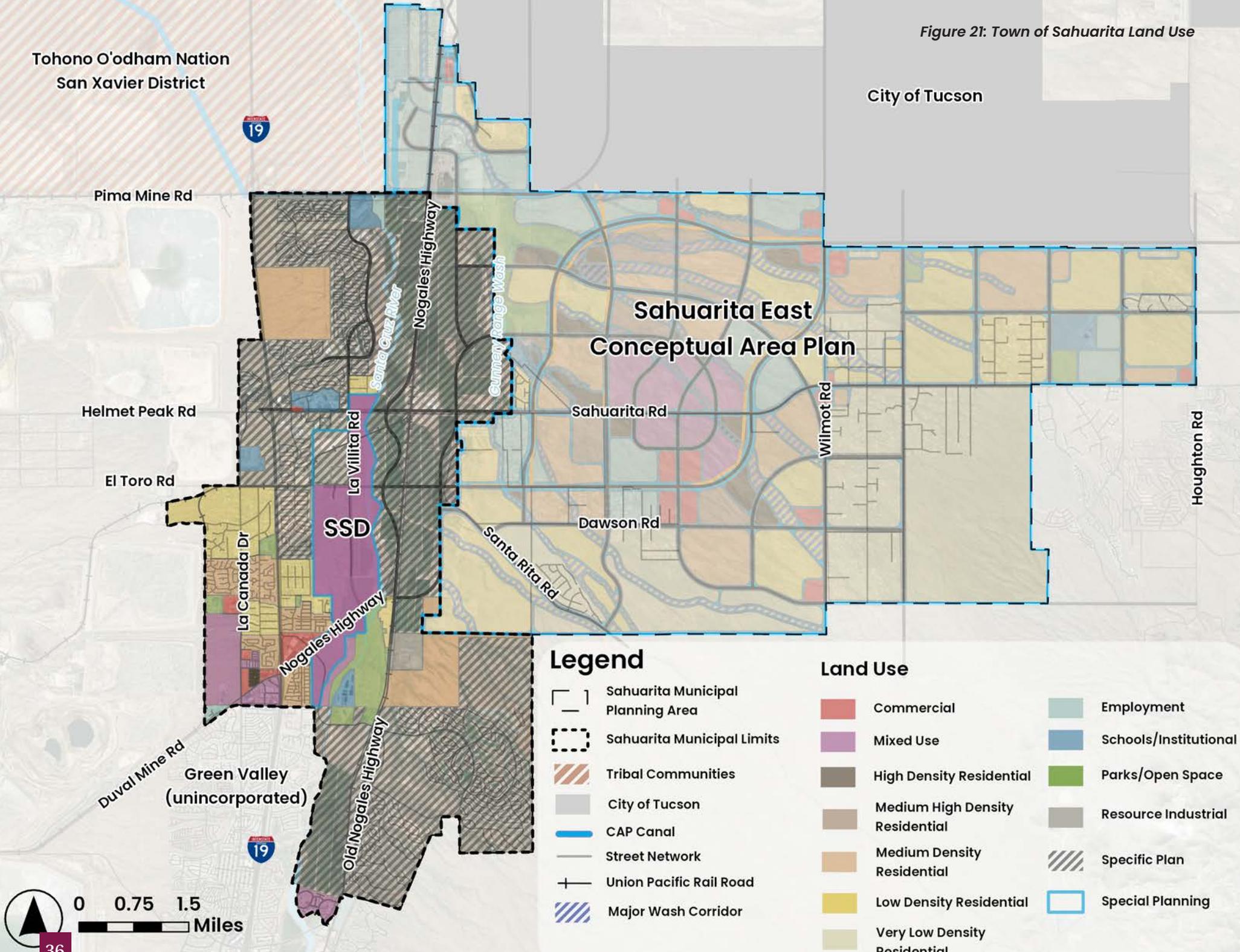


Figure 21: Town of Sahuarita Land Use

Tohono O'odham Nation
San Xavier District

City of Tucson

Sahuarita East Conceptual Area Plan



Legend

- Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area
- Sahuarita Municipal Limits
- Tribal Communities
- City of Tucson
- CAP Canal
- Street Network
- Union Pacific Rail Road
- Major Wash Corridor

Land Use

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Commercial | Employment |
| Mixed Use | Schools/Institutional |
| High Density Residential | Parks/Open Space |
| Medium High Density Residential | Resource Industrial |
| Medium Density Residential | Specific Plan |
| Low Density Residential | Special Planning |
| Very Low Density Residential | |

0 0.75 1.5
Miles

Table 4: General Plan Land Use Distribution

Land Use	Within Town Limits			Within Municipal Planning Area		
	Percentage	Acres	Sq. Miles	Percentage	Acres	Sq. Miles
Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)	--	--	--	5.8%	2,360.51	3.69
Low Density Residential (LDR)	5.9%	1,178.76	1.84	19.4%	7,930.74	12.39
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	9.9%	1,992.48	3.11	13.8%	5,639.09	8.81
Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	--	--	--	2.5%	1,034.27	1.62
High Density Residential (HDR)	0.1%	22.26	0.03	2.1%	841.73	1.31
Mixed Use (MU)	10.8%	2,399.07	3.75	8.1%	3,311.98	5.17
Commercial (C)	1.1%	225.08	0.35	2.1%	859.73	1.34
Employment (E)	0.6%	125.05	0.20	8.2%	3,370.17	5.27
Infrastructure/Schools	1.9%	371.66	0.58	1.4%	585.87	0.92
Resource Industrial (RI)	1.1%	220.21	0.34	0.8%	344.14	0.54
Parks/Open Space (P)**	2.7%	540.01	0.84	3.4%	1,386.55	2.17
Specific Plan	65.9%	13,196.83	20.62	32.3%	13,196.83	20.62
TOTAL	100.0%	20,039.13	31.31	100.0%	40,861.64	61.41

*Excludes those portions of planning area east of Wilmot and south of Sahuarita Road

**It is expected that total acreage for parks and open space will exceed the acreage and percent shown here. Parks and open space will be provided in all planned land use areas.

Source: Town of Sahuarita

Land Use Categories

The Town of Sahuarita designates specific land use categories within its land use element. Each residential category includes a permissible range of densities, measured in dwelling units per net acre of the building site, excluding existing public rights-of-way. New rights-of-way are granted density credits, which are then allocated to the buildable portion of the site. Existing residential areas have been categorized appropriately to maintain context.

Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)

Very Low Density Residential is comprised of single-family residential development that maintains a rural character typified by lots of 3.3 acres and larger and houses of an individual design. Rural commercial uses permitted in the recommended zoning categories are acceptable. Recommended zoning categories are: Rural Homestead (RH), Suburban Ranch (SR), and Major Resort (MR).

Density Range is 0–0.3 residences per acre.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

Low Density Residential consists of single-family residential development that maintains either a rural or larger lot suburban character. Clustering of uses is permitted to enhance an interconnected open space system or to maximize preservation of existing vegetation and other natural features of the site. Rural, non-commercial uses permitted in the recommended zoning categories are acceptable. Recommended zoning categories include: Suburban Homestead (SH), R-1 Single Residence Zone, R-2 Single Residence Zone, and R-3 Single Residence Zone.

Density Range is 0.31–3 residences per acre.

Medium Density Residential (MDR)

Medium Density Residential is characterized by single-family suburban residential development with a range of subdivided lot sizes. Clustering of uses is permitted to enhance an interconnected open space system or to maximize preservation of existing vegetation and other natural features of the site. Recommended zoning categories include: R-2 Single Residence Zone, R-3 Single Residence Zone, R-4 Mixed Dwelling Type Zone and MH-1 Manufactured and Mobile Home-1 Zone.

Density range is 3.1–6 residences per acre.

Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)

Medium High Density Residential includes primarily single family attached or detached residential development. Clustering or use of the small lot subdivision option is permitted if it adds to an interconnected open space system. Recommended zoning categories include: R-4 Mixed Dwelling Type Zone, R-5 Multiple Residence Zone, and MH-2 Manufactured and Mobile Home-2 Zone.

Density Range is 6.1–12 residences per acre.

High Density Residential

High Density Residential consists of multi-family residential developments. Recommended zoning categories include: R-5.

Density Range is 12.1 or more residences per acre.

Mixed Use

Mixed-use development permits residential and compatible non-residential projects in a compact layout that includes entertainment, cultural activities, and community gathering spaces, which foster opportunities to live, work, learn, and recreate in a pleasant, walkable environment. Allowable uses include Medium High to High Density residential, commercial, employment, hotel and resort uses, public spaces, governmental/institutional uses. Vertical and horizontal mixed-use is encouraged. It is strongly recommended that specific plans be utilized to implement the mixed-use concept. Otherwise, recommended zoning categories include R-5 Multiple Residence, Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Mixed Use (MX), and Local Business (B-1). General Business (B-2), Major Resort (MR), Campus Park Industrial (CPI) and Light Industrial/Warehousing (I-1) are recommended only when subject to strict design standards ensuring compatibility with neighboring uses.

Commercial

A Commercial land use designation allows for office and retail development that support the needs of the Town's market area and employment centers. Recommended zoning categories include: Neighborhood Commercial (NC), Mixed Use (MX), Local Business (B-1), General Business (B-2) and Major Resort (MR).

Employment

Employment opportunities within the Town include uses such as: light industrial, assembly/manufacturing, transportation logistics and distribution centers, hospital and medical facilities, research and development, technology and innovation, educational campuses including higher education and vocational trade schools, corporate headquarters, traditional office, business support and services, and warehousing uses. Recommended zoning categories include: General Business (B-2), Campus Park Industrial (CPI), Light Industrial/Warehousing (I-1) and General Industrial (I-2). When part of an employment campus, higher density residential uses may be permitted.

Infrastructure/Schools

Infrastructure/schools uses include public and quasi-public uses such as government services, schools and religious institutions that provide the basic human services.

Resource Industrial

Resource Industrial land uses accommodate mining and aggregate extraction activities that are essential to regional construction and infrastructure needs. This designation supports the continued operation of resource-based industries while ensuring appropriate separation from residential and other sensitive land uses to minimize conflicts and environmental impacts.

Parks/Open Space

Parks/Open Space includes - parks and open space to serve the needs of the Town. Existing parks and open space are identified on the General Plan Land Use map. Policies for future parks are addressed in the recreation and open space element. Parks and open spaces are allowed in all zoning categories.

SPECIAL LAND USE CATEGORIES

In addition to the land use categories detailed above, there are several special designations shown on the Land Use map (**Figure 21**): Special Planning Areas, and Specific Plans.

Special Planning Areas

The Special Planning Areas include land intended for development when demand approaches. There are two designated Special Planning Areas as shown on the Land Use map (**Figure 21**) – one area located along the La Villita corridor known as the Sahuarita Square District (SSD) and a large area to the east of the current Town limits known as the Sahuarita East Conceptual Area Plan (SECAP).

While there will likely be demand for development for certain portions of the Special Planning Areas within the next 10 years, especially the western portion of the SECAP area, it is more likely that development in these areas will mostly occur throughout the 20-year horizon.

The designated Special Planning Areas provide for the submittal of specific plan proposals without

the need for a major general plan amendment; a minor general plan amendment may be required to ensure specific plan conformity with the general plan. Although Specific Plans are strongly recommended for Special Planning Areas, development utilizing existing underlying zoning is not precluded.



Adopted Specific Plans

The purpose of the Specific Plan is to allow flexibility in site planning and design, while assuring the General Plan goals and objectives are implemented. Existing specific plans in Sahuarita are characterized by a variety of intensities and uses, including low to high density residential, differing scales of commercial development, industrial and employment related uses, and significant open space and natural areas.

The Town has adopted several Specific Plans – La Jolla Verde Commercial Center, Madera Highlands, Rancho Sahuarita, Sahuarita Farms, Quail Creek, and Parcel 30 – which are incorporated by reference into this General Plan. Future Specific Plan locations will be determined by their ability to create a functional, well designed, flexible specific plan.

Goals & Policies

LU-1: Promote high-quality design and character in new development.

Sahuarita is committed to delivering a high quality of life through the utilization of thoughtful design and the cultivation of a sense of place and small-town feel. By balancing growth with the management of land resources and preservation of existing developments that contribute to Sahuarita's unique character, residents will continue to enjoy safe and convenient access to all the amenities and services the town has to offer.

Policies

LU-1.1: Promote high-quality building and landscape design in new development that respects desirable community character and context for both existing and future residents.

LU-1.2: Ensure the design and intensity of new development is compatible with existing neighborhoods and uses in terms of its height, scale, and the overall mix of uses ensuring that future development continues to promote the character, identity and sense of place that makes Sahuarita a distinct community.

LU-1.3: Collaborate with landowners, developers, prospective businesses, and other stakeholders to foster a captivating architectural environment through the use of attractive and varied architectural and additional landscape treatments that are compatible with the surrounding natural environment.

LU-1.4: Continue to encourage the use of Specific Plans and establish Planned Community Districts as tools for the unique and cohesive development of large tracts of land.

LU-2: Support desirable and efficient development patterns through the effective integration of transportation and land use planning.

By aligning transportation with land use planning, Sahuarita seeks to enhance overall connectivity within the town through the creation of development patterns that are both attractive and functional and ensure that residents have convenient access to essential services, schools, employment centers, and recreational opportunities.

Policies

LU-2.1: Encourage higher densities and mixed-use developments near commercial and employment hubs to enhance walkability and bikeability and to promote safe and efficient connectivity for vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists in all land use planning.

LU-2.2: Coordinate with local school districts and proposed charter schools to site new schools in safe locations, easily accessible by all modes of travel and especially as a component of master planned communities.

LU-2.3: Promote the clustering of commercial sites to reduce or eliminate strip commercial development and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity where feasible and appropriate.

LU-2.4: Implement land use patterns that are conducive to multi-modal transportation options.

LU-2.5: Plan for emerging needs in land use planning and development design likely to occur with increased autonomous vehicle and ride hailing usage.

LU-3: Ensure that future development reflects all facets of sustainability and enhances the overall quality of life for all residents.

Sahuarita seeks to guide growth in a manner that is economically viable, supports healthy ecosystems and promotes local well-being by integrating sustainable practices into all aspects of development, from planning and design to construction and operation. By prioritizing sustainability, the town aims to create a resilient community that can adapt to evolving community and economic conditions while reducing its carbon footprint and conserving natural resources.

Policies

LU-3.1: Achieve and maintain a diverse and sustainable economic base that is compatible with Sahuarita's character and natural environment.

LU-3.2: Foster environmental responsibility by promoting awareness of and living in balance with the natural desert, riparian, and hillside environmental subsystems. Where feasible, preserve and integrate regulated riparian and natural areas into new development thoughtfully as an amenity.

LU-3.3: Support new development that provides convenient access to community health and other human services, programs, and practices that serve residents of all ages and income levels.

LU-3.4: Encourage integration of arts, culture, entertainment, and community gathering spaces within new development that offer accessible amenities and recreational services for everyone.

LU 3.5 - Promote development that respects our local water resources and air quality by encouraging growth that is balanced with resource conservation and air quality management.

LU-4: Encourage development and redevelopment efforts that support the long-term growth of the town.

This plan underscores the importance of planning for the future by promoting projects that not only meet current needs but also anticipate and accommodate future demands. By encouraging thoughtful development and fostering redevelopment initiatives that contribute to the sustainable and strategic growth of Sahuarita the plan will create a dynamic and prosperous community that can thrive over the long term.

Policies

LU-4.1: Continue to support the development efforts of adopted Specific Plans as well as new plans that encourage a mix of residential, employment, commercial, and recreational and open space uses.

LU-4.2: Ensure future development includes areas that are intentionally designed to connect to nearby employment hubs and commercial centers, fostering walkability, access to services, and economic vitality.

LU-5: Promote the construction of a range of single-family and multi-family housing types, with a variety of price-points and sizes, which meet the needs of all incomes, ages, and lifestyles.

The availability of diverse, high-quality housing options is essential for the ongoing success of any community. Sahuarita is dedicated to a comprehensive approach that balances the need for increased and varied housing with the commitment to maintaining the character of its neighborhoods. Sahuarita also supports regional collaboration to address housing needs across jurisdictions. As part of the Regional Affordable Housing Commission, the Town is committed to advancing strategies that increase the supply of housing that is affordable, and safe, promoting individual and community prosperity throughout Pima County.

Policies

LU-5.1: Encourage a wide range of housing types, densities and prices within new developments and large master planned communities to support the current and projected populations and ensure that housing remains attainable in the future.

LU-5.2: Actively update local ordinances, policies, and building codes to support creative housing opportunities when and where appropriate within the town. (†)

LU-5.3: Accommodate medium and high-density development/redevelopment in appropriate areas of the town and that are compatible with existing development.

LU-5.4: Integrate elderly and assisted care facilities into neighborhoods and establish non-vehicular connections to the wider community, reducing reliance on automobiles and supporting aging in place and continuum of care for the elderly and residents with special needs.

Note: Policies marked with a dagger icon (†) may also serve as action items, providing a direct path toward implementation.

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GROWTH AREAS

In accordance with the Arizona Revised Statutes, the Town of Sahuarita is required to identify specific Growth Areas suitable for development within the 20-year horizon of this General Plan. These areas are strategically selected based on their capacity to support planned multimodal transportation, infrastructure expansion, and a diverse mix of land uses, including residential, commercial, office, tourism, and industrial development.

Framework

The Growth Areas Plan for the Town of Sahuarita is designed to outline anticipated and preferred patterns of growth within the community. While this plan is not regulatory, it provides a strategic framework for the next 20 years that reflects Sahuarita's unique development patterns, regional context, and community values. It considers existing neighborhoods, projected growth, environmental features such as the Santa Cruz River corridor, and key transportation corridors like Interstate 19.

The designated Growth Areas as shown on the Growth Areas Map are areas identified as being especially receptive to future development. These areas are not expected to grow more rapidly than others, but they are well-positioned to accommodate coordinated public and private investment, efficient infrastructure expansion, and mixed-use development that supports eventual transportation interconnections.

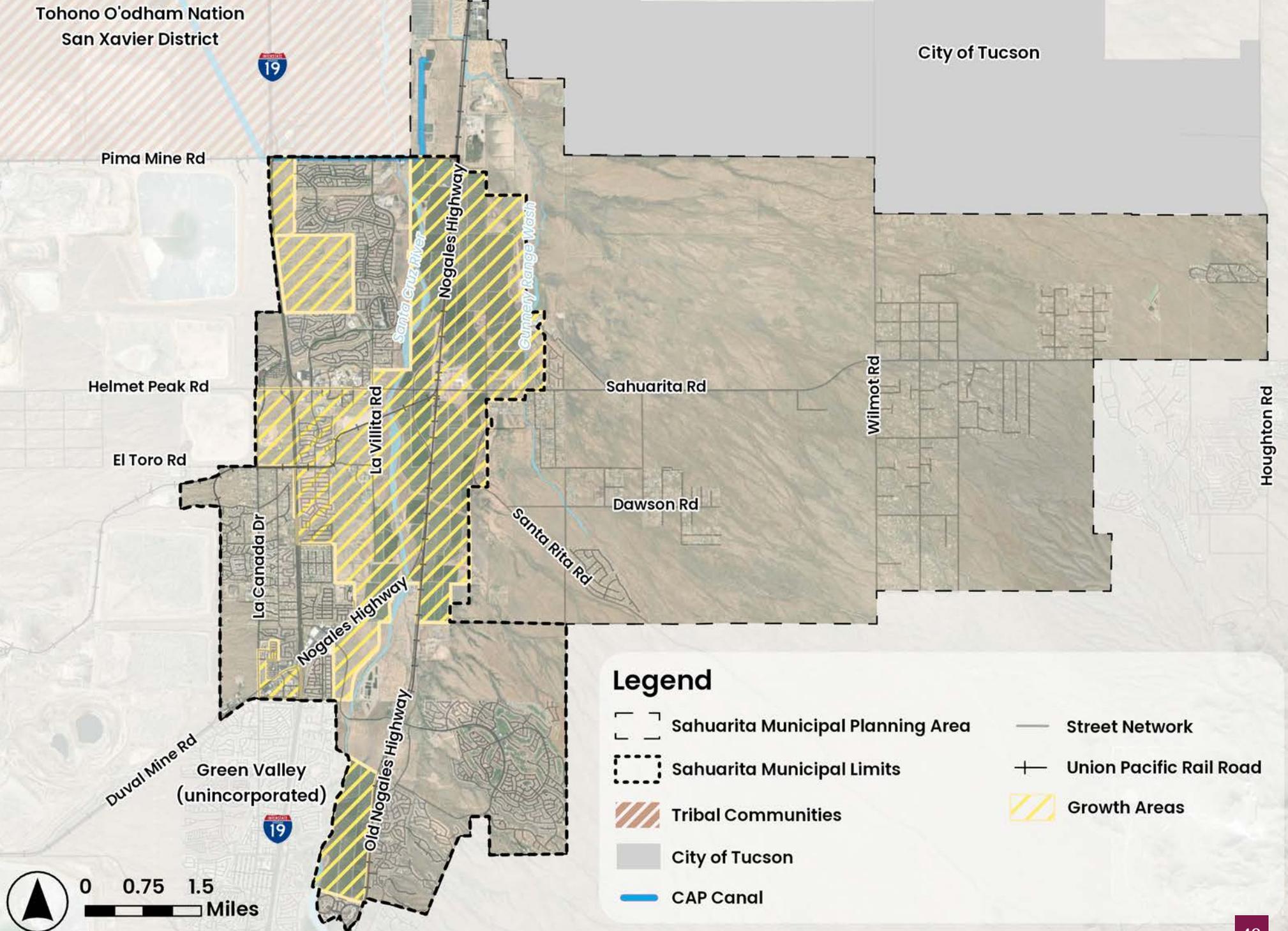
The Growth Areas Element includes policies aimed at:

- Enhancing multimodal circulation and connectivity;
- Making infrastructure investments more economical and strategic;
- Promoting a rational and sustainable pattern of land development;
- Preserving open space connections between growth areas and the broader community.

In some areas, change may occur incrementally through infill and small-scale projects. In others, a single master-planned development could catalyze transformational change. Regardless of the pace, the Town of Sahuarita is committed to preserving the community's character while planning for a vibrant, connected, and resilient future.



Figure 22: Growth Areas



Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

Goals & Policies

GA-1: Encourage growth to occur within the town's designated growth areas.

Sahuarita will direct development and expansion within its designated growth areas while also ensuring new developments are strategically located to maximize infrastructure efficiency, preserve open spaces, and enhance the overall quality of life for residents.

Policies

GA-1.1: Focus higher intensity development in key identified growth areas that will encourage mixed-use development and the use of alternative modes of transportation within the community.

GA-1.2: Ensure future growth provides a balanced mix of land uses in and near major activity centers, community and neighborhood nodes, gateways and key corridors, and industrial areas.

GA-1.3: Take a balanced approach to conservation to ensure sustainability and fiscal viability goals are met.

GA-2: Align growth areas with economic development goals and strategies.

Sahuarita seeks to coordinate growth with the goals and strategies the town has for economic development in an effort to ensure that future growth supports economic vitality, attracts investment, and creates opportunities for sustainable development which benefit the community as a whole.

Policies

GA-2.1: Prioritize existing plans and opportunities for mixed-use development throughout the town including in the Town Center area.

GA-2.2: Collaborate with landowners, developers, and other stakeholders within Growth Areas to ensure development is aligned with the Town's long-term vision.

GA-2.3: Within the Sahuarita Square District continue to promote mixed-use opportunities to advance the facilitation of desired development within the Town Center growth area.

GA-3: Ensure growth is strategically managed and achieves the best possible balance between community need and development impacts.

While growth brings valuable opportunities to the town, it must be carefully managed to balance community needs with development impacts. In areas where growth is encouraged, efforts will focus on the efficient use of developable land which minimizes sprawl and reduces operation and maintenance costs.

Policies

GA-3.1: Prioritize growth in areas with planned or existing infrastructure.

GA-3.2: Promote uses on existing developable industrial and commercial land resources within the town boundary that maximize jobs and revenue.

TRANSPORTATION

As Sahuarita continues to grow, a safe, efficient, and well-connected transportation system is essential to support the community's mobility, economy, and quality of life. The Transportation Element of the General Plan outlines the Town's long-term vision for how people and goods will move throughout Sahuarita—by car, bike, foot, and other modes—while ensuring that transportation planning supports land use goals, environmental sustainability, and economic development.

This element is prepared in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes § 9-461.05, which requires a circulation element that identifies the general location and extent of major transportation infrastructure (**Figure 23**) and ensures it aligns with the Town's land use plans.

Framework

Regional Transportation System

The regional transportation system connects the Town of Sahuarita to the greater Tucson Metropolitan Area through several key north-south and east-west corridors. Interstate 19 (I-19), a major north-south highway, provides direct access from Sahuarita to Tucson approximately 15 miles to the north and to Nogales and the U.S.-Mexico border to the south. Sahuarita Road serves as a primary east-west arterial, linking the Town to State Route 83 and the Sonoita region to the east, and to I-19 to the west. Additional regional connectivity is provided by Nogales Highway and Old Nogales Highway, which parallel I-19 and serve as alternative routes for local and regional traffic.



The Pima Association of Governments (PAG) helps plan and fund transportation projects across the greater Tucson region, including Sahuarita. Through its Regional Mobility and Accessibility Plan (RMAP), PAG outlines how anticipated federal, state, and local transportation dollars will be invested over the next 30 years to meet the region’s evolving needs and goals. These investments aim to enhance safety, support economic growth, and ensure the efficient movement of people and goods—particularly along major corridors outside Sahuarita’s town limits that are essential to daily life and long-term development. In and around Sahuarita, example projects include the widening of Nogales Highway (SR 289), intersection and roadway improvements along Sahuarita Road, the addition of multi-use paths on La Cañada Drive, and long-term upgrades to Interstate 19 to improve corridor efficiency and regional freight mobility—key to supporting the town’s economic future.

Roadways

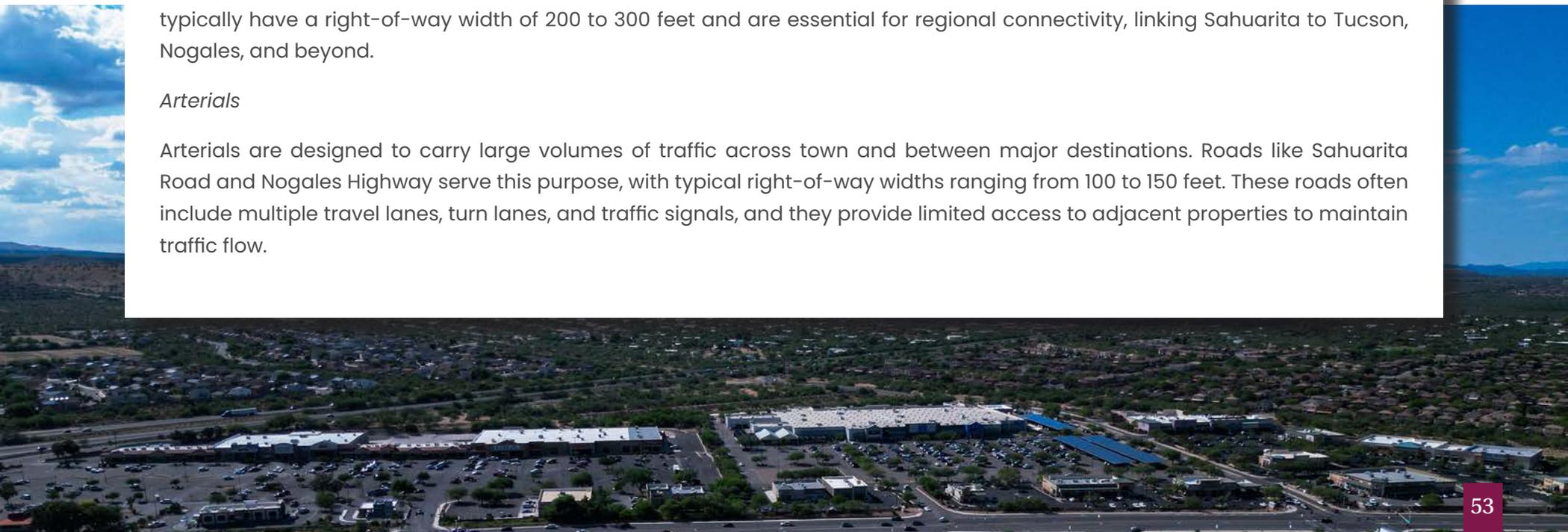
Sahuarita’s road network is organized into a hierarchy of road types, each serving a different purpose in how people and goods move through the community and the region:

Interstate/Freeway

Freeways, such as Interstate 19 (I-19), provide high-speed, long-distance travel with limited access points. These roads typically have a right-of-way width of 200 to 300 feet and are essential for regional connectivity, linking Sahuarita to Tucson, Nogales, and beyond.

Arterials

Arterials are designed to carry large volumes of traffic across town and between major destinations. Roads like Sahuarita Road and Nogales Highway serve this purpose, with typical right-of-way widths ranging from 100 to 150 feet. These roads often include multiple travel lanes, turn lanes, and traffic signals, and they provide limited access to adjacent properties to maintain traffic flow.





Collectors

Collector roads serve as connectors between local streets and arterial roads. They gather traffic from neighborhoods and direct it toward the larger road network. Examples include Rancho Sahuarita Boulevard and La Villita Road. These roads usually have a right-of-way width of 70 to 100 feet and may include features like bike lanes, sidewalks, and moderate access to homes and businesses.

Local Streets

At the neighborhood level, local streets provide direct access to homes, schools, and small businesses. These streets are designed for lower speeds and traffic volumes, prioritizing safety and accessibility. Most residential streets in Sahuarita fall into this category, with typical right-of-way widths of 50 to 60 feet.

Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities

Bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Sahuarita are designed to support safe, healthy, and accessible travel options for people of all ages and abilities. The Town features a growing network of shared-use paths and bike lanes that connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, and commercial areas, shown in **Figure 24**. These facilities encourage walking and biking as practical alternatives to driving, while also promoting active lifestyles and reducing traffic congestion. As Sahuarita continues to grow, the town will look to expand and enhance this network to improve connectivity, safety, and access throughout the community.

Interstate 11

Interstate 11 (I-11) is a proposed north-south transportation corridor designed to enhance regional mobility, strengthen trade, and support long-term economic development across Arizona. The project is being jointly led by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and it is currently in a post-Tier 1 phase undergoing re-evaluation of its Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). According to the current Tier 1, two, potential alternatives for I-11 in the Sahuarita area were identified. One option would extend west from I-19, creating a new corridor. Another alternative considers a route that more closely aligns with existing transportation corridors.



I-11 is especially significant for Sahuarita as it positions the Town at a critical crossroads of a future interstate connection. Its proximity to the corridor could improve access to national and international trade routes, particularly through the Nogales port of entry, and attract logistics, industrial, and commercial development to the region. The new route is also expected to ease congestion on I-19 and local roads, improving long-term mobility for both residents and freight.

While the Town recognizes the potential benefits of the I-11 project, it is opposed to the current westward alternative alignment illustrated in **Figure 23**. This alignment will introduce challenges related to land use compatibility, environmental impacts, and developmental constraints in the areas the town has identified for future planning efforts. It will cause fragmentation of existing or planned communities, impacts on natural and cultural resources, and the need for costly infrastructure adjustments. These issues require careful evaluation as the planning process proceeds.

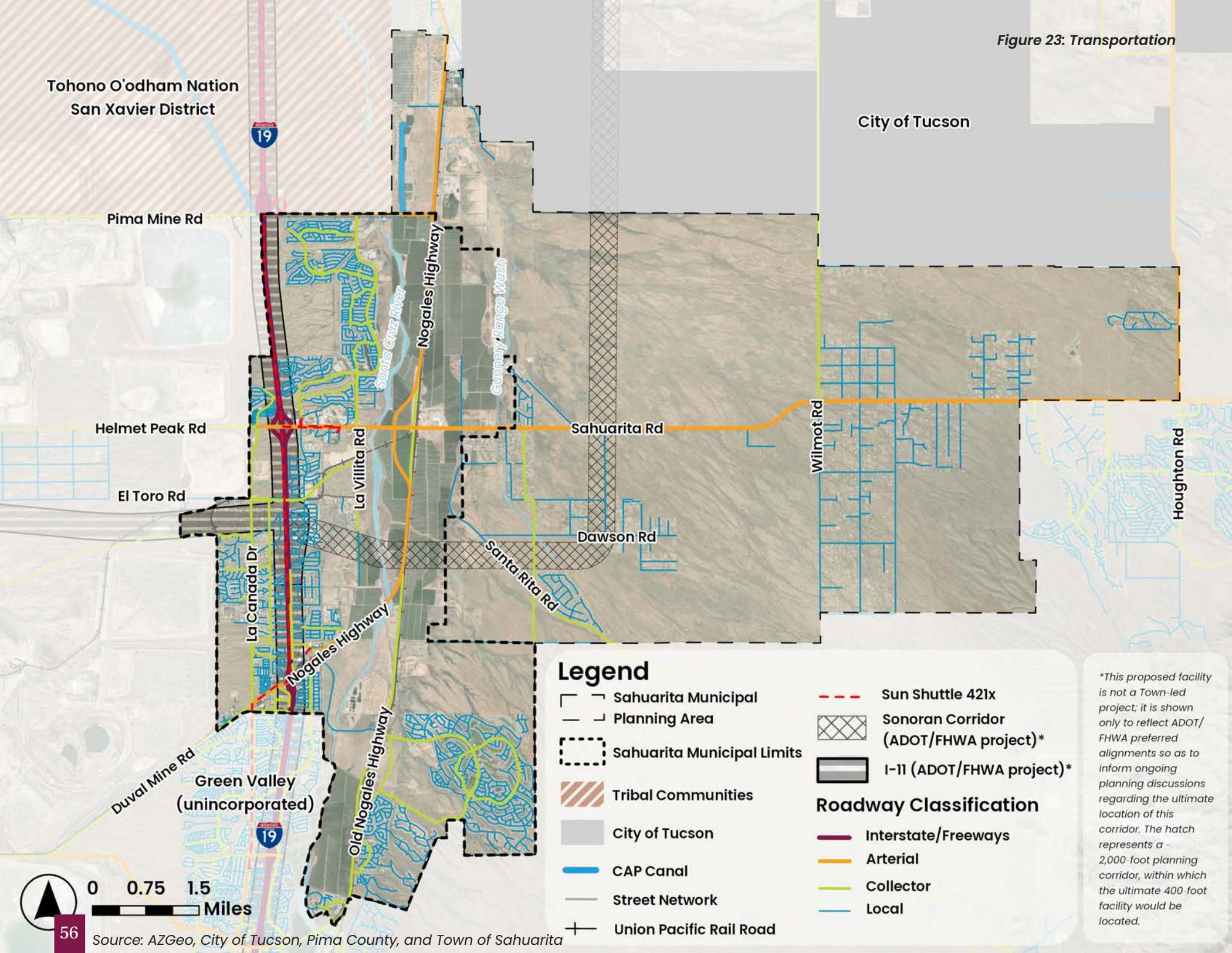
As the I-11 project advances into Tier 2 studies, the Town encourages ADOT/FHWA to focus on a route that more closely aligns with existing transportation corridors.

Sonoran Corridor

The Sonoran Corridor is a proposed high-capacity transportation route that would connect Interstate 10 near the University of Arizona Tech Park – at S Rita Road – to Interstate 19 just south of El Toro Road in Sahuarita. This transportation planning project is being led by ADOT in partnership with FHWA and is proposed to enhance regional mobility, reduce congestion, and support long-term economic growth. Additionally, the corridor would provide a more direct link between major employment hubs, logistics centers, and trade routes, including Tucson International Airport and southern Arizona’s inland port facilities.

For Sahuarita, the Sonoran Corridor represents a long-term infrastructure improvement that will eventually be needed to support regional mobility and offers the potential to make the town even more attractive for business and industrial development by enhancing access to I-10 and the broader interstate network. However, the Town does not support the current preferred route (which has been revised multiple times over the last decade) because it directly conflicts with recent residential development located within the proposed corridor and would negatively impact future planned land uses. As planning for this corridor continues, the Town encourages ADOT/FHWA to identify a more viable alignment so that long-term plans can be established with certainty and any necessary land can be appropriately preserved.

Figure 23: Transportation



Tohono O'odham Nation
San Xavier District

City of Tucson

Pima Mine Rd

Helmet Peak Rd

El Toro Rd

La Canada Dr

Green Valley
(unincorporated)

Duval Mine Rd

Old Nogales Highway

La Villita Rd

Nogales Highway

Nogales Highway

Cuney Range Wash

Santa Rita Rd

Dawson Rd

Legend

- Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area
- Sahuarita Municipal Limits
- Tribal Communities
- City of Tucson
- CAP Canal
- Street Network
- Union Pacific Rail Road

- Sun Shuttle 421x
- Sonoran Corridor (ADOT/FHWA project)*
- I-11 (ADOT/FHWA project)*

Roadway Classification

- Interstate/Freeways
- Arterial
- Collector
- Local

*This proposed facility is not a Town-led project; it is shown only to reflect ADOT/FHWA preferred alignments so as to inform ongoing planning discussions regarding the ultimate location of this corridor. The hatch represents a - 2,000-foot planning corridor, within which the ultimate 400-foot facility would be located.

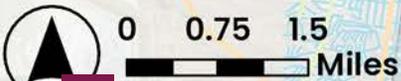
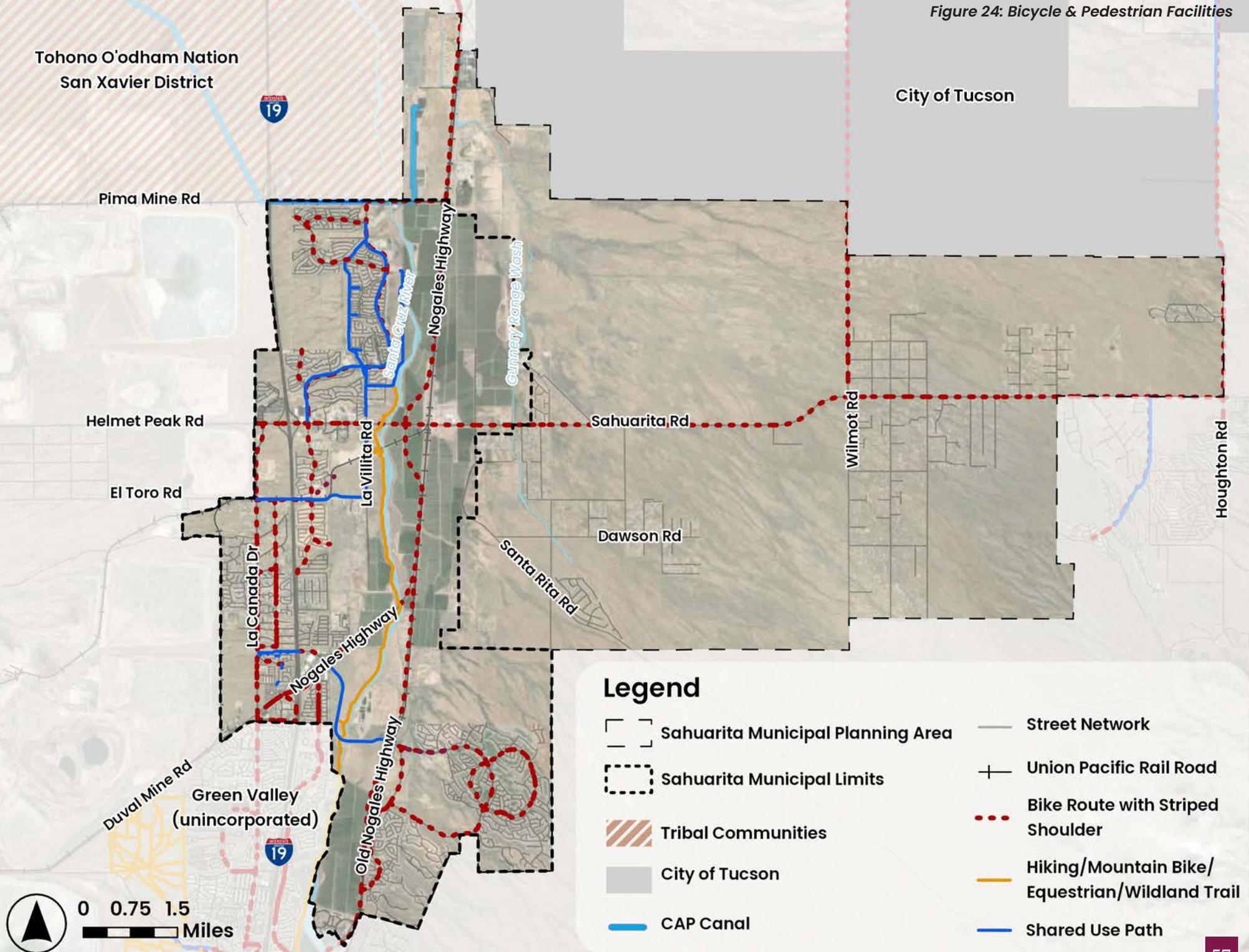


Figure 24: Bicycle & Pedestrian Facilities



Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

Goals & Policies

TRN-1: Provide an efficient, reliable, accessible, and safe transportation system for all ages.

An effective transportation system is comprised of a network of streets each with its own designation, function, and capacity within the system. Each segment contributes to the interconnectivity of the system. Therefore, for a system to operate efficiently, it is essential for there to be a well-connected and functional street network that is easy to access and navigate, reliable, safe, cost-effective and in harmony with adjacent land uses.

Policies

TRN-1.1: Promote a sub-regional balance of transportation facilities and services by mode, including automobile, public transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other innovative transportation solutions.

TRN-1.2: Monitor the performance of all modal systems to best mitigate traffic congestion and to assure safe operating conditions. (†)

TRN-1.3: Locate ingress/egress points to maximize the use and effectiveness of the existing and planned transportation network per the Town's access management guidelines.

TRN-1.4: Periodically update the Major Streets and Routes policy and plan to guide the roadway development process, the designation of street classifications, right-of-way of major facilities, and special route designations within the current and future Town limits. (†)

TRN-1.6: Design roadways to safely and efficiently support various modes of travel while enhancing the visual appeal of the corridors.

TRN-1.7: Plan and design the transportation system to accommodate international trade corridors, such as the CANAMEX Corridor, Sun Corridor, and future Interstate 11 corridor.

TRN-2: Facilitate the use of alternate modes of transportation.

This plan prioritizes preparation for and investment in alternate modes of transportation (like walking, cycling, transit, and other innovative transportation solutions), which offer significant social, environmental, economic and health benefits. The goal is to provide for ease of mobility regardless of how you choose or are able to get around, where you live, your income or your age.

Policies

TRN-2.1: Promote strategies and incentives to reduce peak period travel demand through alternate modes of travel and other travel reduction tools such as:

1. High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) passenger transfer facilities and park-and-ride lots as needed to make transit ridership safe, comfortable, and convenient.
2. Local bus/shuttle circulators to provide better connectivity between neighborhoods and activity/employment centers and services.

TRN-2.2: Seek to improve the mobility of all segments of the community, including the underserved, disabled, elderly, and economically disadvantaged through transportation investments.

TRN-2.3: Explore opportunities to implement active transportation (i.e., sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails) facilities on corridors that provide comfortable and low-stress connections for the first/last-mile gaps between transit stops and key destinations.

TRN-2.4: Develop strategies that promote safe routes to schools and programs that improve pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections to schools and parks in to minimize student exposure to traffic, promote healthy living, and reduce traffic congestion in school zones.

TRN-2.5: Coordinate with Pima County and regional service providers (Sun Tran), when feasible, to provide public transit services that are readily accessible, convenient, and safe to an increasing proportion of persons in the community

TRN-2.6: Promote convenient multi-modal access to public places having high concentrations of trips, such as:

1. Employment and major activity centers;
2. Commercial core areas; and
3. Inter-modal transportation (hub) facilities.

TRN-3: Effectively coordinate with regional and interagency transportation planning programs and projects while safeguarding the Town’s long-term vision.

Various Federal, State, local government, and non-governmental entities fund and manage pieces of the transportation system that leads into and services within the Town. Coordinating the efforts of all of these entities with the long-term vision of the Town will be important to enhancing overall mobility across Sahuarita.

Policies

TRN-3.1: Participate in regional collaboration, coordination and communication.

TRN-3.2: Approach public involvement proactively throughout regional transportation planning and programming processes, including open access to communications, meetings, and documents related to the Plan.

TRN-3.3: Continue to work collaboratively alongside regional partner agencies such as PAG and Pima County as well as developers for planning and constructing an integrated and seamless multimodal transportation system.

TRN-3.4: Assist in the implementation of regional transportation corridors by:

1. Designing corridors in a manner that benefits the Town as well as the region;
2. Providing local direct access to I-19 and Nogales Highway; and
3. Identifying and soliciting State and Federal funding sources for the assessment, alignment, design and construction of the corridors.

TRN-4: Construct and maintain transportation improvements in a logical and timely fashion.

While street construction and expansion improvements are important to address existing and future transportation needs, maintenance of existing street facilities will require the attention of the Town.

Policies

TRN-4.1: Balance construction of new transportation improvements with maintaining existing roadways and investing in operational improvements to minimize need for replacement and rehabilitation.

TRN-4.2: Maintain the Town of Sahuarita transportation networks established Level of Service (LOS) standard.
(†)

TRN-4.3: Consider the economic, energy, and environmental effects of major transportation investments.

TRN-5: Anticipate and prepare for emerging transportation technologies.

The Town will plan for and accommodate emerging transportation technology such as smart technologies and systems which promote safety and efficiency, electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles and continue to monitor for future transportation innovations.

Policies

TRN-5.1: Consider the implementation smart technology and systems on the transportation network to support travel safety, optimize travel efficiency, reduce traffic congestion.

TRN-5.2: Promote flexibility in design standards to be able to adjust for and accommodate changes from future technologies, such as automated vehicles.

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03

CONSERVE TODAY TO THRIVE TOMORROW

The Town of Sahuarita has long recognized the value of its environmental setting in providing opportunities for relaxation, recreation, physical activity, and the enjoyment of natural landscapes. This chapter outlines Sahuarita's strategic approach to preserving open space, protecting natural and water resources, and maintaining the ecological integrity of the Town's Planning Area. As the Town continues to grow, it will collaborate with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that resource management aligns with the community's commitment to conservation.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS



Expanding & Enhancing Our Open Space

Ensuring a healthy community is essential to meeting the future needs of Sahuarita’s residents. As the population grows and recreational interests evolve, the availability of parks and open spaces becomes increasingly important. The Town recognizes the value of providing spaces and activities that offer residents a break from daily routines and opportunities for new and enriching experiences. These can range from structured environments like parks and recreation centers to more natural, minimally disturbed areas.



Conserving Our Resources

Protecting the unique and sensitive riparian environments along the Santa Cruz River—including vital plant and wildlife habitats—is a key priority for the Town. While Sahuarita benefits from its rich natural and built environment, it also faces development and environmental challenges such as flooding and extreme heat. The Town is committed to fostering safe, high-quality development while promoting resource efficiency and environmental resilience.



Managing Our Water

As development continues, concerns about the long-term availability of groundwater and surface water have become increasingly important across Arizona. In Sahuarita, residents have emphasized the need for comprehensive water management strategies that are sustainable. The Town is committed to responsible stewardship of its water resources to ensure their availability for future generations.



Powering Our Future

With Sahuarita’s growing population and expanding economic base, there is a strong foundation for advancing energy efficiency across both public and private sectors. The intent is to support healthy growth and strong economic development in Sahuarita to create a resource-efficient community within the context of a desert environment.

ELEMENTS

PARKS, RECREATION & OPEN SPACE

The Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element aims to foster a regionally connected system of open spaces and recreational areas, ensuring the community has a sufficient variety of recreational opportunities and open spaces. This element offers essential policy guidance as the Town's population and area expand, directing the Parks and Recreation Department in its mission to provide parks, natural areas, facilities, programs, and services that enhance the quality of life for the Sahuarita community.

Framework

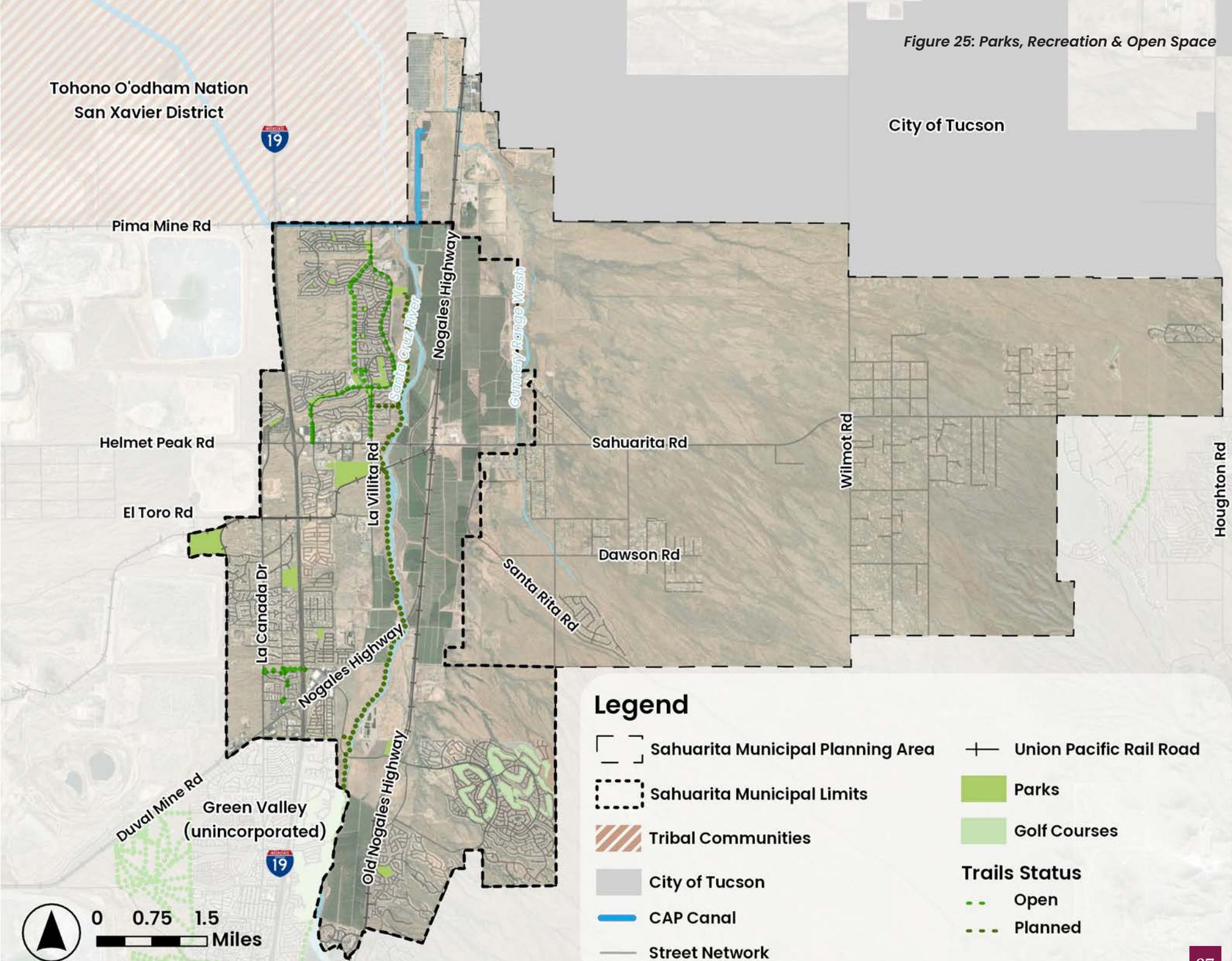
Parks and open space are vital to the Town of Sahuarita's social, environmental, and economic well-being. These areas promote healthy lifestyles, strengthen community identity, and provide inviting spaces for recreation, relaxation, and cultural connection. The Town currently has 27 parks within its municipal boundaries, 9 of which are managed by the town (as shown in **Figure 25**), offering a diverse range of amenities including playgrounds, sports fields, walking paths, and preserved natural areas. Signature destinations such as Sahuarita Lake Park and Anamax Park serve as central gathering places for both residents and visitors.

In addition to its physical amenities, Sahuarita offers a variety of recreation programs and community events that foster year-round engagement. These include youth and adult sports, fitness classes, and seasonal celebrations such as Fiesta Sahuarita and Sahuarita Stars & Stripes, which bring the community together and enhance the town's vibrant character.

As Sahuarita's population continues to grow, so does the need for accessible, high-quality recreational space. To maintain the Town's current level of service—7.1 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents—an additional 27.9 acres of developed parkland will be required. However, to meet the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) median standard of 10.6 acres per 1,000 residents, the Town would need to add approximately 112 acres of developed parkland. The Open Space Element of the General Plan provides a guiding framework to address this need, emphasizing the protection and enhancement of open space resources, access to amenities, and alignment with broader regional planning efforts.

Through continued investment in parks, open space, and community programming, Sahuarita reaffirms its commitment to a high quality of life and a connected, active, and resilient community.

Figure 25: Parks, Recreation & Open Space



Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

Goals & Policies

REC-1: Provide a safe, accessible, and integrated network of parks and open space across all areas.

Sahuarita's system of parks and open space is a key asset to the community and contributes to the overall quality of life for residents. The town seeks to continue providing a high quality of life by enhancing and expanding its network of safe and distinctive parks and open space to ensure that the park system is easy to get to and can adequately meet the active and passive open space needs of current and future residents.

Policies

REC-1.1: Routinely assess and evaluate park facilities to ensure that the park system can adequately meet the active and passive open space needs of current and future residents. (†)

REC-1.2: Continue to implement the Parks and Recreation Area Plan (RAP) to ensure that new housing developments and subdivisions contribute appropriately to parks and recreational facilities as the Town grows. (†)

REC-1.3: Review and update the Parks and Recreation Area Plan (RAP) at least every five years to reflect changes in development patterns, community needs, and recreational priorities. (†)

REC-1.4: Update the Town's Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan at least once every ten years to ensure it reflects current community needs, growth patterns, and recreational priorities. (†)

REC-1.5: Provide park land in quantities and locations to serve the broadest possible spectrum of community recreation needs. Parks should be placed in locations that serve all neighborhoods and populations with minimal overcrowding and overuse.

REC-1.6: Work collaboratively with adjacent jurisdictions and other communities such as, Marana, Oro Valley, Pima County, Pima Association of Governments, State Land Department, the San Xavier District of the Tohono O'odham Nation, the City of Tucson, the mines and other entities to ensure a regionally interconnected open space system.

REC-1.7: Encourage the shared use of schools and school recreation facilities by the Town and School District.

REC-2: Provide access to active recreational activities such as, bicycling, walking, hiking and horseback riding through the development of trails and multi-modal pathways.

Trail and path networks offer communities more options for outdoor recreation. Sahuarita is dedicated to developing a safe and convenient trail and multi-use path network that continues to promote recreational opportunities such as walking, biking, and hiking.

Policies

REC-2.1: Work to provide an off-street trail network that provides connections between major destinations which is safe, convenient, and continuous.

REC-2.2: Encourage new development to provide connections to, and within, the existing and proposed trail network as outlined in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan, including connections to and along the de Anza Trail.

REC-2.3: Integrate and connect neighborhood trails, sidewalks and bike paths with the regional trail system.

REC-2.4: Ensure the Town's trail network provides links to existing and future parks and open space.

REC-2.5: Identify opportunities to connect on-street bicycle facilities to Sahuarita's existing and planned off-street multi-use path network.

REC-3: Preserve and protect natural open space as a valuable recreational asset.

Surrounded by the Sonoran Desert, Sahuarita sits among one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world. As the community is sensitive to protecting this unique environment the Town will: seek to preserve and protect natural open spaces, recognizing their value as essential recreational assets; focus on maintaining these areas for public enjoyment; promote environmental stewardship; and ensure that these natural landscapes remain accessible and beneficial for future generations.

Policies

REC-3.1: Plan for and encourage provision of natural open space as part of an integrated open space system throughout the Town, including as part of new development.

REC-3.2: Encourage site design that incorporates both passive/natural and active/functional open space areas where applicable.

REC-3.3: Maintain Sahuarita's designation as a Tree City USA by continuing to invest in and improve the town's urban forestry program. This includes routine tree care, fostering public participation in tree-related initiatives, and integrating tree preservation and planting strategies into broader land use and community planning efforts.

REC-4: Provide a variety of accessible recreational programs that support healthy lifestyles for residents of all ages and abilities.

Recreational programming provides crucial benefits to the physical and mental health of residents while bringing people from all walks of life together. The town seeks to build on the programming it already offers and build an exceptional portfolio of programming that has something for everyone.

Policies

REC-4.1: Provide a range of recreational, educational, enrichment, and special interest programs and events to meet the diverse interests, ages, and needs of residents throughout Sahuarita.

REC-4.2: Promote physical activity through recreation programs, events, and providing recreation facilities that encourage independent exercise in accordance with the Parks and Recreation Department policies and standards.

REC-4.3: Expand recreation programs and facilities through partnerships based on community demand/need.

REC-4.4: Provide opportunities for park and recreation programs and facilities that serve a multi-generational population and those with special needs.

REC-4.5: Conduct periodic citizen surveys to solicit feedback on parks, facilities and programs. (†)

REC-5: Identify partnerships and other unique funding resources to assist in the expansion of parks and recreation facilities.

In an effort to ensure existing and future residents have access to diverse and high-quality recreational spaces the town will collaborate with various stakeholders to explore innovative funding opportunities which aim to enhance and expand its parks and recreation infrastructure.

Policies

REC-5.1: Explore alternative and creative funding mechanisms including grants, private donations and coordination with local non-profit organizations and businesses to support the enhancement of the town's parks and recreation facilities.

REC-5.2: Consider partnerships with adjacent municipalities, federal agencies, and other state and regional partners on the implementation of collaborative projects and plans that support the enhancement of regional recreational facilities, open space, and trail system.

REC-5.3: Initiate and maintain partnerships with school districts, charter schools, and other educational providers within the planning area to utilize their facilities for Town-sponsored recreation programs.

REC-6: Include residents in park design, development and maintenance, programming, and policy-making.

Engaging the community in every aspect of parks planning ensures that the parks and recreation facilities reflect the needs and desires of the people who use them. This inclusive approach not only fosters a sense of ownership and pride among residents but also enhances the overall quality and sustainability of Sahuarita's parks and recreation system.

Policies

REC-6.1: Continue to include and encourage the Parks and Recreation Commission to assist with development of strategies for continuous improvement.

REC-6.2: Actively involve the youth of the Town through the Sahuarita Teen Advisory Council in planning programs and activities designed for youth.

REC-6.3: Continue to recruit participants for the Adopt-A-Park Program to assist with the general landscape maintenance of the Town parks and trails.

REC-7: Continue to provide community events that bring Town residents together, establish traditions, and attract tourism.

The town will continue to organize community events of varying sizes that enhance local pride, highlight the town's unique character, and boost the local economy through increased tourism.

Policies

REC-7.1: Continue to develop town-wide events and celebrations that build community civic pride and attract visitors to the town for signature events.

REC-7.2: Engage and work with residents, organizations and businesses to encourage participation in the Town's events.

REC-7.3: Encourage, support and efficiently process permitting of private special events that can promote and enhance traditions as well as quality of life for residents of the Town.

REC-7.4: Create tools and best practices that measure the economic impact events have on the community.

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ENVIRONMENTAL

The Environmental Planning Element encompasses goals and policies aimed at addressing natural systems and the impacts of development on air and water quality, habitat preservation, natural resource conservation, and the protection of cultural resources within and throughout the community. Recognizing the inherent values and qualities of the existing natural environment, it is crucial to consider these environmental amenities, shown in **Figure 26**, in urban development alongside economic and social factors.

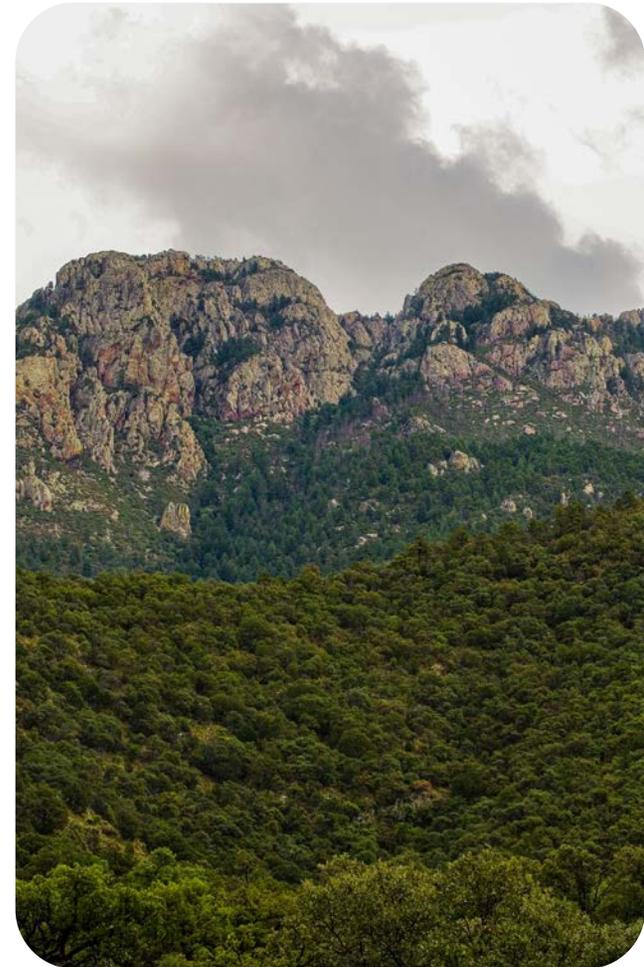
Framework

Air Quality

The Town of Sahuarita requires dust mitigation measures, particularly during construction and road development activities to help reduce airborne dust and address air quality concerns.

Air quality regulation in Sahuarita and the surrounding region falls under the jurisdiction of the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ). PDEQ oversees air quality throughout Pima County, excluding tribal lands such as the Tohono O’odham Nation, Pascua Yaqui Tribe, and San Xavier District.

The original air quality monitoring station closest to Sahuarita was located 0.5 kilometers west of I-19 in Green Valley. In February 2001, this station was relocated about 1 kilometer north to the Pima County Government Center at 601 N. La Canada Drive. In 2011, PDEQ added a second monitoring site atop the Green Valley Fire District’s administration building at 1285 W. Camino Encanto.

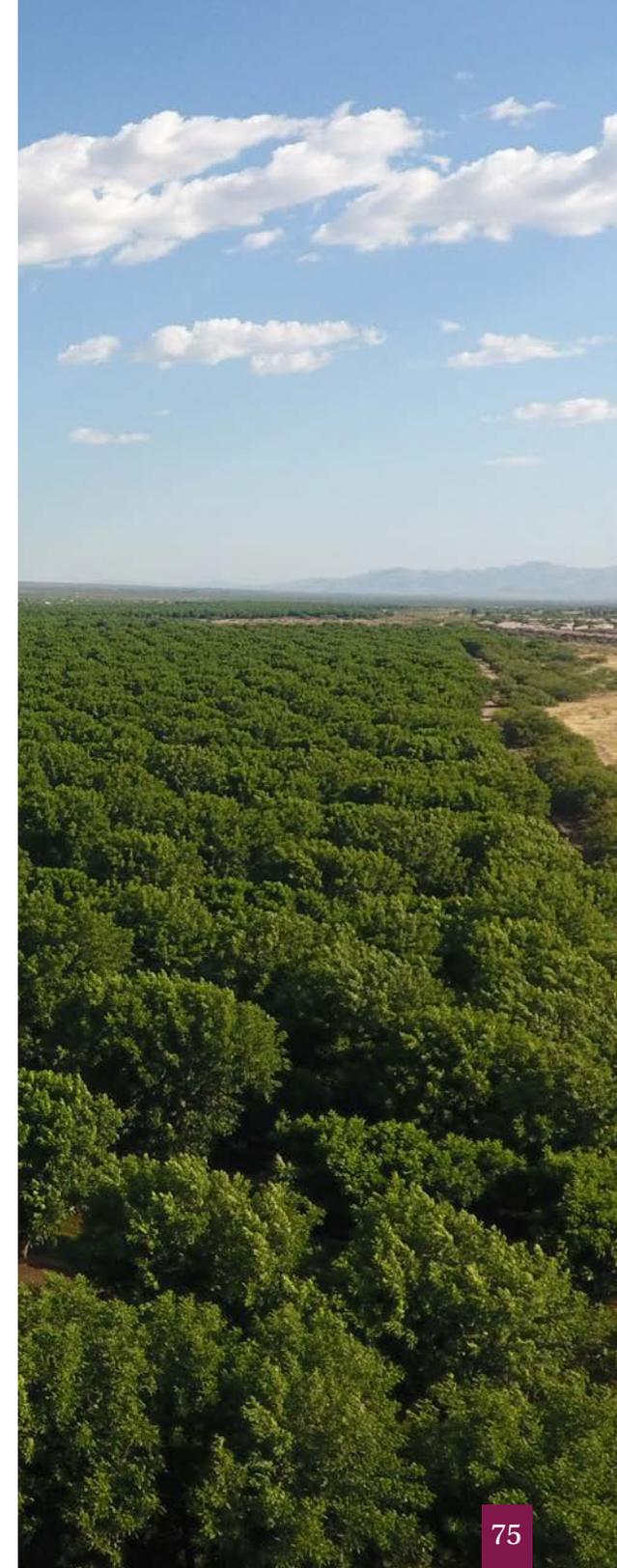


Water Quality

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), along with the Pima County Department of Environmental Quality (PDEQ) through a delegation agreement, oversees inspections of activities that could affect water quality in Sahuarita. The Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) monitors local aquifers and manages groundwater resources as part of the Tucson Active Management Area. As of 2025, ADEQ has updated its Aquifer Water Quality Standards to better protect groundwater, with new regulations taking effect in August 2025.

Habitat Preservation

The Environmentally Sensitive Lands within the Town of Sahuarita and its planning areas identify locations of critical habitat. These are typically distinguished by unique plant communities or by increased vegetation size and density compared to surrounding upland regions. The presence and type of vegetation in these habitats often reflect the availability of moisture.





Floodplain

The Town Engineer serves as the Floodplain Administrator for Sahuarita and acts as the primary point of contact for National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) matters with county, state, and federal agencies. The Town is responsible for floodplain management both within and outside of FEMA-designated floodplains.

Approximately one-third of the Town of Sahuarita lies within the 100-year floodplain of the Santa Cruz River and its associated washes, shown in **Figure 26**. A significant portion of this floodplain is located within the Sahuarita Farms Specific Plan area, however the Sahuarita Farms Specific Plan and comprehensive River Master Plan outlines a long-term strategy for mitigating flood risks while supporting development. These plans emphasize ecologically friendly river corridor design, flood conveyance, habitat restoration, and recreational opportunities.

Additionally, the Santa Cruz River Management Plan, led by Pima County, continues to guide regional floodplain strategies, balancing flood risk reduction with environmental and community benefits.

Figure 26: Environmentally Sensitive Lands

Tohono O'odham Nation
San Xavier District

City of Tucson

Pima Mine Rd

Helmet Peak Rd

El Toro Rd

La Canada Dr

La Villita Rd

Green Valley
(unincorporated)

Duval Mine Rd

Nogales Highway

Nogales Highway

Old Nogales Highway

Santa Cruz River

Santa Rita Rd

Gunnery Range Wash

Sahuarita Rd

Dawson Rd

Wilmot Rd

Houghton Rd

Legend

- Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area
- Sahuarita Municipal Limits
- Washes
- Tribal Communities
- City of Tucson
- CAP Canal
- Street Network

- Union Pacific Rail Road
- Protected Lands of Pima County
- Regulatory Floodway
- 1% Annual Chance Flood Hazard
- Lee Moore Special Study Flow Corridor
- Regulated Riparian Habitat (RRH)

- Floodways
- Aggregate Resources**
- Resource Industrial
- Washes by Flow Rate**
- Under 500 CFS
- 500-1000 CFS
- 1000-2000 CFS
- 2000-5000 CFS
- 5000-10000 CFS
- Over 10000 CFS



0 0.75 1.5
Miles

Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita



Cultural Resources and Historical Structures

The Santa Cruz Valley, including Sahuarita, has been inhabited since around 11,500 B.C., making it rich in archaeological and cultural resources, shown in **Figure 27**. The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, which runs along the Santa Cruz River, remains a key cultural feature of the area.

Sahuarita is also home to the largest irrigated pecan orchard in the world, operated by Farmers Investment Co. (FICO) and its subsidiary, Green Valley Pecan Company. While FICO closed its local processing plant in 2021 due to global market pressures, it continues to invest in farming operations and groundwater recharge efforts.

During World War II, Sahuarita was the site of Camp Continental, a German prisoner-of-war camp established in 1944 to address labor shortages caused by the war. Located near present-day Continental Ranch, the camp housed around 250 to 300 POWs who worked in local agriculture, particularly cotton and vegetable farming. Today, the site is commemorated by a historical marker installed by the Santa Cruz Valley Historical Society at Quail Creek Veterans Municipal Park.

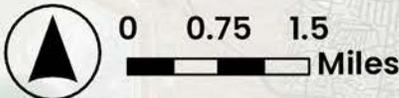
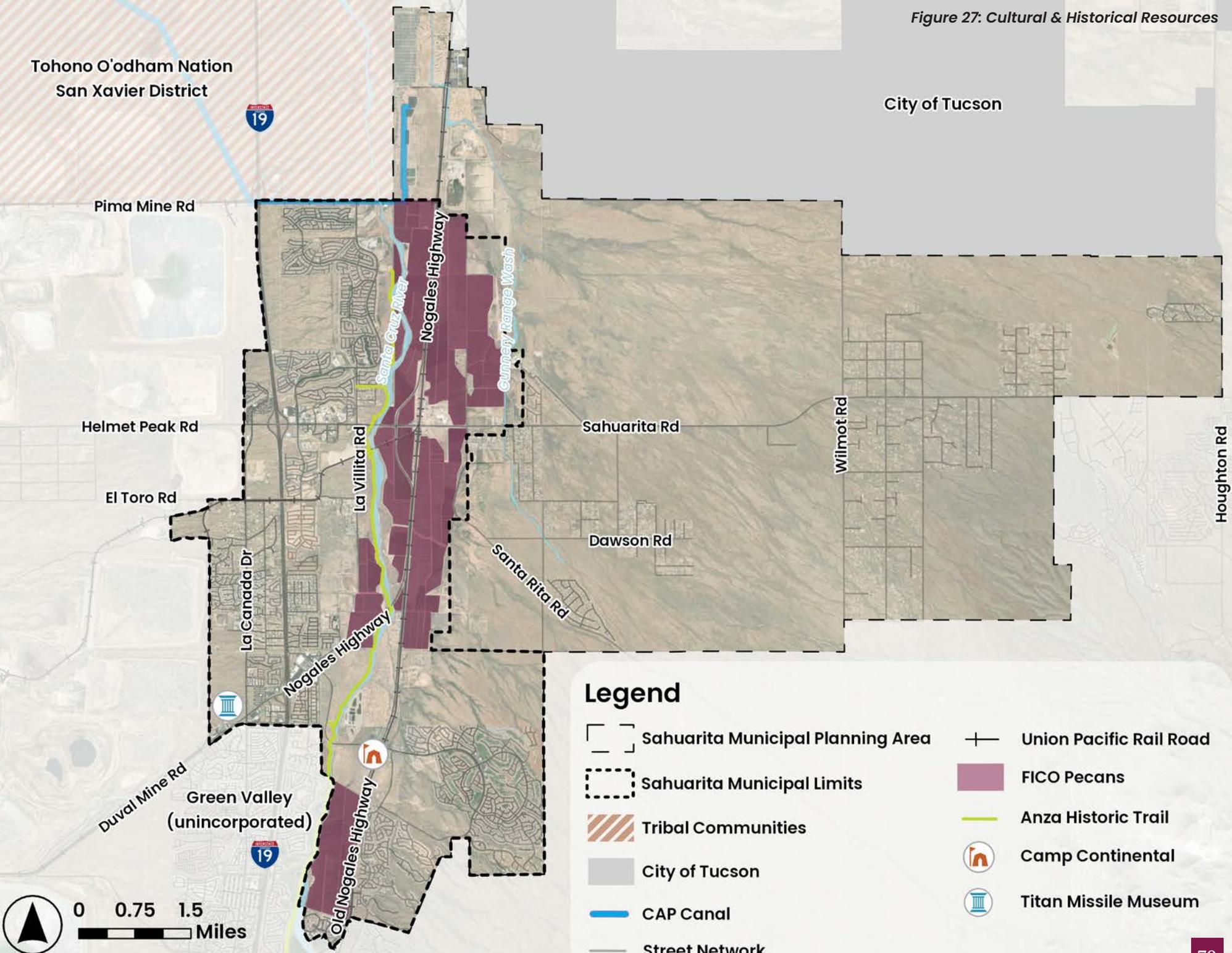
Lastly, Sahuarita is home to several historic homes, ranches, and schoolhouses that may qualify for historic recognition. The Titan II Missile Museum, designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994, is currently the Town's only officially recognized historic site.

General Conservation

The Town of Sahuarita has adopted the 2024 International Building Codes, including the International Energy Conservation Code, with local amendments to promote energy-efficient construction in new developments.

The Town also continues to support environmental stewardship through annual recycling events, where residents can safely dispose of household hazardous waste and electronics. These events are typically held at the Sahuarita Town Hall complex and are promoted through the Town's website and community outreach.

Figure 27: Cultural & Historical Resources



Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita



Aggregate Resource Management & Mining Facilities

Aggregates:

The Town of Sahuarita recognizes the critical role that aggregate resources—including sand, gravel, and other mineral materials—play in supporting construction, infrastructure, and economic development. These materials are fundamental to the Town’s continued growth and are essential for both public and private development projects.

Aggregate mining operations typically involve the excavation of loose alluvial materials from riverbeds or adjacent lands, followed by sorting, grading, and transportation. In Sahuarita, such activities are most likely to occur along the Santa Cruz River corridor and other drainageways where alluvial deposits are prevalent.

While aggregate extraction is vital to regional development, it can also generate environmental and community impacts, including:

- Air quality degradation from dust and particulate matter (PM10),
- Groundwater consumption for dust suppression and material processing,
- Visual and aesthetic impacts on natural landscapes and view corridors,
- Noise and traffic associated with haul routes and heavy equipment.

To manage these impacts and ensure land use compatibility, the Town has identified existing and potential aggregate extraction sites using state-provided mapping resources (see **Figure 28**). These areas are designated as Resource Industrial, a land use category that acknowledges the industrial nature of mining operations while promoting appropriate separation from residential and other sensitive uses.

Mining:

Multiple mining operations exist adjacent to the Town of Sahuarita, and additional mines have been proposed in the surrounding area. While the Town does not have jurisdiction or permitting authority over these facilities, it remains actively engaged in monitoring their status and coordinating with relevant agencies to ensure that any potential negative impacts are identified early.

Figure 28: Aggregate Resources

Tohono O'odham Nation
San Xavier District

City of Tucson

Pima Mine Rd

Helmet Peak Rd

El Toro Rd

La Canada Dr

Green Valley
(unincorporated)

Duval Mine Rd

La Villita Rd

Nogales Highway

Old Nogales Highway

Santa Cruz River

Nogales Highway

Santa Rita Rd

Cunney Range Wash

Sahuarita Rd

Dawson Rd

Wilmot Rd

Houghton Rd

Legend

-  Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area
-  Sahuarita Municipal Limits
-  Tribal Communities
-  City of Tucson
-  CAP Canal
-  Street Network

-  Union Pacific Rail Road
-  Resource Industrial
-  Aggregates

Deposits

-  Q - Undivided surficial deposits
-  Qo - Early Pleistocene alluvial deposit
-  Qr - Recent quaternary alluvium

Source: AZGeo, AZGS Library, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

Goals & Policies

ENV-1: Manage and preserve Sahuarita's natural resources in a manner that balances their ecological value and aesthetic potential with growth and development.

The health and well-being of our natural systems are intimately tied to how growth occurs. As development occurs, Sahuarita will continue to protect its natural resources, such as the Santa Cruz River corridor, ensuring they can be enjoyed in a variety of ways for many years to come.

Policies

ENV-1.1: Preserve the Town's natural systems and resources through land conservation planning efforts (i.e. public or private land trusts).

ENV-1.2: Encourage rehabilitation of open space in riparian areas, including the rehabilitation of degraded mapped riparian areas.

ENV-1.3: As part of the development review process or through a rezoning condition, require preservation in place of unique or special native plant specimens. Where preservation in place is not feasible, require transplantation on-site and in accordance with common industry-standard methods.

ENV-1.4: Avoidance of sensitive natural features, such as wetlands, riparian areas, sensitive plant and animal sites, and migration corridors, shall occur where possible. When unavoidable, protect such areas with buffers vegetated with native species and low impact development practices to retain stormwater.

ENV-1.5: Take into consideration wildlife corridors and other linear linkages between large open space areas.

ENV-1.6: Establish invasive species prevention measures and education resources to continuously monitor, manage and remove invasive species.

ENV-1.7: Encourage activities along the Santa Cruz River that establish a cohesive river corridor, preserve riparian and habitat areas, serve as an amenity, and spur economic growth.

ENV-1.8: In post-annexation entitlement reviews, consider Pima County Conservation Lands System map and guidelines to balance new development with natural resource protection.

ENV-2: Collaborate with local agencies and non-profits to educate the public on best practices to conserve natural resources.

Through partnerships with local agencies and non-profit organizations, Sahuarita will support effective educational programs and outreach initiatives that raise awareness about sustainable practices such as water conservation, recycling, and energy efficiency.

Policies

ENV-2.1: Support private, public and non-profit programs and activities that preserve water resources, plant and wildlife habitats.

ENV-2.2: Coordinate with Pima County, the Arizona Department of Game and Fish, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, the Arizona Department of Water Resources, and other agencies to promote open space and water resource conservation and wildlife education programs.

ENV-2.3: Work collaboratively with Pima Association of Governments, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, and other agencies to educate the public on best practices to prevent stormwater pollution.

ENV-3: Promote opportunities to improve local air quality.

Sahuarita is committed to enhancing local air quality by creating opportunities for cleaner air through local partnerships and community initiatives which focus on minimizing impacts to air quality, promoting sustainable practices, and ensuring a healthier environment for all residents.

Policies

ENV-3.1: Promote initiatives that enhance community health through better air quality.

ENV-3.2: Pave or treat unpaved public roads to minimize air quality impacts, as well as other environmental impacts, when practical and feasible.

ENV-3.3: Coordinate with Pima Association of Governments (PAG) and Pima County on an educational program to promote air quality education.

ENV-4: Minimize man-made environmental hazards.

Through partnerships with local organizations and increasing public awareness the town will work to minimize man-made environmental hazards ensuring a high quality of life for residents now and into the future.

Policies

ENV-4.1: Protect sensitive lands from environmental degradation.

ENV-4.2: Avoid development in the floodplain and areas of steep slopes with the exception of user-based recreational uses where appropriate.

ENV-4.3: Promote the adoption of green infrastructure standards that rely on natural processes for stormwater drainage, groundwater recharge, and flood management.

ENV-4.4: Mitigate potential hazard impacts when building in hazard-prone areas.

ENV-4.5: Educate and inform residents of how to mitigate impacts from floods, extreme heat, and other high-risk hazards.

ENV-5: Preserve and protect the Town's cultural and historic resources.

To keep the Town in tune with its past while fostering growth, Sahuarita will work to enhance access to its history and culture, for both residents and visitors, by working with local partners and the development community to properly preserve the many historic and cultural resources within the town.

Policies

ENV-5.1: Cooperate with local preservation non-profits, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the National Park Service (NPS), and others to increase public awareness of the importance of Sahuarita's cultural resources and encourage public participation in identifying and protecting sites and features within the town that have historic, cultural, or archaeological significance.

ENV-5.2: Recognize and reinforce statutory requirements for protection of cultural resources during the development process and require developers to report all previously unrecorded cultural resources discovered during construction activities by builders, contractors, or individuals to the Arizona State Museum.

ENV-5.3: Address mitigation of any potential impacts to historic districts, historic landscapes, or landmarks during the rezoning process as a condition of rezoning approval.

ENV-5.4: Require areas surveyed for cultural resources in 2000 or earlier to be resurveyed by a qualified archaeologist to ensure that all surveys meet current professional standards and SHPO guidance.

ENV-6: Promote best practices in solid waste removal and recycling.

The town will partner with service providers and local organizations to support comprehensive programs and activities which promote best practices and encourage residents and businesses to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills and recycle effectively.

Policies

ENV-6.1: Encourage residential, commercial, and industrial recycling of paper, cardboard, and other recyclable materials.

ENV-6.2: Promote public and private agency partnerships that encourage conservation, reuse and recycling of refuse materials.

ENV-7: Promote noise mitigation strategies to enhance the quality of life for Sahuarita residents.

Sahuarita is committed to delivering a high quality of life through the utilization of thoughtful design and the cultivation of a sense of place and small-town feel. By balancing growth with the management of land resources and preservation of existing developments that contribute to Sahuarita's unique character, residents will continue to enjoy safe and convenient access to all the amenities and services the town has to offer.

Policies

ENV-7.1: Encourage compatibility of adjacent uses in order to minimize adverse impacts of development-generated noise.

ENV-7.2: Require commercial developments to implement noise attenuation measures if they are likely to negatively impact neighboring areas, particularly when these developments are near existing residential neighborhoods.

ENV-7.3: Require new residential development to incorporate noise attenuation strategies when constructed adjacent to existing noise generators, such as freeways or industrial or commercial uses.

ENV-8: Ensure that any future aggregate resource development is compatible with surrounding land uses and consistent with the Town's environmental and community values.

By ensuring compatibility between aggregate resource development and surrounding land uses, the Town can support essential extraction activities while preserving environmental quality and protecting the health, safety, and character of nearby neighborhoods. This balanced approach allows Sahuarita to meet infrastructure needs without compromising community livability or long-term sustainability.

Policies:

ENV-8.1: Encourage land use compatibility by requiring appropriate buffers between mining operations and residential or sensitive uses.

ENV-8.2: Promote site reclamation and recontouring practices that restore disturbed areas to a condition compatible with surrounding landscapes and future land uses.

ENV-8.3: Coordinate with regional and state agencies to ensure that aggregate resource planning aligns with broader environmental and infrastructure goals.

ENV-8.4: Provide information to the public regarding any proposed aggregate operations to ensure transparency and responsiveness to community concerns.

WATER RESOURCES

The Water Resources Element outlines the Town of Sahuarita's goals and policies for managing its surface water, groundwater, and reclaimed water supplies. It evaluates current water availability, anticipates future demand based on projected growth, and identifies strategies for securing additional resources to meet long-term needs.

Key challenges to future water security include climate change, fragmented water and wastewater management, and limited financial resources. To address these uncertainties, the Town aims to adopt adaptive policies to ensure sustainable water use and conservation, while coordinating with other elements of the General Plan that impact and/or address water (i.e. Water quality is addressed in the Environmental Element, and infrastructure needs are covered in the Public Facilities and Services Element).

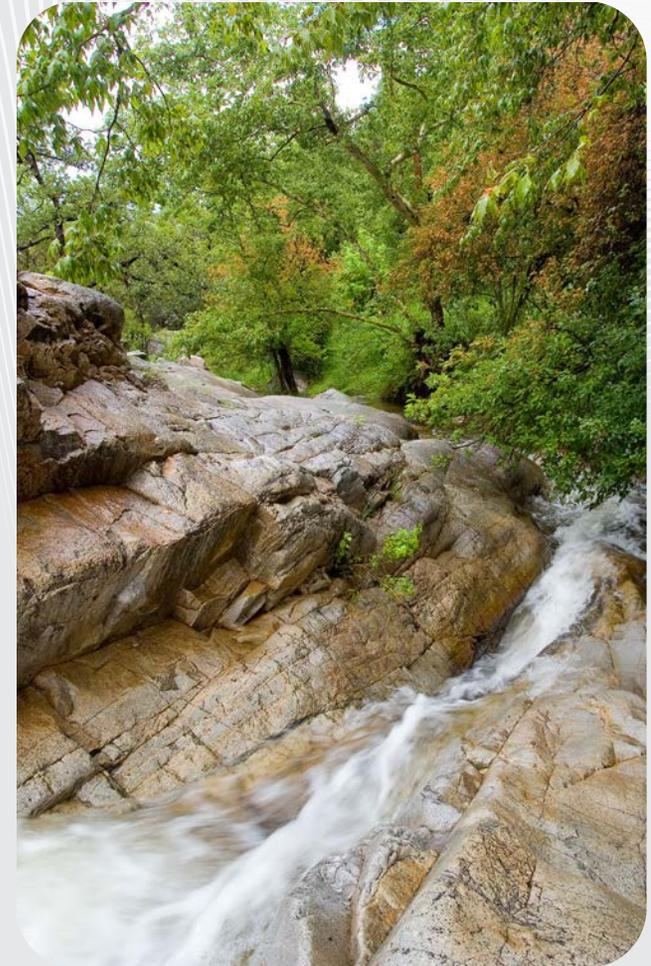
Framework

Arizona's Growing Smarter legislation emphasizes the importance of aligning land use planning with the availability and cost of water resources. Water is a vital public resource—essential for life and deeply connected to both natural ecosystems and built environments. In our desert climate, where water is especially limited, responsible management is critical.

A well-developed water resources framework ensures a long-term, safe, and reliable supply by balancing public and private needs. Such a plan also supports the efficient reuse of water, enhancing the community's resilience to environmental challenges and future uncertainties.

1980 Groundwater Management Act

To address groundwater depletion in the state's most populous areas, the state legislature passed the 1980 Groundwater Management Act and created the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) to ensure dependable long-term water supplies for Arizona's growing communities. The ADWR administers the provisions of the Groundwater Code found in the Arizona Revised Statutes, explores methods of augmenting water supplies



to meet future demands, and works to develop public policies that promote conservation and equitable distribution of water. Since the Town of Sahuarita falls within the Tucson Active Management Area, the Town must comply with the requirements of this Act.

Tucson Active Management Area

The Tucson Active Management Areas (AMA) is one of five AMAs in the state that were established pursuant to the 1980 Groundwater Management Code. The Tucson AMA covers 3,866 square miles in southeastern Arizona and includes the Town of Sahuarita. The Tucson AMA has a statutory goal of achieving safe-yield by 2025. Safe-yield means that the amount of groundwater pumped from the aquifer on an average annual basis must not exceed the amount that is naturally or artificially recharged. The safe-yield goal is a basin-wide balance. Since groundwater use in AMAs is regulated, groundwater pumping in these areas requires a permit from ADWR. Rights to use surface water are also designated through a permitting process by ADWR. There are also significant water rights held by mining and agricultural interests within or adjacent to the Town's corporate limits. The Tucson AMA has made significant progress towards achieving safe-yield, however under Colorado River shortage conditions (which are expected to result in increased groundwater pumping), it may be a significant challenge to maintain safe-yield given the resources and regulatory tools currently available.

Water Providers & Resources

Municipal water providers include cities, towns, private water companies, and irrigation districts that deliver water for non-irrigation uses such as residential, commercial, governmental, industrial, and construction uses. Although water providers in the Town offset groundwater pumping as required by the Arizona Department of Water Resources, the water providers currently do not use CAP water as a source for municipal or domestic water. Currently, six main providers supply municipal water within the Town of Sahuarita.

Global Water-Las Quintas Serenas, which has been consolidated into the Global Water-Saguaro, services the area south to Via del Santa Tomas (Anamax access), north to El Toro



Road, east to I-19 and west to the Anamax tailing dike. The source of water supply for the Las Quintas Serenas Water Company is groundwater. The company currently does not use effluent or have any Central Arizona Project (CAP) allocations.

The Community Water Company of Green Valley services parcels in the area around the intersection of Duval Mine Road and I-19, including the Wal-Mart, and has expanded into Sections 25, 26, and 35 within Township 17 south, Range 13 east, north of Duval Mine Road. Community Water pumps groundwater and does not use reclaimed water. The company has a CAP allocation for 2,858 acre-feet of water and is planning for the ultimate use of its CAP allocation.

Global Water - Farmers Water Company services Madera Highlands, properties owned by Farmers Investment Co (FICO) and other areas within and outside the Town, both east and west of the Santa Cruz River. Global Water - Farmers Water Company primarily utilizes groundwater across four independent water systems (although a CAP line extension and agreement with Freeport-McMoRan was completed in 2020 to serve FICO's Sahuarita Farm); Sahuarita, Continental, Sahuarita Highlands, and Santa Rita Springs. Overall, Global Water - Farmers Water Company serves over 3,500 customers, with 71% of those located within Town limits and the remaining 29% located in surrounding unincorporated land. Recently, Global water initiated and completed utility master planning validation of system dynamics, incorporated FICO's Sahuarita Farms and Continental specific plans, as well as included initial planning for SECAP.

The Sahuarita Water Company services the area within the Rancho Sahuarita Specific Plan area. The company has a 100-year Assured Water Supply designation with the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). The source of supply for Sahuarita Water Company is groundwater. The company utilizes extinguishment credits to offset a portion of its annual water use.

The Quail Creek Water Company currently provides water within the Quail Creek Specific Plan area. The company has no CAP allocations currently. Pima County has an agreement with Robson/Quail Creek in which Robson/Quail Creek purchases a portion of reclaimed water from Pima County and stores it in a constructed recharge facility adjacent to Pima County's existing wastewater reclamation facility located in the southern portion of the Town. Some of this water is recovered by Robson to offset their groundwater use at the Quail Creek development.

There are also numerous small water companies and cooperatives servicing areas of the Town. This includes the Sahuarita Village Water Company, which serves a small area north of Sahuarita Road and west of the Santa Cruz River, as well as the Valle Verde del Norte Water Cooperative, which consists of a small service area east of I-19 and north of Nogales Highway.



Water Supply & Demand

While each private water provider that serves the Town and its planning area manage water resource portfolios that primarily consist of groundwater and the annual incidental recharge volume, per each DAWS, they all are working hard to develop to ensure the ongoing responsible growth and sustainability of a thriving town, even in times of drought and scarcity.

The water providers that serve the Town and surrounding unincorporated areas, provide water to a total population of over 58,368. These active connections include residential, industrial, commercial, government, turf, construction, and other uses. The total existing demand for each water provider in the Sahuarita region is provided in **Table 5**. Given their significance to the Town and the region, agriculture and mining uses are further recognized below:

- *Agriculture* - The primary agricultural area in the Town of Sahuarita is the pecan groves owned by Farmers Investment Co (FICO). FICO has 5,889 irrigation acres with an annual allotment of 34,685-acre feet (AF).
- FICO and Freeport-McMoRan (Freeport) recognize the importance of the long-term sustainability of groundwater to the local aquifer. Consequently, in 2015 the companies partnered to build a waterline to deliver Central Arizona Project (CAP) water to FICO's Sahuarita Farm. This waterline extension was completed in 2020. By utilizing renewable CAP water supplies, more water can remain in the aquifer due to reduced groundwater pumping.
- *Metal Mines* - Water usage by the metal mines adjacent to the Town has increased significantly in recent years due to the recovery of a depressed copper market in the mid-1980s. Current groundwater use by the ASARCO and Freeport McMoRan mines is estimated to be approximately 39,000 AF per year. The level of mining activity fluctuates with the price of copper and technological advances as well as with other economic factors.

Total estimated existing water demand for the Sahuarita region is currently below the Designations of Assured Water Supply (DAWS) allocated to this area. This estimate excludes water use from private wells that serve residences, and commercial or industrial water users not served by a water provider. Since many of the private water providers total service area encompasses areas outside of the Town of Sahuarita or its planning area, dedicated demand totals for these specific limits were not available.

It is anticipated that domestic water demand will increase with increased development, while agricultural water demands will decrease due to decreased farmland area. Though the Town’s larger planning area will require more water in the future, many water providers do not currently use their entire Designation of Assured Water Supply (DAWS) allocation, leaving room for sustainable growth. It is estimated that the population within the Sahuarita region can increase to approximately 71,700 without the need for additional water supplies. **Table 5** summarizes the estimated projections for future water demands within the service areas of the Town.

Table 5: Future Water Demands

Water Provider	Water Source	Current Population ¹	Avg Daily Demand (ac/ft)	Projected Population ¹	Projected Avg. Daily Demand (ac/ft)	Additional Future Water Supply Needed
Sahuarita Water	Groundwater	~18,178+non-residential uses	8.0	~22,366+non-residential uses	8.1	None
Global Water - Farmers	Groundwater	~8,542+non-residential uses	2.9	~15,000+non-residential uses	4.7	None
Global Water - Las Quintas Serenas	Groundwater	~3,627+non-residential uses	1.4	~ 3,885+non-residential uses	1.5	None
Quail Creek Water	Groundwater	~5,576+non-residential use	1.9	~ 7,505+non-residential uses	2.3	None
Community Water of Green Valley	Groundwater	~22,000+non-residential uses	6.7	~ 22,500+non-residential uses	6.7	None
Sahuarita Village Water	Groundwater	~120	0.06	~120	0.06	None
Valle Verde Del Norte Water	Groundwater	~325	0.2	~325	0.2	None

Source: ADWR Public Records and Private Water Utility Providers

1. May reflect total customers located within Town of Sahuarita boundaries as well as customers located within unincorporated Pima County.



Wastewater Facilities

The Sahuarita wastewater system plays a vital role in protecting public health and the environment by collecting and treating the Town's wastewater. The Town and Pima County are designated to provide wastewater service in the northern and southern portions of the Town, respectively. The Town operates the Sahuarita Water Reclamation Facility located along Rancho Sahuarita Boulevard south of Pima Mine Road. Pima County operates the Green Valley Wastewater Reclamation Facility located west of Quail Creek along Nogales Highway. Additionally, certain areas within the town utilize private septic systems.

The Town's wastewater system is comprised of over 50 miles of pipeline, 1,178 manholes, a treatment plant, and multiple pumps and other equipment. It meets the needs of more than 5,500 customers and has the capacity to serve nearly 2,500 more without additional expansion. At full buildout, 8,000 more customers are planned to be served through future facility expansion. Sahuarita's Wastewater Treatment Facility is state-of-the-art. It employs the latest odor control technology, and it produces effluent water that is filtered through recharge basins into the aquifer to supplement groundwater supplies.

The Town has been actively coordinating with Pima County for several years to review projected development within the Town and the SECAP area. In response to future growth needs, Pima County has proposed construction of a new 4 to 8 MGD Regional Water Reclamation Facility at the northeast corner of the Town. This new facility will enhance wastewater treatment capacity and provide greater operational flexibility for the Town, while also supporting development beyond the current Sewer Service Area boundaries.

Reclaimed Water (Effluent)

Both the Sahuarita and Green Valley (Pima County) wastewater facilities produce A+ reclaimed water. The Town recharges water from its Sahuarita Water Reclamation Facility and utilizes a portion of the stored water to offset groundwater use at Lake Park. The remaining water is stored in the aquifer for later use. A portion of reclaimed water produced at the Green Valley facility is sold to Quail Creek through an agreement with Pima County. The remainder is discharged to percolation ponds on site. Pima County did process a permit amendment from ADEQ and ADWR to store the remainder of its reclaimed water.

Goals & Policies

WR-1: Effectively manage water resources to meet the current and future needs of the town.

Sahuarita will continue to collaborate with local water providers to manage water demand ensuring that current and future residents within the town have an adequate supply of water well into the future.

Policies

WR-1.1: Coordinate with regional stakeholders to protect the quantity of water resources in the Tucson Active Management Area.

WR-1.2: Regularly coordinate with the local water companies to align water planning and management efforts in local, regional, and State priorities and regulations.

WR-1.3: Support local and regional efforts to increase delivery and storage of renewable water supplies in the upper portion of the Santa Cruz basin.

WR-1.4: In accordance with State law, ensure new development will complete its reasonable and fair share of providing for new water facilities that directly service the respective development.

WR-1.5: Consider the development of a comprehensive water resources plan to comprehensively assess all private water systems and effectively guide anticipated future growth. (†)

WR-1.6: Pursue and secure renewable water supplies should the town become a water provider.

WR-1.7: Promote the construction of facilities that transport and process surface and renewable water resource supplies.

WR-2: Maintain the quality of groundwater and surface water supplies.

Sahuarita will work with local water providers and other stakeholders to ensure the water systems that service the town have the means and ability to deliver safe a reliable water to all of the town's residents.

Policies

WR-2.1: Coordinate with regional stakeholders to protect the quantity and quality of water resources in the Tucson Active Management Area.

WR 2.2: Support local and regional efforts to increase delivery and storage of renewable water supplies in the upper portion of the Santa Cruz basin.

WR-2.3: Update the Town's five-year CIP as necessary should the town become a water provider.

WR-3: Promote water conservation and water reuse.

As part of their efforts to effectively manage water Sahuarita will continue to promote water conservation efforts which seek to reduce water usage and encourage innovative water practices. This includes working with water providers to continually evaluate current water use and explore opportunities for water reuse.

Policies

WR-3.1: Implement strategies to increase the beneficial use of effluent in accordance with Resolution 2011-0240, as amended.

WR-3.2: Maximize the town's ability to earn long-term storage credits where effluent recharge projects are implemented.

WR-3.3: Encourage the implementation of alternative water conservation methods for new and existing developments, including conversion and/or installation of stormwater collection systems such as green infrastructure and Low Impact Development (LID) principles.

WR-3.4: Promote the use of xeriscaping and rainwater harvesting for irrigation practices to conserve water.

WR-3.5: Assist the private water companies in conservation, long-range planning, and identification of their roles as water suppliers for the region.

WR-3.6: Continue to allow options for natural vegetation without irrigation to remain and count toward required landscape bufferyards in order to conserve water resources.

WR-3.7: Encourage the use of Arizona Department of Water Resources-approved drought tolerant plants, low flow irrigation, and water-conserving fixtures in all new developments.

WR-3.8: Establish passive recreation opportunities that include conservation demonstration projects in the vicinity of water recharge facilities.

WR-3.9: Encourage the use of low flow plumbing fixtures, the purchase of water saving appliances, changes in water use habits and other water saving tips.

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ENERGY

Promoting the efficient use of existing energy resources, while actively encouraging the development and integration of renewable and alternative energy sources, delivers lasting benefits to the entire community. By prioritizing responsible energy consumption and supporting innovation in energy technologies, the Town can align with its broader goals of improving residents' quality of life and fostering economic growth. Energy-conscious planning contributes to healthier living environments, and a more attractive setting for businesses and future development. In doing so, the Town positions itself as a forward-thinking, environmentally responsible community committed to long-term prosperity and well-being.

Framework

The Town of Sahuarita remains committed to implementing improvements that benefit the Southern Arizona community. Town staff actively pursue funding opportunities to support projects that enhance Sahuarita as a vibrant place to live, work, and play.

In the early 2010s, the Town received over \$111,000 in funding from the Governor's Office of Energy Policy (GOEP) through a U.S. Department of Energy grant. This funding supported energy efficiency initiatives, particularly in outdoor lighting at municipal facilities such as parks, the wastewater treatment plant, and the Municipal Complex. Additional smaller-scale upgrades included IT improvements, compact fluorescent lighting, and motion sensors. These projects were completed in December 2011. The Town also received a second round of funding in April 2012, totaling \$11,100, which was used to upgrade lighting at Anamax and North Santa Cruze Park sport courts, completed in September 2012.

More recently, the 2023–2028 Strategic Plan, adopted by the Town Council in May 2023, outlines a renewed focus on sustainability, infrastructure modernization, and energy-conscious development. The plan emphasizes environmental stewardship and includes goals related to energy efficiency, smart growth, and infrastructure resilience.



Goals & Policies

ENG-1: Work to become a community that promotes energy efficiency best practices in order to balance energy consumption with renewable energy generation.

Through this plan, Sahuarita aims to encourage responsible and efficient energy use by educating the community, forming local and regional partnerships that focus on expanding and increasing the variety of renewable energy sources and exploring innovative strategies to enhance energy efficiency through the development process.

Policies

ENG-1.1: Promote the generation, transmission, and use of a range of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power to meet current and future demand.

ENG-1.2: Encourage and support new development and redevelopment projects that incorporate renewable energy sources.

ENG-1.3: Encourage energy and resource efficient buildings and landscaping that conforms to green and sustainable development standards and practices in the planning, design, construction and renovation of public facilities.

ENG-1.4: Encourage the use of green building techniques and standards in new development to improve the quality of the built environment and reduce environmental impacts.

04

ECONOMIC VITALITY & FISCAL STABILITY

As cities evolve rapidly, it is essential for community members and leaders to collaborate in shaping development that meets current needs without compromising the well-being of future generations. This chapter is dedicated to fostering prosperity across Sahuarita's economic and infrastructure systems in a balanced and holistic manner—guiding the Town's collective path forward. To achieve vitality and stability, a collaborative effort between the Town, private businesses, and partners is desired to create conditions for long-term growth, job creation, and fiscal responsibility.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS



Balancing Economic Development & Fiscal Stability

Many of the comments received from the Town's residents included a desire for more commercial, entertainment, and employment uses. As such, Sahuarita seeks to promote a strong foundation for a competitive future where people and businesses are drawn to the Town for its high potential for prosperity.



Maintaining Infrastructure & Level of Services

Quality public services have been recognized as a key contributor to providing an increased sense of safety and security for residents. The Town strives to provide and work with private providers to offer the highest quality public services to customers, regardless of their location in the community. The focus moving forward is to continue to ensure the provision of quality public services, facilities, and infrastructure distributed equitably throughout the Town.



ELEMENTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sahuarita is at a transformative point in its development, shifting from a primarily residential community to a more balanced, self-sustaining town with a vibrant and diverse economy. As the population grows and regional dynamics evolve, the Town's economic development strategy must be proactive and adaptable to ensure long-term prosperity for all residents.

This element of the General Plan establishes a comprehensive framework to guide Sahuarita's economic future. It recognizes that economic development is not just about attracting businesses, it's about creating the conditions for people, ideas, and enterprises to thrive. It's about building a resilient local economy that supports high-quality jobs, fosters innovation, and enhances the overall quality of life.

Sahuarita's strategic location within the Sun Corridor, access to regional transportation networks, and proximity to educational and research institutions provide a strong foundation for economic growth. However, realizing this potential requires intentional planning, investment in infrastructure, and a commitment to placemaking that supports both economic and community development.

Framework

The goals and policies of the Economic Development element are structured three strategic economic pillars (People, Prosperity, and Place) that collectively guide Sahuarita's efforts to build a competitive economy, develop a skilled workforce, and enhance its identity as a premier destination for living, working, and investment. The Town's economic development policies are organized into five interconnected focus areas aligned with these pillars, forming the framework for a strong, resilient, and adaptable local economy.

1. Fostering Business Growth, Industry Diversification, and Innovation (Prosperity)
2. Building Local Talent and Workforce Readiness (People)
3. Investing in Infrastructure, Employment Centers, and Economic Readiness (Prosperity)
4. Enhancing Placemaking, Livability, and Community Identity (Place)
5. Strengthening Regional Collaboration and Economic Resilience (Prosperity & Place)

This framework provides the basis for the general plan goals, policies, and actions that will help guide Sahuarita's economic development over the next decade. It reflects the community's values and long-term vision, ensuring that economic progress supports a more connected, prosperous, and well-prepared future.

Goals & Policies

ED-1: Foster Business Growth, Industry Diversification, and Innovation by leveraging Sahuarita's strategic location, infrastructure, and assets to attract and grow industries that create quality jobs and capital investment. (Prosperity)

Sahuarita will capitalize on its geographic position, its access to regional and international markets, and its existing infrastructure to attract new businesses and support the expansion of existing ones. By targeting industries that offer high-quality employment opportunities and significant capital investment, the Town will diversify its economic base, strengthen fiscal stability, and enhance long-term prosperity for residents and businesses alike.

Policies

ED-1.1: Target recruitment of high-value industries, including but not limited to advanced manufacturing, aerospace & defense, optics & photonics, healthcare, information & communications technology, and hospitality & entertainment.

ED-1.2: Leverage employment centers such as the Sahuarita Advanced Manufacturing & Technology Center (SAMTEC) to attract industrial real estate development.

ED-1.3: Maintain an updated Economic Development Master Plan and sector-specific strategies.

ED-1.4: Capitalize on proximity to Greater Tucson, the University of Arizona, and Mexico to promote binational trade and foreign direct investment.

ED-1.5: Support tourism and experience-based businesses, including destination attractions, niche events, and regional recreation assets.

ED-2: Build local talent and workforce readiness by ensuring Sahuarita’s employers have access to a highly skilled, adaptable workforce through strong education and training partnerships. (People)

Sahuarita will work with educational institutions, training providers, and industry partners to develop a talent pipeline that meets current and future employer needs. By aligning education and skills training with key industry demands, the Town will help businesses remain competitive while creating career opportunities that support residents’ long-term success.

Policies

ED-2.1: Collaborate with University of Arizona, Pima Community College, JTED, and local school districts to align education and training with key industry needs.

ED-2.2: Expand internship, apprenticeship, and job-shadow programs connecting students with local employers.

ED-2.3: Support “wraparound” workforce services, including childcare, transportation, and housing affordability to improve labor force participation.

ED-2.4: Promote lifelong learning and re-skilling opportunities for residents to adapt to evolving industry needs.

ED-3: Invest in infrastructure, employment centers, and economic readiness by providing the infrastructure, land use flexibility, and regional connectivity necessary to support thriving employment and industry centers. (Prosperity)

Sahuarita will prioritize infrastructure investments, maintain adaptable zoning to accommodate evolving industry needs, and advocate for regional transportation improvements. These efforts will ensure the Town’s employment and industry centers remain competitive, accessible, and positioned for sustainable growth.

Policies

ED-3.1: Prioritize infrastructure investment in designated employment centers and growth areas.

ED-3.2: Maintain flexible zoning to accommodate emerging industry formats, including research parks, flex space, and high-tech manufacturing.

ED-3.3: Advocate for regional transportation improvements, including Interstate and multimodal connectivity.

ED-4: Enhance placemaking, livability, and community identity by positioning Sahuarita as a destination for residents, businesses, and visitors through vibrant places and a strong community brand. (Place)

Sahuarita will enhance its sense of place by creating vibrant, well-designed spaces, supporting cultural and recreational amenities, and promoting a cohesive community brand. These efforts will attract residents, businesses, and visitors, strengthening the Town's identity and economic appeal.

Policies

ED-4.1: Implement placemaking projects in Town Center, Sahuarita Square, and other key corridors that integrate arts, culture, and public gathering spaces.

ED-4.2: Develop and maintain a comprehensive community branding and marketing strategy highlighting quality of life, economic opportunity, and unique amenities.

ED-4.3: Encourage mixed-use developments that promote walkability, bikeability, and transit access near job centers.

ED-4.4: Support housing diversity to meet workforce needs and sustain economic mobility.

ED-5: Strengthen regional collaboration and economic resilience by leveraging partnerships and strategic alliances to increase competitiveness and build a resilient local economy. (Prosperity & Place)

Sahuarita will collaborate with regional, state, national, and international partners to expand economic opportunities, share resources, and address common challenges. Through these alliances, the Town will strengthen its competitiveness, diversify its economic base, and enhance its ability to adapt to changing conditions.

Policies

ED-5.1: Actively participate in county, regional, state, and binational economic development initiatives.

ED-5.2: Enhance partnerships with major employers and industry clusters to address shared challenges and opportunities.

ED-5.3: Maintain active entrepreneurial and small business development programs.

ED-5.4: Use quantitative & geospatial data and analysis to inform economic development actions and opportunities.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & SERVICES

The Public Facilities & Services Element of the Town of Sahuarita General Plan sets forth goals and policies to ensure that future development is aligned with public facilities and services, maintaining appropriate levels of service in a timely and efficient manner to uphold a high quality of life. These goals and policies guarantee adequate fire and police protection, public administration, parks, recreation and open space, water and sewer services, and designated locations for future public facilities within the community.

Framework

The Town of Sahuarita operates with a commitment to maintaining a small, efficient government that focuses on delivering core municipal services while leveraging partnerships to meet broader community needs. This approach allows the Town to remain fiscally responsible while ensuring high-quality service delivery.

Currently, the Town directly provides essential services including:

- Town administration and management
- Municipal court operations Town magistrate services
- Code enforcement
- Building permitting and inspections
- Planning and zoning
- Community relations
- Public works, including streets, right-of-way maintenance, floodplain management, solid-waste, and capital projects
- Economic development and business support
- Public safety services, including law enforcement through the Sahuarita Police Department
- Wastewater treatment and sewer services

To reduce operational costs and enhance service efficiency, Sahuarita contracts with external agencies and private providers for a range of specialized services. These partnerships allow the Town to access expertise and infrastructure without duplicating services already available through regional or private entities. Contracted or externally managed services currently include:

- Fire protection and emergency medical services, provided by the Santa Rita Fire District
- Water service, provided by multiple private and public utilities (see Water Resources Element)

This hybrid model of service delivery enables the Town to remain adaptable and responsive to changing community needs while maintaining a lean organizational structure. As Sahuarita continues to grow, the Town will regularly evaluate its service delivery framework to ensure it remains aligned with community expectations, fiscal sustainability, and long-term plan.

Goals & Policies

PFS-1: Provide the high-quality public facilities, utilities and services needed to support and efficiently serve the existing and projected populations in a viable and sustainable manner, ensuring balanced access to amenities.

As the town grows Sahuarita will coordinate with both public and private utility providers to ensure the availability of adequate infrastructure and services to meet the needs of new residents as well as the existing community.

Policies

PFS-1.1: Plan, design and build public facilities in an integrated manner to meet community, economic development and land use needs and to reflect the culture and character of the community.

PFS-1.2: Seek to improve the availability of public services as needs change over time and especially in growing areas.

PFS-1.3: Provide and maintain high-quality and cost-effective public facilities and services.

PFS-2: Work with fire, police and other emergency services to provide high-quality public safety ensuring the Town is a safe place for all to live and visit.

Creating a safe and secure environment within a community is essential for ensuring residents enjoy a healthy and high-quality life. Sahuarita is committed to collaborating with the local fire district, town police department, and other emergency service providers to maintain efficient and effective emergency services as the town continues to grow.

Policies

PFS-2.1: Locate new police facilities based on need, budget, and service level required to protect the safety and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

PFS-2.2: Coordinate with the local fire district to locate fire facilities where needed for optimum efficacy in service provision.

PFS-2.3: Identify adequate response times for police services and take appropriate steps to ensure response times can be met.

PFS-2.4: Utilize annual reports detailing call volumes and response times for police and fire providers to determine level of service and community need in growing areas of the town.

PFS-3: Encourage public/private partnerships to effectively serve the community's needs.

By encouraging collaboration between public entities and private organizations, the town aims to leverage diverse resources and expertise to ensure comprehensive and efficient service delivery to its residents. This approach will not only enhance the quality of services but also promote innovation and sustainability within the community.

Policies

PFS-3.1: Work collaboratively with private, nonprofit, and public community service organizations to coordinate the delivery of services that support community needs, including the use of shared facilities and regionalized service.

PFS-3.2: Foster excellent working relationships between the town and the business and development community through fast and transparent development and permitting processes and facilitation of ongoing communication.

PFS-4: Plan future utilities, facilities and services in a logical, cost effective, functional, efficient and sustainable manner, ensuring balanced access to facilities.

As growth continues to occur within the town Sahuarita aims to develop a well-organized and resilient community infrastructure that maximizes resources, meets the community's needs, and supports long-term sustainability.

Policies

PFS-4.1: Maximize public/private partnerships for new infrastructure development.

PFS-4.2: Encourage cost efficiency and effectiveness of public services provided by the Town.

PFS-4.3: Promote the provision of state-of-the-art communication technologies in new developments for greater public access to information.

PFS-4.4: Assure that all circulation projects include infrastructure for future technology needs, such as wireless and fiber-based telecommunications and where practical and feasible.

PFS-4.5: Support broadband infrastructure investment which provides access to affordable fiber-based broadband communications for all residents.

PFS-5: Support partnerships and collaborations focused on quality education and facilities.

The Town will continue to work with school districts and other partners to ensure that residents have opportunities for high-quality education and lifelong learning in the community.

Policies

PFS-5.1: Continue to support local school districts in their endeavors to provide the absolute best K-12 education.

PFS-5.2: Ensure area school districts are involved with master planning, population forecasting, and strategic planning to ensure that information is shared, resources are used wisely, and common goals are aligned.

PFS-5.3: Promote the location of new school facilities within the neighborhoods they intend to serve, at acceptable enrollment capacities.

PFS-5.4: Encourage developers to provide the connection of schools to surrounding neighborhoods through a safe system of sidewalks and bicycle pathways upon development of adjacent areas.

PFS-5.5: Encourage developers to work with the school district to determine a new development's impact on the school system and implement strategies recommended by the school district to address those impacts prior to project approval.

PFS-5.6: Support accessible and effective education through a variety of institutions that serves the educational needs of the community, including area industries, trades, and businesses, to address present and future workforce and skills requirements of Sahuarita employers.



COST OF DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring the continued delivery of high-quality municipal services is a top priority for the Town of Sahuarita as it plans for future growth. To maintain cost-effective service delivery and support the Town’s long-term vision, new development is encouraged to occur within or adjacent to areas already served by existing infrastructure. This approach helps preserve community character, reduce service delivery costs, and maximize the use of existing public investments.

When growth occurs outside of these areas or requires the expansion of services, the Town must evaluate how to fund the necessary infrastructure and public facilities. In accordance with state law, this element identifies a range of funding and financing mechanisms that can be used to support new development. It also establishes policies that clarify the respective roles of the public and private sectors in funding growth-related improvements. These policies ensure that new development contributes its proportionate share of the costs associated with the infrastructure and services it requires—while allowing for flexibility in cases where broader public benefits are achieved.

Framework

The following section outlines commonly used funding options for public improvements and describes how private development may be required to reimburse the Town for a fair share of those costs when it benefits from such investments. The Town also retains the flexibility to adjust its funding strategies as new tools become available or as legislative conditions change.

Pay-As-You-Go Out of Current Revenues

In many Arizona towns, expanding services—like adding new water lines, improving roads, or building a fire station—is usually paid for using local sales taxes, state funding, service fees, and grants. This mix of funding is considered the most practical approach. While towns would prefer to pay for everything with the money they already have, that’s not always possible as services often need to be in place before new homes or businesses are built.

In-Lieu Fees

Sometimes, it's not practical for a developer to build a specific public facility at the time of construction. In those cases, the Town may collect an "in-lieu" fee instead. This money is set aside for that specific purpose and used later to build the facility. For example, several neighborhoods might contribute in-lieu fees toward the future construction of a regional park.

Development Fees & Capacity Charges

These are fees charged to new developments to help cover the cost of expanding public services—like roads, water systems, or public safety—to meet the needs of a growing population. This ensures that growth helps pay for itself.

User Fees

User fees are what residents pay for services such as water, sewer, recreation programs, or facility rentals. These fees help cover the cost of operating and maintaining those services, and in some cases, help pay off debt from building new facilities.

General Obligation Bonds

This is a common way towns across the U.S. pay for large projects like new buildings or major infrastructure. These bonds are backed by property taxes, and voters must approve them through an election. Because they're supported by the Town's taxing power, they usually offer low interest rates.

Revenue Bonds

Revenue bonds are another way to borrow money for big projects. Instead of being backed by property taxes, they're paid off using future income from things like sales taxes, state-shared highway funds, or user fees. These bonds don't require voter approval but must be supported by reliable revenue sources.





Improvement Districts

Improvement Districts are special areas where property owners agree to help pay for specific upgrades in their neighborhood, like better roads, streetlights, or utility lines. These improvements are paid for through a temporary increase in property taxes for those who benefit directly. The Town can set up these districts when needed.

Certificates of Participation / Municipal Property Corporations

These are ways the Town can borrow money for projects and pay it back over time using general Town revenues. Unlike some other types of bonds, these don't require a public vote and can be approved by the Town Council. They're often used for buildings or other large projects.

Special Tax Districts

Also known in other states as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), this tool is used to support redevelopment and revitalization—especially in older or underused areas. While Arizona currently limits how these districts can be used, future changes in state law may allow towns like Sahuarita to use them more widely.

Loans

Just like individuals can take out loans from banks, towns can too. Sahuarita can borrow money from banks or government programs to help pay for big projects. Agencies like the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Water Infrastructure Finance Authority (WIFA) still offer loans for things like water systems and other infrastructure.

Goals & Policies

CD-1: Seek adequate funding for capital facilities and services not specifically tied to new development.

Sahuarita will identify and pursue a variety of funding sources to ensure that essential infrastructure and services are adequately constructed and maintained.

Policies

CD-1.1: Implement and maintain the adopted Capital Improvement Plan and ensure the adopted Plan implements the goal and policies of the General Plan (†)

CD-1.2: Review existing revenues to determine if they are adequate to meet the needs of the Town. (†)

CD-1.3: Explore and utilize all realistic and legal alternative means to provide capital facilities and services including: public/private partnerships; grants; non-profit collaborations, bonds, improvement districts, facility construction dedications and service privatization; and special taxing districts.

CD-1.4: Consider alternate sources of revenue if shortfalls are projected including but not limited to general obligation bonds and a basis on which to issue revenue bonds.

CD-1.5: Seek opportunities both locally and regionally to obtain funding for regional infrastructure that would also benefit the Town.

CD-1.6: Partner with the League of Cities and Towns and/or other communities to seek new or additional revenue-sharing opportunities from the state of Arizona.

CD-1.7: Consider annexation of land particularly when it is likely to increase revenue-sharing funds, minimize infrastructure costs, and diversify the Town's economy.

CD-1.8: Analyze the adopted level of service standards as necessary and in conjunction with updates to the adopted Capital Improvement Plan to assure adequate funding is provided.

CD-2: Ensure that new growth and development pays its proportionate share toward the cost of public service needs generated, with appropriate exceptions if in the public interest.

As growth within the town continues to move forward it is paramount that growth happens in a fiscally responsible and sustainable way. To that end, Sahuarita will work to create sound financial strategies to support growth, while ensuring that the burden of infrastructure expenses is distributed evenly among new development and the community.

Policies

CD-2.1: Recover proportionate share costs, which are defined as the total capital cost (facilities and equipment) minus developer credits and funds dedicated to a project as set forth in the Town's adopted Capital Improvement Plan and include only those costs directly related to the new development.

CD-2.2: Continue to require all new development to construct necessary public facilities within or adjacent to the development, consistent with State requirements and Town codes.

CD-2.3: Coordinate public funding of infrastructure and financing planning (through the Capital Improvement Program) with privately financed development activity that meets the goals of the Town's Economic Development strategy or Strategic Management Plan within designated growth areas.

CD-2.4: Encourage the use of special improvement or community facility districts, development agreements, dedicated tax or user fees, or other public/private infrastructure financing techniques to support funding efforts for specific development-related infrastructure improvements as appropriate.

CD-2.5: Ensure that any funding mechanisms adopted by the municipality:

1. Result in a beneficial use to the development; and
2. Bear a reasonable relationship to the burdens imposed on the municipality to provide additional necessary public services to the development and are imposed according to law.

CD-2.6: Seek to recover costs for infrastructure provided by the Town.

CD-3: Identify mechanisms for determining cost recovery.

In an effort to balance the budget, support ongoing maintenance and improvements, and ensure that resources are used responsibly the town will establish clear and efficient methods to recoup costs associated with public facilities and services.

Policies

CD-3.1: For each service and facility provided by the Town, identify and adopt a desired level of service measure in order to determine cost recovery.

CD-3.2: Define and maintain a benefit area for each service, such as a police substation or road facilities, and determine the facility needs and costs for the benefit area, based on the level of service standards established as a result of Policy CD-3.1.

CD-3.3: Develop a responsive time frame for cost recovery of the facilities identified in each benefit area.

CD-3.4: Identify costs of expansion of Town services and facilities to maintain service level expectations.

CD-3.5: Seek programmatic or technological innovations to reduce capital costs as well as operations and maintenance costs.

CD-3.6: Develop a process to apply the proportionate share cost recovery policies to all new development, regardless of the need for rezoning.

CD-3.7: Consider establishing development incentive areas that may allow reduced cost recovery obligations for projects to foster development activity within those areas.

05

AREA PLANS



Area plans are an additional component of the General Plan, offering focused guidance for the development and character of specific areas within the town. These plans build upon the General Plan's overarching goals and translate them into place-based strategies that address land use, infrastructure, transportation, and community design. By tailoring planning efforts to the unique needs and opportunities of each area, Sahuarita supports coordinated, thoughtful growth that reflects the community's values and long-term vision.

SAHUARITA EAST CONCEPTUAL AREA PLAN

Sahuarita: Gateway to Arizona

The Sahuarita East Conceptual Area Plan (SECAP) is a vision of what the Town of Sahuarita seeks for its future. It describes new ways of looking at future growth and development and increases choices in where and how we live, work, play and commute. SECAP seeks to create a high tech, environmentally-friendly, live/work environment on a large area of primarily Arizona State Trust Land directly east of the current Town boundaries by including areas for residential, commercial, industrial, employment and mixed use developments. This plan will evolve over time and will be monitored and updated as a component of the Town's General Plan.

SECAP is an opportunity for Sahuarita to be recognized as a Gateway to Arizona. The Town's proximity to Mexico is an asset. This plan provides for quality residential, commercial, employment, and recreational opportunities that will not only be a draw to the international community, but will highlight the Town's rich cultural past, bridging the gap between new and old, as well as north and south.

This plan creates the opportunity for the Town of Sahuarita to work with the Arizona State Land Department in developing a comprehensive and sensitive land use plan. This type of planning can only be done over decades of time and in small increments. The rate of development is directly tied to the Town's growth and its financial realities. This type of development can only occur with a plan that attracts and excites private companies and investors wanting to become part of a unique community. Employees and their families will be drawn to the planned employment, recreation, and cultural options and amenities.

Most importantly, quality, above all else is emphasized in this plan. The vision statement, included below, highlights the intended outcome of this plan; a well-planned, functional, environmentally sensitive, aesthetically refined live/work/play community.





Vision

SECAP envisions a quality community with a strong identity, character, and sense of place, where people live, work, recreate, learn and celebrate culture, heritage, environment, the arts and the spirit of innovation. Planned in an integrated manner, it takes advantage of the US/Mexico bi-national economy, the Sonoran desert climate and the latest technologies. This Plan is designed to evolve over time, monitored and updated as an integral component of the Town's General Plan, ensuring its relevance and responsiveness to future opportunities and challenges.

Development of SECAP must marshal long-term market forces while fostering community engagement and environmental stewardship to promote:

- **Community Design:** Sahuarita envisions a high quality of community design including vibrant and connected village centers dispersed throughout the Town. With a mixture of uses, employment, commerce, and higher density housing these centers will be hubs of activity for the community. Village centers will accommodate a balanced lifestyle where recreation, entertainment, and cultural centers are balanced with employment, services, and commerce.
- **Village Center:** Village centers within the SECAP area will consist of a mix of uses that should contribute to the vision of a diverse and vibrant community with a strong sense of place. Places that exhibit a strong sense of place have an identity and character recognized immediately by a visitor and valued deeply by residents. To help facilitate a sense of place, the envisioned Village Center should include:
 - Employment and mixed uses that are integrated with a common vision and cohesive feel;
 - Higher density residential and appropriate commercial uses that are woven into the village centers and contribute to the cohesion of the community network;
 - Mixed use areas that contribute to the public domain by providing open and accessible areas for all residents and visitors enjoying the village center. Mixed use areas will be both visually and physically connected to open space.



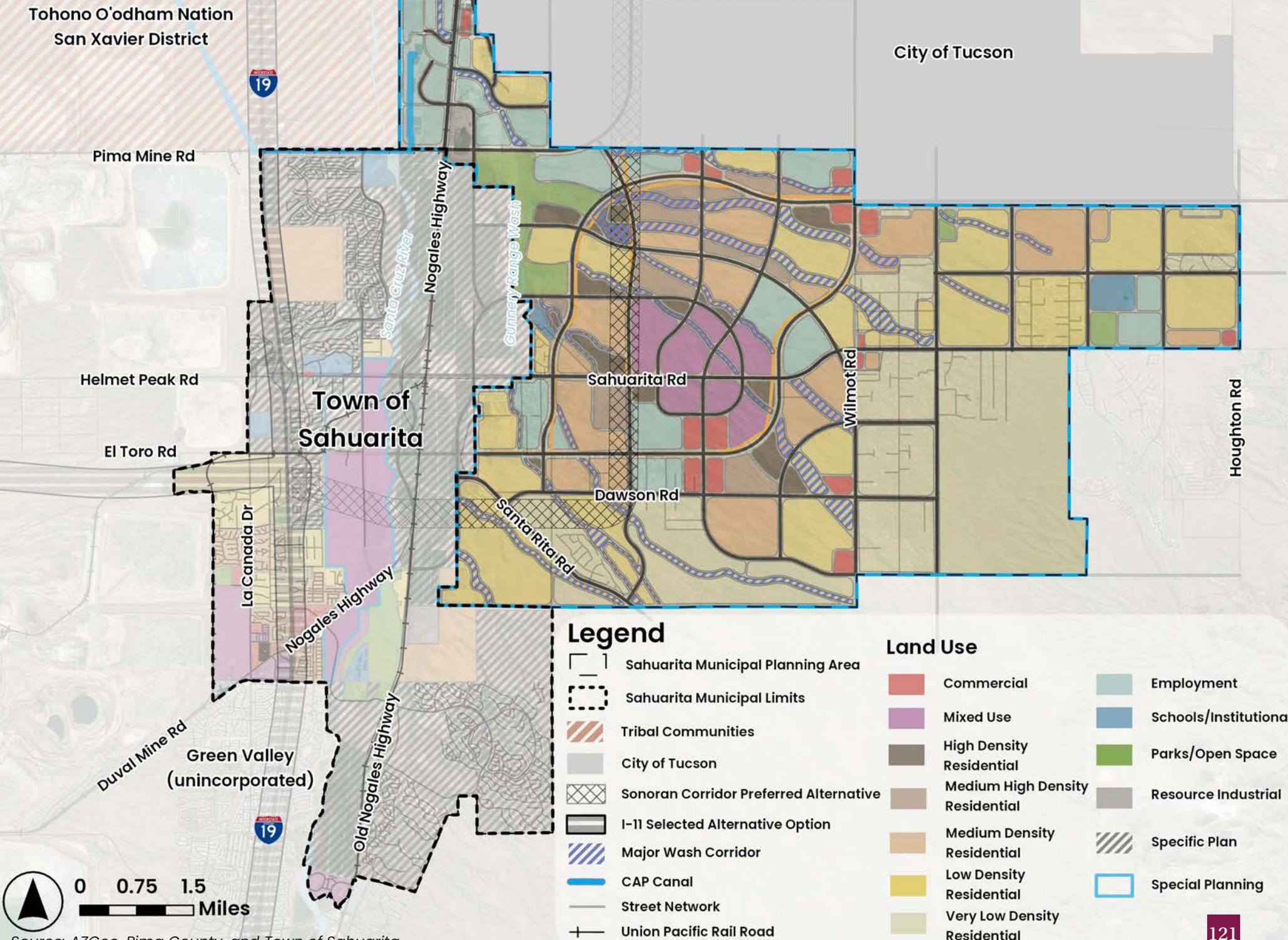
- **Public Spaces:** Public spaces and developed areas should contribute to a walkable and accessible village center:
 - Public gathering areas should be central to the design of the urban core and provide a friendly and open environment to contribute to the feeling of community accessibility;
 - The village centers should be accessible to both pedestrians and vehicles by ensuring that building placement responds to the needs of all users;
 - Buildings should be proximate to each other to encourage walkability;
 - Large parking areas should be broken up by walkways and landscaped areas, and located away from the pedestrian spaces to reduce the amount of walking across large paved surfaces;
 - Walkways and pedestrian areas should have ample shade coverage to encourage use in all seasons.
- **Campus Environment:** Business and industrial areas should promote a campus-like environment that fosters educational opportunities, idea sharing, innovation, and community engagement.
- **Economic Development:** The project should serve to reinforce Sahuarita's role in the global market place and create a wide range of employment opportunities for a diversity of the community's citizens.
- **Compatibility with Surrounding Neighborhoods:** Development must maintain and enhance the quality of life in adjacent neighborhoods, providing linkages, land use transitions and transportation patterns.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Development in the area as a whole must create a positive revenue stream that will increase the Town's tax base for the benefit of all citizens.
- **Diversity:** The SECAP area must offer a wide range of housing choices in order to create a new community of socially and economically diverse residents.
- **Sustainability:** The development should be planned in a way that promotes energy and water efficiency, resource protection, reduced auto dependency, watershed protection and green spaces.
- **Environment:** The SECAP area will take a balanced approach that encourages development while ensuring the protection of important natural resources, riparian connectivity, and habitat preservation.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT



Stakeholder involvement was paramount in producing the SECAP. To ensure continued stakeholder involvement in the process, the SECAP Advisory Group was formed, consisting of representatives from the land development and economic development industries, government officials representing state and local levels, and environmental and planning experts. The Advisory Group met six times over the course of the planning process. A Working Group of technical experts was formed to take the ideas and feedback generated by the Advisory Group and create the SECAP vision, policies, and maps. The Working Group met at least monthly over the course of the SECAP process. Working Group members also ensured public awareness of SECAP by presenting at various community forums, including HOA meetings, neighborhood meetings, and through joint open house/community meetings with Aspire 2035. At the beginning of the process, a mailing was sent out to all addresses within the SECAP area to provide those residents the opportunity to have their names added to the SECAP interest list. Members of the Working Group also met with local interest groups, such as the chamber of commerce, the Southern Arizona Homebuilders' Association, the Metropolitan Pima Alliance, and the Tucson Association of Realtors.

Figure 29: SECAP Land Use

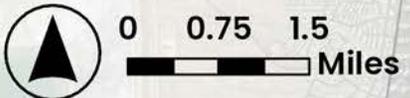


Legend

- Sahuarita Municipal Planning Area
- Sahuarita Municipal Limits
- Tribal Communities
- City of Tucson
- Sonoran Corridor Preferred Alternative
- I-11 Selected Alternative Option
- Major Wash Corridor
- CAP Canal
- Street Network
- Union Pacific Rail Road

Land Use

- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- High Density Residential
- Medium High Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Very Low Density Residential
- Employment
- Schools/Institutional
- Parks/Open Space
- Resource Industrial
- Specific Plan
- Special Planning



Source: AZGeo, Pima County, and Town of Sahuarita

Proposed Land Uses & Land Use Legend

Introduction

The proposed land uses provided in this section are meant to ensure the viability of the SECAP area (see **Figure 29**). The land use percentages provided in **Table 6**, support a balance of land uses and a favorable jobs/housing ratio, creating an independent and economically productive community.

Proposed Land Uses

Table 6: Proposed Land Use Mix*

Land Use	Percentage	Acres	Sq. Miles
Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)*	11.3%	2,360.51	3.69
Low Density Residential (LDR)	32.4%	6,751.98	10.55
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	17.5%	3,646.61	5.70
Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)	5.0%	1,034.27	1.62
High Density Residential (HDR)	3.9%	819.47	1.27
Mixed Use (MU)	5.5%	1,145.23	1.79
Commercial (C)	3.0%	634.65	0.99
Employment (E)	15.6%	3,245.12	5.07
Infrastructure/Schools	1.0%	214.21	0.33
Parks/Open Space (P)**	4.1%	846.54	1.32
Resource Industrial (RI)	0.6%	123.93	0.19
Total	100.0%	20,822.51	32.52

*Excludes those portions of planning area east of Wilmot and south of Sahuarita Road

**It is expected that total acreage for parks and open space will exceed the acreage and percent shown here. Parks and open space will be provided in all planned land use areas.

Land Use Category Definitions

The SECAP land use plan delineates a variety of land use categories. Each land use category has an acceptable range of densities and/or appropriate land uses. Existing residential areas have been placed in the appropriate category for context.

Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)

Very Low Density Residential is comprised of single-family residential development that maintains a rural character typified by lots of 3.3 acres and larger with custom or semi-custom homes. Rural commercial uses allowed in the permitted zoning categories are acceptable.

Density Range is 0–0.3 residences per acre.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

Low Density Residential consists of single-family residential development that maintains either a rural or larger lot suburban character. Clustering of lots is permitted to enhance an interconnected open space system or to maximize preservation of existing vegetation and other natural features of the site. Rural, non-commercial uses allowed in the permitted zoning categories are acceptable.

Density Range is 0.31–3 residences per acre.

Medium Density Residential (MDR)

Medium Density Residential is characterized by single-family suburban residential development with a range of subdivided lot sizes. Clustering of lots is permitted to enhance an interconnected open space system or to maximize preservation of existing vegetation and other natural features of the site.

Density range is 3.1–6 residences per acre.

Medium High Density Residential (MHDR)

Medium High Density Residential includes primarily single family attached or detached residential development. Clustering or use of the small lot subdivision option is permitted if it adds to an interconnected open space system.

Density Range is 6.1–12 residences per acre.

High Density Residential (HDR)

High Density Residential consists of multi-family residential developments.

Density Range is 12.1 or more residences per acre.

Mixed Use (MU)

Mixed use allows for residential and compatible non-residential development in a compact development pattern, including entertainment, cultural uses and community gathering spaces, creating opportunities to live, work, learn and recreate in a pleasant, walkable setting integrated with parks, trails and open space. Allowable uses include Medium High to High Density residential, commercial, employment, hotel and resort uses, public spaces, governmental/institutional uses. Vertical and horizontal mixed-use is encouraged. It is strongly recommended that specific plans be utilized to implement the mixed-use concept.



Commercial (C)

A Commercial land use designation allows for office and retail development that support the needs of the Town's market area and employment centers. In addition, higher density residential uses, as allowed in the recommended zoning categories, are permitted.



Employment (E)

Employment opportunities within the Town include uses such as: light industrial, assembly/manufacturing, transportation logistics and distribution centers, hospital and medical facilities, research and development, technology and innovation, educational campuses including higher education and vocational trade schools, corporate headquarters, traditional office, business support and services, and warehousing uses. When part of an employment campus, higher density residential uses are also recommended.



Infrastructure/Schools

Infrastructure/Schools uses include Public and quasi-public uses such as government services, schools, and religious institutions that provide the basic human services.



Parks/Open Space (P)

The Parks/Open space land use designation provides for parks and open space to serve the needs of the Town. Policies for future parks are addressed in the parks and open space section of this plan.

Major Streets and Routes

This plan will utilize the Town's adopted Major Streets and Routes Plan (MS&RP) for all roadway definitions and descriptions.

GOALS & POLICIES

GENERAL GOALS & POLICIES

SECAP-1: Plan, design, and develop the SECAP area as envisioned.

POLICIES

SECAP-1.1: Develop the area to reflect the concepts and guidelines provided in the Sahuarita East Conceptual Area Plan, including:

- Village development style;
- Desert appropriate planning, design and construction;
- Variety of housing opportunities, including workforce housing;
- Employment centers with a campus setting;
- Diverse economic development strategies;
- Technology and innovation;
- International community;
- Integrated open space, parks, trails and urban gathering spaces including plazas, courtyards, promenades, ramadas and riverwalks;
- Multimodal connectivity;
- Innovative, efficient and cost effective infrastructure; and
- Energy conservation.

SECAP-1.2: Explore the possibility of using Planned Community Developments (PCDs) as a mechanism to develop the SECAP area with possible exceptions for projects that further the Town's economic development goals.

Village Life

SECAP-2: Develop a regional destination for employment, residents, cultural amenities and recreational opportunities.

POLICIES

SECAP-2.1: Provide a variety of uses - residential, commerce, industry, cultural, educational, services, recreation, and entertainment that serve a diverse international community and contribute to a high-quality image of the area.

SECAP-2.2: Integrate public places into the built environment that reflect the community character and provide for multiple activities and interaction such as: plazas, open spaces, landscaping, street furniture, lighting, universal accessibility, public art, heritage markers, sidewalks and multi-use paths.

Design Elements

SECAP-3: Encourage place-based designs that build a strong sense of community.

POLICIES

SECAP-3.1: Promote high quality architecture and landscape design in private and public spaces.

SECAP-3.2: Establish and integrate valuable environmental amenities and features into the built environment.

SECAP-3.3: Integrate public art into development designs.

SECAP-3.4: Design building placement, orientation, height, and massing to:

- Create visual interest from off-site as well as on-site
- Ensure efficient use of a development parcel; and
- Minimize monotony along the street frontage.

SECAP-3.5: Encourage unique building façades and details to create visual interest through the interplay of light, shadow, color and texture.

Economic Development

SECAP-4: Provide a unique mix of business, industry, and education in a serene setting to complement and support adjacent residential development and the surrounding community.

POLICIES

SECAP-4.1: Recruit companies leading the fields of medicine, technology, and science to locate in the SECAP area.

SECAP-4.2: Provide opportunities for small incubator companies as well as large employment centers.

SECAP-4.3: Create open, campus-like, work environments that are a draw for businesses and can be utilized by the public.

SECAP-4.4: Encourage flexibility to change with market demands.

SECAP-4.5: Create partnerships to provide workforce development and training opportunities within local businesses and industries.

SECAP-4.6: Integrate upper education campuses within areas designated for commerce and industry.

SECAP-4.7: Encourage development of a hotel/resort to better serve Sahuarita's international visitors.

Housing

SECAP-5: Develop high quality, diverse, and functional residential neighborhoods.

POLICIES

SECAP-5.1: Provide a variety of quality housing options that support a diverse population within the SECAP area ranging from lower density residential areas to higher-density workforce housing in planned activity nodes.

SECAP-5.2: Support the creation of mixed-use projects as a means to increase housing supply while promoting diversity, economic viability and neighborhood vitality.

SECAP-5.3: Respect existing homes and neighborhoods by providing compatible transitions and buffers.

Parks and Recreation

SECAP-6: Establish the SECAP area as a regional centerpiece and national destination for recreation and culture.

POLICIES

SECAP-6.1: Plan for at least four major recreation sites to provide ball fields, courts, and other active amenities.

SECAP-6.2: Ensure opportunities for horseback riding, hiking, hunting, and other outdoor activities in areas appropriate locations abutting both the Coronado National Forest and the Santa Rita Mountains.

SECAP-6.3: Encourage a variety of green recreational areas, shaded paths, habitat projects and low water use parks.

SECAP-6.4: Use public-private partnerships to economically stimulate developments that further SECAP as a live-work-play destination.

SECAP-6.5: Develop trails and multiuse paths along major wash and riparian corridors.

SECAP-6.6: Minimize use of water consumptive design elements and take advantage of reclaimed sources of water.

Open Space

SECAP-7: Promote the preservation and integration of open spaces throughout the SECAP area.

POLICIES

SECAP-7.1: Create functional and integrated open space throughout the SECAP area along the major wash and riparian corridors.

SECAP-7.2: Encourage development in proximity to major washes and riparian areas to take advantage of viewsheds and recreational opportunities.

SECAP-7.3: Refine mapped “flow corridors” and provide additional analysis and coordination with the Regional Flood Control District and other governing bodies and consistent with the Lee Moore Wash Study concerning the exact delineation and dimensions of such corridors at the development stage. This refinement should also include the development of open space and greenway components and making corridors wider.

Stormwater Management

SECAP-8: Effectively and efficiently manage stormwater runoff.

POLICIES

SECAP-8.1: Work with public and private property owners to reduce stormwater runoff.

SECAP-8.2: Consider adopting green infrastructure standards that rely on natural processes for stormwater drainage, groundwater recharge and flood management.

SECAP-8.3: Utilize stormwater channels and drainage ways to support trails, open space and wildlife habitat.

Transportation

SECAP-9: Promote multimodal transportation options within the SECAP area.

POLICIES

SECAP-9.1: Provide multimodal transportation options and reduce dependence on automobiles by:

1. Prioritizing pedestrian and bicycle access;
2. Designing and implementing a human-scaled high quality pedestrian environment at the street level;
3. Ensuring safety, comfort, and security of pedestrians and bicyclists; and
4. Creating connections to regional and local transit.

SECAP-9.2: Update the Major Streets and Routes policy and plan to guide the roadway development process, the designation of street classifications, right-of-way of major facilities, and special route designations within the SECAP area.

SECAP-9.3: Apply Major Streets and Routes setback requirement to protect ultimate right-of-way within the SECAP area.

SECAP-10: Promote environmentally sensitive circulation design.

POLICIES

SECAP-10.1: Roads should avoid crossing major washes to the greatest extent possible.

Infrastructure Expansion

SECAP-11: Strategically plan for infrastructure expansions.

POLICIES

SECAP-11.1: Private development should coordinate the timing of on-site and offsite infrastructure with the construction of public infrastructure needed to serve the project as part of the development review process.

SECAP-11.2: The Town Capital Improvements Program will be used to provide direction on the location, timing and types of new public infrastructure for coordination with private sector requests.

SECAP-11.3: Plan for near- and mid-term commercial and business development along Sahuarita Road, the Sonoran Corridor, Wilmot Road, Houghton Road and Nogales Highway.

Information Technology

SECAP-12: Plan for and establish an information technology master plan.

POLICIES

SECAP-12.1: Provide public improvements that encourage private investment including: high speed internet, fiber optics, town-wide wireless and WIFI capabilities, and other unknown future technologies.

SECAP-12.2: Assure that all circulation projects include infrastructure for future technology needs, such as fiber based telecommunications

SECAP-12.3: Identify and locate all major fiber routes passing by and within Sahuarita for future linkages.

SAHUARITA SQUARE DISTRICT AREA PLAN

The Sahuarita Square District (SSD) Area Plan, shown in **Figure 30**, is a vision of a new town core that will be the community hub and regional attraction in Southern Arizona. To support this vision, the strategies of the SSD Area Plan will be aimed at enhancing local economic development, integrating a balanced mix of uses, creating one-of-a-kind attractions, and establishing the town core as a vibrant destination for residents and visitors alike.

The SSD Area Plan will provide a framework for the future land use development and will also be used to guide the Town's future decision-making and design processes for the Sahuarita Square Overlay Zone. The Overlay Zone will further establish rules for design review and economic incentives. The SSD Area Plan establishes the blueprint to creating a town core to channeling community needs and priorities into the creation of an active cultural, entertainment and recreational gathering space all the while expanding and enhancing community connectivity.

Current conditions include: An active pecan grove and vacant land owned and operated by the Green Valley Pecan Company and Farmers Investment Company, of which future development is governed by the Sahuarita Farms Specific Plan; non-restrictive and restrictive vacant land sites owned by Freeport McMoran; Los Arboles Mobile Home Park; and numerous privately owned land parcels of all sizes. The proposed district has limited roadway and utility improvements, and is bordered to the east by the Santa Cruz River. Notably, in 2023, the Man in the Maze Trails Park was officially remediated and transferred from Freeport to Town ownership, and Parcel 30 was annexed out of the SSD boundary and rezoned under a Specific Plan designation to support mixed-use development consistent with the Town Center Vision.



To ensure that SSD Area Plan is responsive to community development needs and economic opportunities, the Town conducted extensive public outreach through community meetings and online surveys. These, along with the visioning efforts of the Town leadership and staff, led to a comprehensive set of goals for the plan:

- Create an Attractive Destination
- Offer a Mix of Uses
- Expand and Enhance Connectivity
- Showcase Arts, Culture, Food, and Entertainment
- Foster Community Collaboration

Proposed Land Use

The Sahuarita Square District land use designation is Mixed Use. Individual properties may include one or more land uses. The goal of the SSD is to have a variety of land uses in proximity to each other to create a diverse area with a range of uses within walking distance. An active and vibrant town core requires a mix of uses giving different user groups a reason to use the space at different times throughout the day. Complementary uses such as office and commercial spaces can benefit from crossover traffic. The following land use definition is applicable in the District:

Mixed Use

Mixed use allows for residential and compatible non-residential development in a compact development pattern, including retail and consumer service uses, dining and entertainment, cultural uses and community gathering spaces, creating opportunities to live, work, learn and recreate in a pleasant, walkable setting integrated with parks, trails and open space. Allowable uses include Medium High to High Density residential, commercial, employment, hotel and resort uses, public spaces, governmental/institutional uses.

Vertical and horizontal mixed-use is encouraged. In many cases a specific plan may be the best way to implement the mixed-use concept. A residential development project that incorporates a mix of densities and lot sizes may be considered a mixed use project.

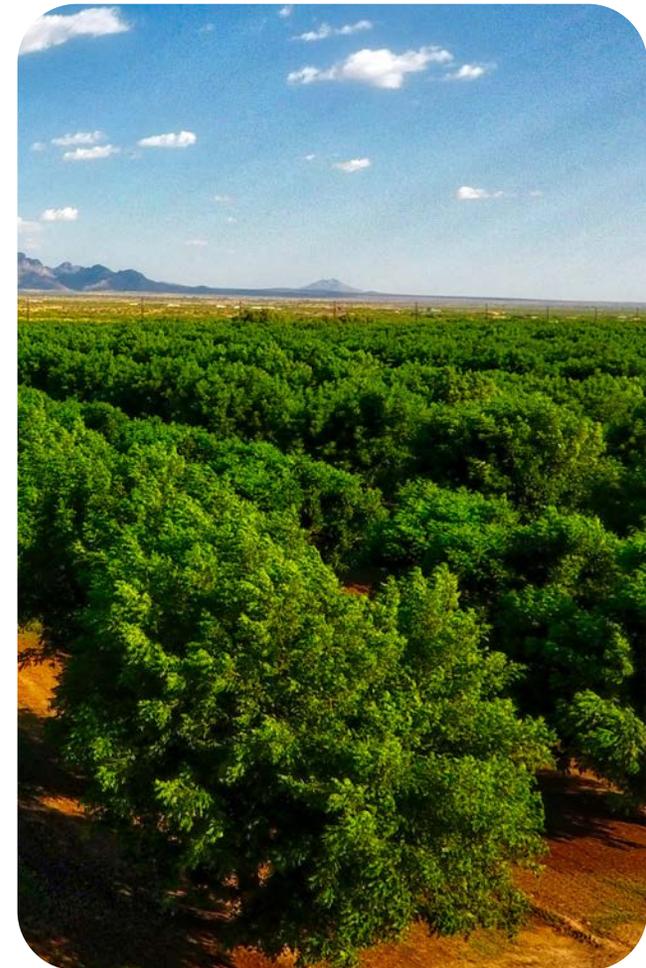
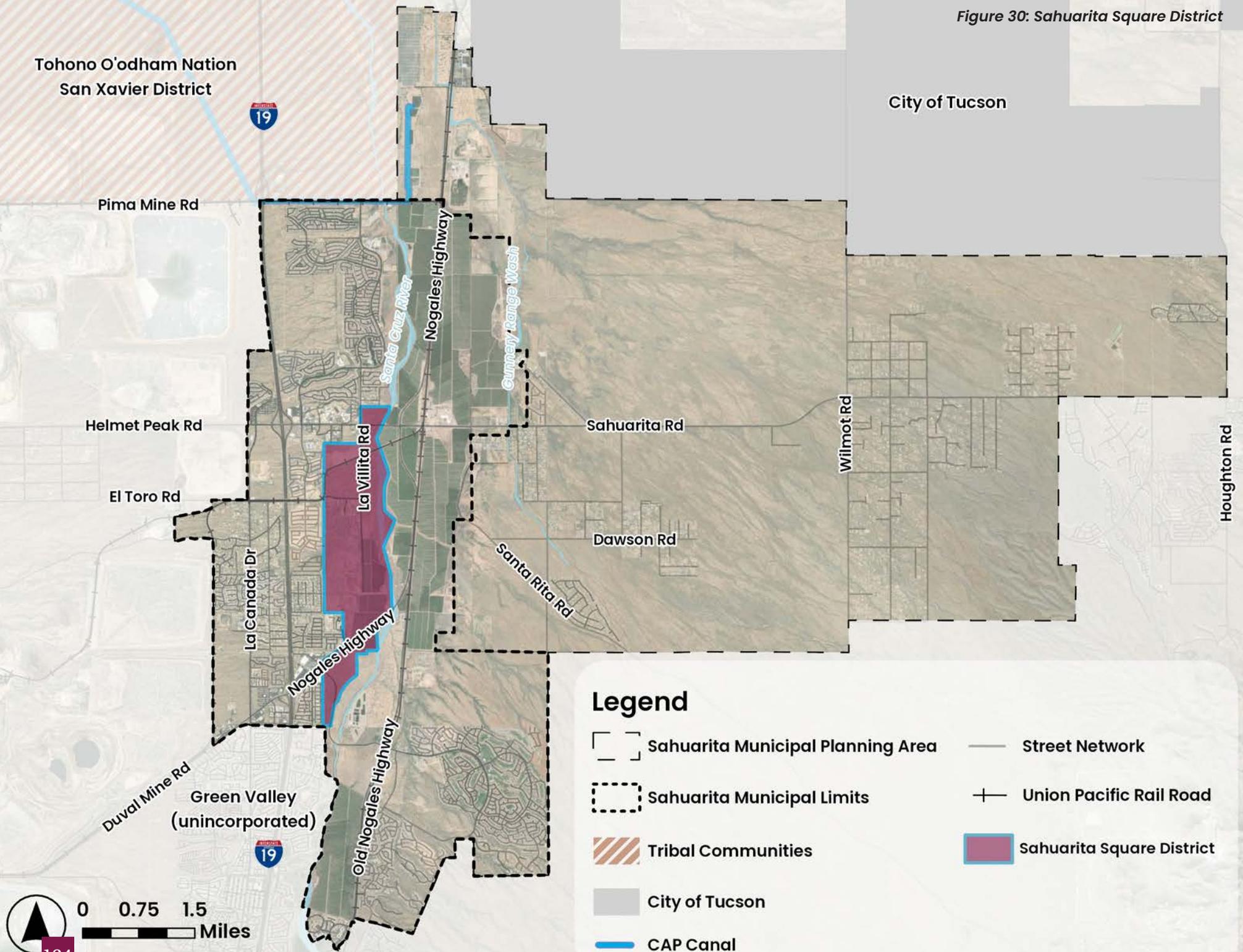


Figure 30: Sahuarita Square District



Tohono O'odham Nation
San Xavier District

City of Tucson

Pima Mine Rd



Helmet Peak Rd

El Toro Rd

La Canada Dr

La Villita Rd

Nogales Highway

Duval Mine Rd

Green Valley
(unincorporated)



Old Nogales Highway

Nogales Highway

Santa Cruz River

Cunney Range Wash

Sahuarita Rd

Dawson Rd

Santa Rita Rd

Wilmot Rd

Houghton Rd



0 0.75 1.5
Miles

General Goals, Policies and Actions

SSD-1: Create an Attractive Destination

POLICIES

SSD-1.1: Develop a Town Center District

ACTIONS

SSD-1.1.1: Utilize a district framework and definitive boundaries to help guide and focus growth as more intense development; and enabling the cultivation of a strong, distinct, and self-sustaining Sahuarita Square District.

SSD-1.1.2: Evaluate the acquisition of properties by the Town to create public spaces.

SSD-1.1.3: Utilize appropriate zoning tools or other planning strategies to support the implementation of this plan.

SSD-1.1.4: Explore public-private partnerships for development in the district.

SSD-1.2: Incorporate Community Gathering Spaces and a Green Infrastructure Plan in the Design of Infill and Future Development

ACTIONS

SSD-1.2.1: Assure that trails and connectivity are established throughout the district.

SSD-1.2.2: Focus development toward the Santa Cruz River and incorporate mountain viewsheds.

SSD-1.2.3: Large-scale community gathering places should be established along with smaller gathering places throughout the district.

SSD-1.3: Create a Destination Setting by emphasizing one-of-a-kind Uses

ACTIONS

SSD-1.3.1: Consider establishing uses such as a farmer's market, arts district, and/or a performing arts center.

SSD-1.3.2: Consider private financing and support in establishing farmer's markets and other public facilities such as a performing arts center or arts district.

SSD-1.3.3: Seek Public-Private Partnerships to leverage resources and attract larger audiences

SSD-1.3.4: Create incentives to help keep small businesses in town while maintaining the community's unique character

SSD-1.4: Lay the Groundwork for a Strong Economic Base

ACTIONS

SSD-1.4.1: Develop economic development incentives for new development in the district that meet the SSD goals.

SSD-1.4.2: Form Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) at key commercial nodes within the Town Center District

SSD-1.4.3: Develop incentive-based strategies.

SSD-1.4.4: Explore available financing, grant opportunities and public financing tools to incentivize development within the district.

SSD-2: Offer a Mix of Uses

POLICIES

SSD-2.1: Create a strong sense of place by promoting complementary architectural character offering opportunities for unique, distinctive design of different developments.

ACTIONS

SSD-2.1.1: Establish a set of design guidelines that offer opportunities for creativity in design to foster a robust and unique sense of place for the Sahuarita Square District. The Design Guidelines should emphasize high-quality design while allowing for flexibility.

SSD-2.1.2: Implement placemaking by creating opportunities for interaction amongst people using spaces, by providing multiple ways of using space, and by strategically locating certain design elements to general additional uses.

SSD-2.2: Balance Uses

ACTIONS

SSD-2.2.1: Promote a complementary mix of uses.

SSD-2.2.2: Discourage large-scale, single use development.

SSD-2.2.3: Allow increasing residential densities in conjunction with more intense mixed-use development.

SSD-2.3: Offer a variety of housing to support the community's set of diverse housing needs.

ACTIONS

SSD-2.3.1: Integrate higher density housing such as townhomes and condominiums into higher-intensity, mixed use development to ensure all public spaces are well used and active for the entirety of each and every day.

SSD-3: Expand and Enhance Connectivity

POLICIES

SSD-3.1: Emphasize Walkability

ACTIONS

SSD-3.1.1: Provide pedestrian amenities, such as wider sidewalks, street trees, shade structures and outdoor seating in both public and private spaces.

SSD-3.1.2: Assure that “Safe by Design” concepts are integrated into developments.

SSD-3.1.3: Provide connectivity through development sites to courtyards and plazas, and to the Santa Cruz River and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

SSD-3.1.4: Cluster a mix of compatible uses and amenities such as residential schools, retail districts, and recreational facilities within a walkable quarter – to half-mile radii to support a reduced dependency on cars.

SSD-3.1.5: Utilize universal design and ADA concepts such as curb cuts, crosswalks, mid- block crossings and pedestrian refuges to create safer connections for the most vulnerable of users.

SSD-3.2: Promote Multi-Modal Transportation

ACTIONS

SSD-3.2.1: Implement Complete Streets strategies to diversify transportation options such as transit lanes, bikeways, multi-use paths, trails and sidewalks.

SSD-3.2.2: Explore opportunities to diversify the way people travel with multi-modal transportation strategies.

SSD-3.2.3: Consider a reallocation of available space along existing public rights of way through lane diets, road diets, and right-of-way acquisition to accommodate more types of travel and offer more comfortable connections for pedestrians.

SSD-3.3: Promote Sustainable Transportation

ACTIONS

SSD-3.3.1: Maximize underutilized space in the public right-of-way with complete street design supporting Green Street strategies such as bulb-outs, parklets, medians, waterharvesting design elements, bioswales, infiltration trenches, xeriscaping, and rain gardens.

SSD-3.3.2: Incorporate environmentally friendly initiatives to decrease CO2 emissions by reducing the dependence on cars and utilizing LED lighting and recycled water (irrigating landscaping) to reduce energy consumption.

SSD-4: Showcase Arts, Culture, Food and Entertainment

POLICIES

SSD-4.1: Activate the Sahuarita Square through Events and Activities

ACTIONS

SSD-4.1.1: Assure that a mix of events and activities are offered to engage the entire community.

SSD-4.1.2: Consider intergenerational inclusivity when developing event programming.

SSD-4.1.3: Assure that both daytime events and nightlife activities are a part of the Sahuarita Square District.

SSD-4.2: Support Small Vendor Opportunities

ACTIONS

SSD-4.2.1: Promote employment opportunities in the interior of the town center through small-scale, mixed-use development that offers aspiring entrepreneurs' attainable opportunities to kick start businesses, expand commerce, and activate the Sahuarita Square District.

SSD-4.2.2: Explore temporary vendor options in public spaces on weekends, holidays or First- Friday type programs.

SSD-5: Foster Community Collaboration

POLICIES

SSD-5.1: Strengthen Community Connections

ACTIONS

SSD-5.1.1: Cultivate social connections for community members through outreach programs, education, special events, festivals, and performances.

SSD-5.1.2: Utilize existing and develop new community facilities such as community and recreation centers.

SSD-5.2: Facilitate Community Engagement in the Planning Process

ACTIONS

SSD-5.2.1: Establish an Advisory Group to actively collaborate in the Sahuarita Square District planning process.

SSD-5.2.2: Develop Sahuarita Square activities and events in collaboration with the community.

SSD-5.2.3: Facilitate a Public Information Program and Meetings through the master planning process.

06

ADMINISTRATION & IMPLEMENTATION

General Plan administration is heavily influenced by state law. Arizona Revised Statutes provide procedures for major General Plan Amendments, which may be processed annually, as well as a requirement to have an updated General Plan ratified by the voters every ten years. In addition, state law requires that all rezoning requests be in conformance with the General Plan.

Arizona Revised Statutes 9-461.06 defines a major plan amendment as a substantial alteration of the land use mixture or balance as established in the General Plan land use element. The municipality's general plan defines the criteria to determine if a proposed amendment to the general plan affects such a substantial alteration.

MAJOR AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN

The Town of Sahuarita defines the criteria for a major plan amendment to be one or more of the following :

- A change to any land use as depicted on the General Plan Land Use map from a residential designation to a non-residential designation, and vice versa except those from High-Density Residential to Mixed-Use.
- Any change involving land over 40 acres in size except those which establish or expand a specific plan or special planning area.
- A change from one residential designation to another residential designation resulting in an increase or decrease in density more than 30% from the existing designation.

State law also requires that the Town’s adopted Public Participation Plan be followed for all major amendments to the general plan, and that such amendments must be presented at a public hearing within 12 months after the date of filing. Major amendments must be approved by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Town Council.

All rezoning requests must implement the General Plan and must be in conformance with it. Requests not in conformance with the plan must go through the general plan amendment process.

MINOR AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN

Minor amendments to the General Plan are considered to be technical or non-substantive. After application and recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission, minor amendments require a simple majority of the Town Council for approval. Minor amendments include:

- Any change not meeting the criteria of a major amendment.

OTHER AMENDMENT CRITERIA

Amendments to adopted specific plans shall follow the amendment process outlined in the Specific Plan. Modifications to adopted specific plans that do not increase overall intensity or density within the Specific Plan boundaries are not subject to the general plan amendment process.

Any land use change involving one acre or less of land does not require any General Plan amendment.



IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Implementation Strategies table (shown in **Table 7**) serves as a roadmap for putting the General Plan into action. It translates the plan's goals and policies into specific steps that guide day-to-day decision-making and long-term planning efforts. Each strategy identifies the action to be taken, the responsible parties, and an anticipated timeline, ensuring clarity and accountability throughout the implementation process. These strategies are intended to be flexible and adaptive, providing a framework for coordination among Town departments, elected officials, and community stakeholders as conditions and priorities evolve over time.

Table 7: Implementation Strategies

Primary Chapter	Implementation Strategy	Lead Responsible Party	Short-Term (0-5 Years)	Mid-Term (5-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)
ALL	Pursue available grant funding to assist with the advancement of applicable policies	All Departments	●	●	●
	Maintain the City's GIS data base and consider including development statistics to assist in monitoring the performance of the General Plan	All Departments	●	●	●
SUSTAINABLE GROWTH & CONNECTIVITY	Actively update local ordinances, policies, and building codes to support creative housing opportunities when and where appropriate within the town.	Community Development	●	●	
	Utilize the Town's state required Annual Housing Report to monitor housing market trends, identify gaps, and inform policy adjustments that support a variety of housing options.	Community Development	●	●	
	Update the Town's Housing Needs Assessment at least every five (5) years, as required by state law, to provide current information on housing supply, demand, and future needs for use in planning and policy development.	Community Development	●	●	●
	Monitor the performance of all modal systems to best mitigate traffic congestion and to assure safe operating conditions.	Public Works	●	●	
	Periodically update the Major Streets and Routes policy and plan to guide the roadway development process, the designation of street classifications, right-of-way of major facilities, and special route designations within the current and future Town limits.	Public Works	●	●	
	Maintain the Town of Sahuarita transportation networks established Level of Service (LOS) standard.	Public Works	●	●	●

Primary Chapter	Implementation Strategy	Lead Responsible Party	Short-Term (0-5 Years)	Mid-Term (5-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)
CONSERVE TODAY TO THRIVE TOMORROW	Routinely assess and evaluate park facilities to ensure that the park system can adequately meet the active and passive open space needs of current and future residents.	Parks and Recreation	●	●	●
	Continue to implement the Parks and Recreation Area Plan (RAP) to ensure that new housing developments and subdivisions contribute appropriately to parks and recreational facilities as the Town grows.	Parks and Recreation	●	●	
	Review and update the Parks and Recreation Area Plan (RAP) at least every five years to reflect changes in development patterns, community needs, and recreational priorities.	Parks and Recreation	●	●	●
	Update the Town's Parks, Recreation, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan at least once every ten years to ensure it reflects current community needs, growth patterns, and recreational priorities.	Parks and Recreation		●	
	Conduct periodic citizen surveys to solicit feedback on parks, facilities and programs.	Parks and Recreation	●	●	●
	Conduct research and consider developing a standardized approach for identifying and conserving sensitive habitats, migration corridors, and ecosystem conditions in the Sonoran Desert.	Community Development	●		
	Consider researching and developing high-level policies and tools to guide consistent consideration of historic and cultural resources and culturally sensitive landscapes during development review, capital improvement planning, and other Town decision-making processes.	Community Development	●		

Primary Chapter	Implementation Strategy	Lead Responsible Party	Short-Term (0-5 Years)	Mid-Term (5-10 Years)	Long-Term (10-20 Years)
ECONOMIC VITALITY & FISCAL STABILITY	Implement and maintain the adopted Capital Improvement Plan and ensure the adopted Plan implements the goal and policies of the General Plan.	All Departments	●	●	
	Review existing revenues to determine if they are adequate to meet the needs of the Town.	All Departments	●	●	

07

ACRONYMS



ACC – Arizona Corporation Commission

ACS – American Community Survey

ADEQ – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

ADWR – Arizona Department of Water Resources

AF – Acre feet

ALEAP – Arizona Law Enforcement Accreditation Program

AMA – Active Management Areas

ARS – Arizona Revised Statutes

BID – Business Improvement District

BLM – Bureau of Land Management

C – Commercial

CAP – Central Arizona Project

CIP – Capital Improvement Project

CLS – Conservation Lands System

DAWS – Designations of Assured Water Supply

E – Employment

EIS – Environmental Impact Statement

EV – Electric vehicle

FICO – Farmers Investment Co.

GOEP – Governor’s Office of Energy Policy

HDR – High Density Residential

HOA – Homeowners’ Association

I-11 – Interstate 11

I-19 – Interstate 19

LDR – Low Density Residential

LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

LID – Low Impact Development

LOS – Level of Service

MDR – Medium Density Residential

MGD – Million Gallons per Day

MHDR – Medium-High Density Residential

MPA – Municipal Planning Area

MR – Major Resort

MS&RP – Major Streets and Routes Plan

MU – Mixed-Use

NFIP – National Flood Insurance Program

NPS – National Park Service

NRPA – National Recreation and Park Association

P – Parks/Open Space

PAG – Pima Association of Governments

PCD – Planned Community Development

PDEQ – Pima County Department of Environmental Quality

RH – Rural Homestead

RI – Resource Industrial

RMAP – Regional Mobility and Accessibility Plan

SDP – Sahuarita Police Department

SECAP – Sahuarita East Conceptual Area Plan

SHPO – State Historic Preservation Office

SR – Suburban Ranch

SR 289 – Nogales Highway

SSD – Sahuarita Square District

SUSD – Sahuarita Unified School District

TEP – Tucson Electric Power

TIF – Tax Increment Financing

USACE – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

USDA – U.S. Department of Agriculture

VLDR – Very Low Density Residential

WIFA – Water Infrastructure Finance Authority

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