

IX. GROWTH AREAS ELEMENT 3.0

Introduction

Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.), 11-804.C.2 requires that counties with populations exceeding 200,000 devote a section of their comprehensive plan to growth areas. Specifically, they must identify areas that are suitable for multimodal transportation and infrastructure improvements that apply to concentrated uses. The 2020 Censuses reported Yavapai County to have exceeded the 200,000- population threshold, reporting a population of 236,209.

Further, Arizona's Growing Smarter legislation, which was first adopted in 1998, requires policies for targeted land uses for mixed-use planning to increase the efficiency of circulation systems, to make infrastructure expansion more economical, and to conserve natural resources and open areas. The Growth Area Element should be used in tandem with the Transportation and Land Use Elements to guide sound planning and growth policies.

Purpose

Growing Smarter requires policies for mixed-use planning to increase the efficiency of circulation systems, to make infrastructure expansion more economical, and to conserve natural resources and open areas. The Growth Area Element is an essential element because it acknowledges areas that are best fitted for strategic growth while being able to provide services and infrastructure near existing infrastructure. Growth areas focus on pinpointing appropriate areas for infrastructure expansion and or improvements as well as expansion of high intensity land uses to help recognize the County's needs and smart growth possibilities.

While the Growth Areas Element defines specific targeted planning areas for growth and redevelopment, the Land Use Element provides the specific policy direction for the land use development within those defined growth areas. The Growth Area Element should be used in tandem with the Transportation and Land Use Elements to guide sound planning and growth policies to insure

Growth Areas are not intended to be restrictive, and development may be proposed and approved regardless of being within or not within a growth area designation. Additionally, a growth area designation should not be the sole determinant in land use decision making, but rather intended to inform and balance the Comprehensive Plan elements against other economic and infrastructure factors.

Current Conditions

Population Trends: While the population in Yavapai County increased by more than 400% during the past three decades, its rate of change decreased from approximately 84% from 1970-80, 58% from 1980-1990, 56% from 1990-2000, 26% from 2000-2010 and 12% from 2010-2020. This declining rate of change is common as the base population enlarges as the population of the County was only at 36,733 in 1970 and 107,714 in 1990. Other data reveal other aspects of the current populations which may affect future growth trends. The 2020 Census shows that the

majority of areas in Yavapai County have populations with median ages above the child-bearing years. Average household sizes correspond to this statistic.

Incorporated Areas: There are fourteen other jurisdictions in Yavapai County: eleven incorporated cities and towns and three Tribal Reservations. The Towns of Chino Valley, Prescott Valley and Dewey-Humboldt, the City of Prescott and the Yavapai-Prescott Indian Reservation are in the Central Yavapai Region. The Towns of Camp Verde, Clarkdale, and Jerome; the Cities of Cottonwood and Sedona; and the Yavapai-Apache Indian Reservation are in the Verde Valley Area. A portion of the City of Peoria is located in the southern-most tip of the County; a small portion of the Town of Wickenburg is located in the southwestern elbow of the County, while a portion of the Hualapai Indian Reservation is at its extreme northwest corner.

With few exceptions all of the referenced incorporated communities have and most likely will continue to annex properties within the county's jurisdiction. Once areas have been annexed, they do fall under the General Plan of the respective jurisdiction. The goal of the County is to work with these communities to properly plan and prepare for areas where growth may occur and be incorporated and avoid piecemeal development.

Property Ownership: The majority of Yavapai County's 8,123 square miles is owned and managed by Federal and State agencies. The United States Forest Service (USFS) maintains 38%, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) controls 10.5% and Arizona State Trust Lands (ASTL) manages 25% of the County's land area. The remaining 27% of Yavapai County is privately owned property. Although the most likely candidates for development are privately owned properties, the possibility of development through land exchanges or sales of State Trust Land is also possible.

****Insert Map****

Environmental and Wildlife Factors: Yavapai County features multiple wildlife habitat areas as well as wildlife corridors. Federally designated critical habitats are important components of our landscape and ecosystems because they protect Threatened and Endangered Species (TES). Locations of these habitats and corridors can be a significant factor in considering future growth area and the character of same. These areas should be looked on an individual basis and Yavapai County designated growth areas shall not supersede TES locations.

Yavapai County is impacted by approximately 212 square miles of regulated watercourses or floodplains. Currently large areas of the County remain unstudied by FEMA and development in those areas may require additional studies be performed adding to the regulated floodplain area. Location of floodplains can have a significant impact on the costs of physical development. Although location within a regulated area does not preclude development, it may be a factor on how the area is developed or what densities may be allowed.

Water Availability: Water is an important aspect of growth in Yavapai County and while this element focuses on that directed growth into specific areas to capitalize on existing infrastructure it does not guarantee water for these areas. While this Comprehensive Plan looks at the high-level aspect of the future growth of the County, each project must demonstrate on its own its own ability to provide water to the site.

The Water Element of this Comprehensive Plan details more existing conditions and future goals and policies to ensure Yavapai County is able to ensure water to its residents and business for many years to come.

Long Range Population Projections

Throughout most of Arizona, especially Yavapai County, population growth has been continually rapid for many decades. Yavapai County experienced 12% change in population from 2010 to 2020, on par with the state rate of 11.9%.

The following charts review the population projections in the major growth regions of Yavapai County. The same 2.25% growth rates have been applied to each region, although it is important to acknowledge that some areas have grown more quickly than others and some have more potential for growth than others.

****Insert charts****

Growth Areas

As Yavapai County continues to grow, the need to plan and focus on the development of growth areas is crucial. Within Yavapai County, with the exception of incorporated cities, there are eleven (11) recognized Growth Areas to assist in directing the County's growth in a thoughtful, comprehensive and fiscally responsible manner. These areas are defined below and identified in the Growth Areas maps included in this element.

- **Ashfork**– This growth area focuses along Highway 89 and Interstate 40 in the northern portion of Yavapai County. There are several commercial areas focused around the northside of Interstate 40 and the area is prime for commercial and industrial growth with the nearby railroad. The area however is underserved in water and needs utility and infrastructure improvements to sustain the future growth as well. Future Commercial and Industrial development is encouraged along the existing Interstate 40, Highway 89 and Railroad line.
- **Beaver Creek**– This smaller growth area located in northeastern Yavapai County is focused along Interstate 17 and improving the utilities and infrastructure to the area to maintain and improve the quality of living in this growth area. This area is primarily single family residential in nature with local commercial to serve the residents of Rim Rock and Beaver Creek. This growth area encourages development of the existing similar community with detached housing and local commercial and employment opportunities with an emphasis in upgrading the existing infrastructure for the area as new

developments occur. This community wants to improve the access and overall transportation to give the proper access within the residential neighborhoods. Beaver Creek will continue to follow the neighborhood changes that are based off of their needs now and in the future.

- **Big Chino**– This area is located along Interstate 40 in northwestern Yavapai County. The area is located west of HWY 89a and hugs along I-40 near Seligman. Growth in this area is focused on commerce and retail along the Interstate.
- **Camp Verde**– This larger growth area is situated along the Verde River and at the end of Beaver Creek. Interstate 17 and AZ-260 make this a prime growth area with high-capacity transportation connections and prime landscaped open space and recreation areas. Tourism and commercial growth will be demanded in this area as well as residential to support those uses.
- **Chino Valley**– This smaller growth area focuses on the unincorporated areas on the southwest side of Chino Valley between Highway 89 and Williamson Valley Road. This area is prime for residential development particularly master planned communities. This community values subdivision neighborhoods that offer options of walking, biking or short-distance driving that will create a sense of “Community Care”.
- **Clarkdale**– This growth area is the smallest growth area and is located in northeastern Yavapai County. This area has a lot of growth opportunities with the Yavapai College located nearby and proximity to the Cottonwood Airport, the tourism attractions in Cottonwood and surrounding areas such as the Verde Canyon Railroad. Mixed-use development is encouraged to incorporate to create a balance of quality residential neighborhoods and commercial development as the area continues to grow. This area is similar to the Cornville Road and Page Springs growth area with its increased interest in wineries, vineyards and tasting rooms. Agricultural Hospitality is encouraged in this area as well as residential and supporting uses for the nearby college which may include office and medium density residential.
- **Congress**– This growth area along HWY 71 and 89 is slowing growing in commercial and more intense uses while the residential community is growing with a small town rural residential and local appeal. The proximity to Yarnell and Wickenburg make this an appealing growth area along the highways.
- **Cordes Junction**– This small growth area in the southeastern part of Yavapai County is focused around the Interstate 17 and Highway 69 interchange. Currently this area is growing in travel centers and commercial activities for those traveling along Interstate 17 and those on their way to Prescott and Prescott Valley. Additionally, there are several single-family homes just south and east of the junction which also have still several vacant parcels within the community, which will likely fill in the near future as home stock becomes decreased. This growth area is a heavily traveled area of the County and increased commercial and light industrial activity is expected to develop in this area.

- **Cornville Rd – Page Springs**– This central growth area is located in northeastern Yavapai County focused around the intersection of Cornville Road and Page Springs Road. This area of the County is prime for Agricultural Hospitality and is encouraged for a variety of agricultural type tourism such as vineyards, wineries, breweries, tap houses and similar. Lower density single family residential uses are also encouraged in this growth area. There is also a focus to establish a multi-use community center that will contain the community development within their core area.
- **Fain** –This central area growth area is located south of Highway 89A and east of Fain Road on the way to Jerome and Prescott Valley. This growth area has large amounts of untapped land potential and state trust land availability for master plans and large-scale development. This area should encourage a mix of a variety of all uses for a more comprehensive development including, high density residential employment, office and commercial uses which will help be also served by the nearby community of Prescott Valley. Additionally, this area will require utilities to be extended and additional roadway infrastructure including extension of Lakeshore Drive and improved connections for Old Fain Road.
- **Paulden** – This growth area is located north of Chino Valley in northern Yavapai County. It is focused along Highway 89 including a mile out on either side of the Highway and then following east along Big Chino Road. This area is scattered with state trust land which is prime for development as well. This area includes the outlying rural areas between Chino Valley and Big Chino characterized by unimproved roads; low density and large tracts of undeveloped private and public lands. These sparsely populated rural and state trust lands also have the potential for future master-planned communities that will provide the infrastructure to support any proposed increases in residential density or commercial or employment uses. Residential, commercial and Employment areas are encouraged in this growth area.
- **Prescott Valley/ Prescott**– This smaller growth area is focused on the unincorporated areas around Prescott and Prescott Valley just south of Chino Valley. The vision for this area is to promote new and re-development growth that will be complimentary to the surrounding areas. This area follows around the potential employment and industrial opportunities around the Prescott Regional Airport and the possible associated commercial and employment uses and future necessary housing to support such growth.
- **Spring Valley-Mayer**– This more linear growth area is located in the southwest portion of Yavapai County along Highway 69 just north of Cordes Junction. This growth area has ample highway frontage and is primarily residential in nature with the nearby larger jurisdictions. This growth area is focused for residential growth with scatterings of higher density residential.
- **Village of Oak Creek**– This growth area focuses on supporting the growth of low-density, low-rise residential. This growth area will also focus on making the community to be more walkable. These focuses will help enhance the development to be compatible with the rural and natural open spaces and views.

- **Wickenburg**– This growth area along HWY 60 and 93 is prime for tourism and commercial and commerce expansion near its central core, while the perimeter area is known for its rural and equestrian lifestyle. Low Density and Open spaces and trails are encouraged outside the town core while commercial and tourism is encouraged in the denser core area.
- **Yarnell**– This growth area focuses along Highway 89 commercial opportunities as well as low density residential just east and west of the highway. Improved connections and infrastructure should be sought after in order to provide more facilities to residents and visitors.

Goals, Objectives and Recommendations

Promote growth in those areas that are particularly suitable for planned multimodal transportation and infrastructure expansion with improvements designed to support a cohesive concentration of a variety of uses, such as residential, office, commercial, tourism and industrial.

Goal 1: Identify potential growth areas for appropriate land uses that are compatible to surrounding communities.

Objective a: Review existing zoning, land use, topography, and transportation studies to ensure potential growth areas are consistent with the goals of the Growth Area element.

Objective b: Ensure the Comprehensive Plan is engaged throughout the review processes within the County's Public Works, Planning and Zoning and other similar departments

Objective c: Discourage land uses which are incompatible to the surrounding infrastructure and put too much demand on existing public services.

Objective d: Advocate growth along transportation multi modal corridors to encourage employment and employee connections.

Goal 2: Direct development into identified growths areas.

Objective a: Offer opportunities for new and redevelopment projects within Growth Areas.

Objective b: Advocate the development of a high intensity employment along major highway corridors such as:

Objective c: Provide a blend of land uses appropriate to each growth area which involve diverse housing types and densities, employment opportunities and access to retail and the commercial centers.

Objective d: Encourage public facilities and civic uses within Grown Areas.

Goal 3: Manage growth with coordinated infrastructure to achieve efficient and orderly growth.

Objective a: Ensure future development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Transportation and Land Use Elements.

Objective b: Advocate development in areas that are conducive to mixed use and multi-modal transportation opportunities.

Objective c: Encourage improvements to properties where infrastructure and circulation is close by and will further optimize existing facilities.

Objective d: Require public right-of-way dedication for every new development to the maximum proposed right-of-way.

Objective e: Advocate development in areas that are conducive to mixed use and multi-modal transportation opportunities.

Objective f: Determine long term potential circulation patterns which encourage new growth and ensure transportation routes are able to serve new and developing areas of Yavapai County.

Goal 4: Conserve significant natural resources and open areas in the growth areas.

Objective a: Ensure future development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Open Space Element.

Objective b: Encourage dialogue and review with and by Open Space stake holders.

Objective c: Adopt new ordinances which promote open space and community facilities (ex. trails, open space) to provide a destination for new growth areas.

Objective d: Incorporate buffers where able to ensure open space and wildlife areas are preserved.

Goal 5: Promote the public and private construction of timely and financially sound infrastructure expansion through the use of infrastructure funding and financing planning that is coordinated with development activity.

Objective a: Ensure future development is consistent with the goals and objectives of the Cost of Development Element

Objective b: Recommend development within Growth Areas where resources and infrastructure are already in place or can be reasonably extended.

Objective c: Require developers to either fully improve the sites infrastructure or deposit cash-in-lieu to the Town's infrastructure Capital Improvement Program (CIP) fund.

Objective d: Update the development fee schedule to provide fee incentives for growth and infill areas.

Objective e: Coordinate public and private investments within growth areas through the establishment of public/private partnerships and/ or development agreements.

Growth Areas Element Recommendations

- Continually proactively identify those areas where the greatest potential for growth.
- Review market conditions indicative of development trends to determine best growth practices and economic development.
- Review recommendations in the other elements to ensure development patterns are in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan and coordinated to ensure infrastructure and improvement plans are coordinated.
- Coordinate efforts with Economic Development for Improvement and Opportunity areas for which federal or state funding may be applied for to help direct development.