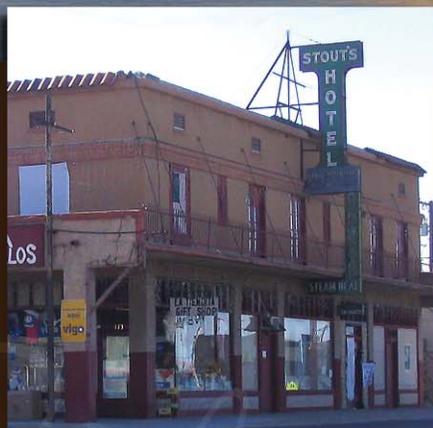
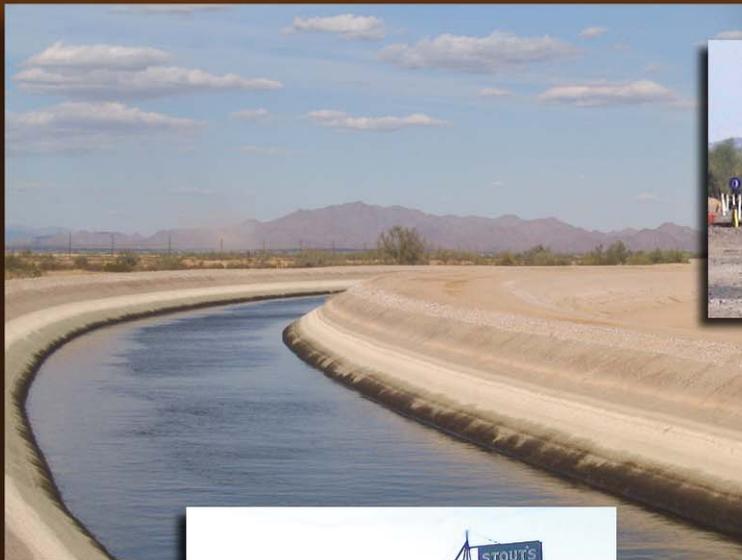


Town of GILA BEND

General Plan



Acknowledgments

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(This page reserved for Town Council resolution)

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General Plan Vision

Gila Bend is a unique community, committed to providing our residents with the necessary public infrastructure and planning to maintain and enhance an environment that: fosters economic development, preserves and integrates the natural environment, and offers diverse and stable employment opportunities.

We are a welcoming community that encourages and accommodates tourism. As a community we are forward thinking, yet we recognize the significance of our past, both historic and prehistoric, in enriching our lives and the experience of our visitors. We take pride in and are committed to the continued importance that the Gila Bend Auxiliary Field plays in our national security.



How to Use This Plan

Purpose of the Town of Gila Bend General Plan

The Town of Gila Bend General Plan provides a clear vision for Town of Gila Bend. It is comprised of Land Use, Circulation, Public Facilities and Services, and Housing elements that, taken together, provide a roadmap for growth and development in Gila Bend. The policies of this plan constitute the implementation strategy, and they will be carried forward as time, circumstances and resources allow, when practical and possible. This Plan is interrelated and should be collectively applied. This Plan meets the requirements of Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS) for General Plans, ARS §9-461.05.

Who Uses the General Plan?

The Town staff, the Planning and Zoning Commission, Town Council, and other decision-making or advisory entities within the Town will use the Plan as a guide to make sure that infrastructure, land use, and other decisions are closely coordinated. Those working with the Town can use the General Plan to help them understand the types of developments appropriate to the Town and guide or make decisions about the plans for future development.

Public Involvement in the Development of this Plan

The consultant team and Town staff worked with a Technical Advisory Committee throughout the process to guide the development of the Plan, and public meetings were conducted as working sessions, where residents had an opportunity to discuss the issues important to them and how the Town should address them. During this process a mailing list was created and used to notify the stakeholders of public meetings. Town staff provided briefings on the Plan to the Town Council during this process.

The Town staff and consultants team worked closely with the Arizona State Land Department in the development of this plan. Other entities were provided draft copies of the plan and asked to comment on it during a review period prior to public hearings (refer to General Plan Update - Public Participation Program.)



Introduction

Gila Bend is located approximately 65 miles southwest of the Phoenix metropolitan area. It is positioned along State Route 85 (SR 85), which connects Interstate 10, approximately 30 miles north of the community, with Interstate 8 (I-8), which bisects the community. Gila Bend's position, at the crossroads of travel between Metropolitan Phoenix; Puerto Penasco (Rocky Point), Mexico; and San Diego gives it a strong advantage for tourism (Refer to Figure 1).

Gila Bend is situated along the Gila River, in relatively flat terrain at approximately 735 feet above sea level. To the north of Town are the Gila Bend Mountains with Woolsey Peak at 3,270 feet, and the North and South Maricopa Mountains located to the east and south, respectively. These low rocky mountains provide a scenic backdrop to the community.

The Gila River flows from the north, making a sharp turn to the west at Gila Bend, hence the Town's name. West of Town the Painted Rock Dam creates Arizona's second largest lake during flooding events, second in surface size only to Roosevelt Lake.

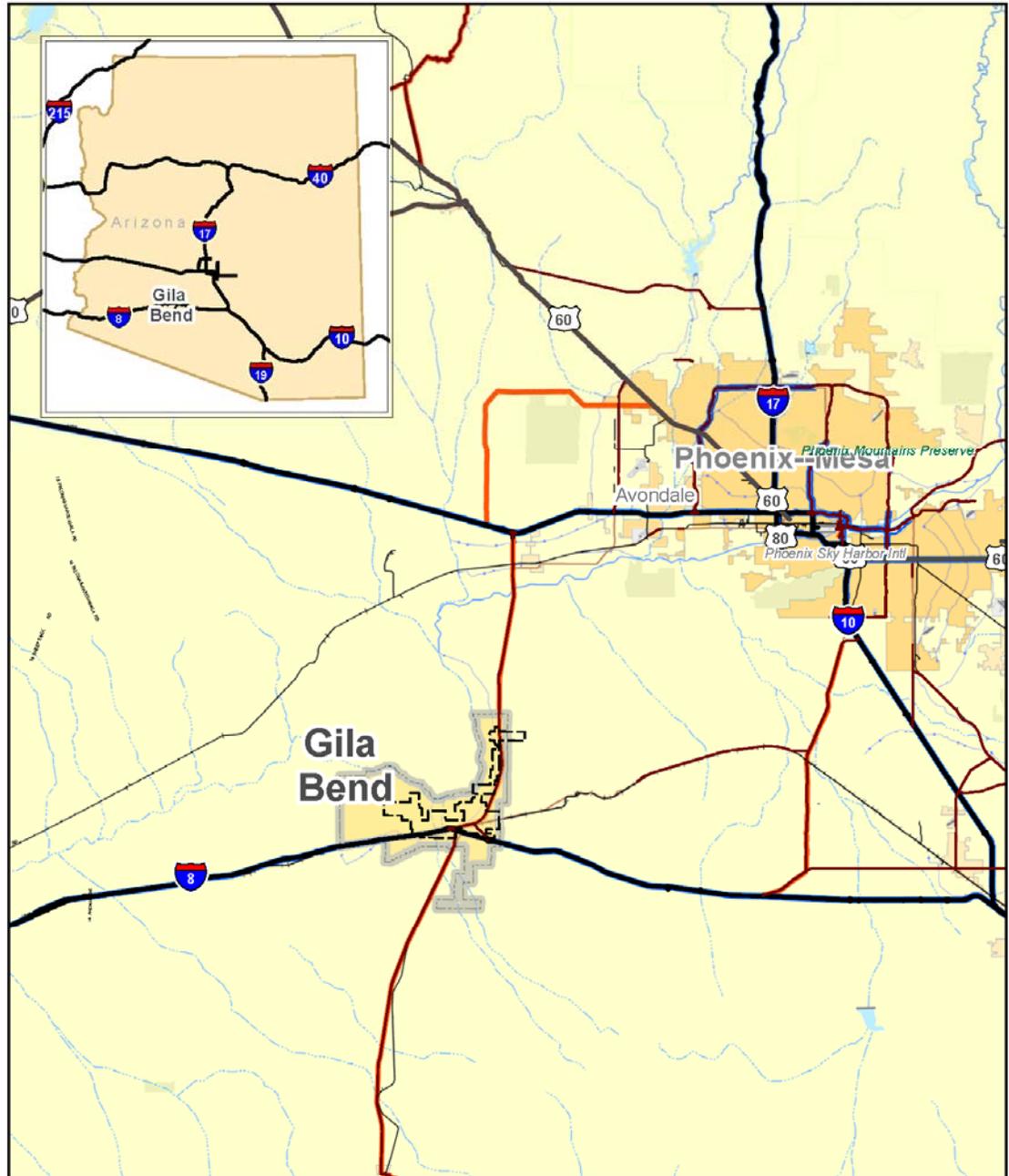
Setting

The Town has primarily evolved with a grid pattern, oriented east-west along Pima Street (SR 85). Pima Street is the commercial core of the Town, with the majority of commercial businesses located on or immediately adjacent to it.

The grid is interrupted south of Pima Street by the Union Pacific railroad. The railroad lies roughly parallel and approximately 400 feet south of Pima Street. Within the framework of collector streets, several neighborhoods have developed with curvilinear streets.

Gila Bend's incorporated area is approximately 41 square miles, an increase of 29 square miles since the 1996 General Plan update. The planning area for the Town encompasses a total of 177 square miles, comparable to the planning area of Mesa, Arizona (170 square miles).

With 90,000 acres under cultivation in the area, agriculture continues to be the mainstay of the economy of Gila Bend (DOC, 2003). Farm crops are primarily cotton, alfalfa, and grain. Tourism is also a large part of the local economy; the heavy traffic on SR 85 and I-8 make Gila Bend a popular overnight stop for travelers to and from California and Mexico.



HDR Map Revised 10/29/06

Source: StreetMap USA (2006)

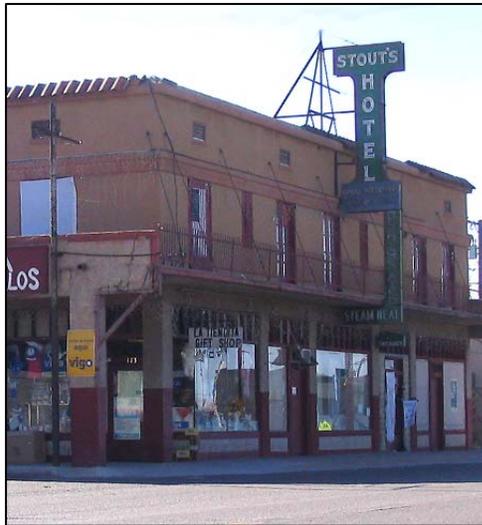
Town of Gila Bend General Plan Update

Figure 1 - Context Map

Historic Setting

The situation of geography and natural transportation corridors along the Gila River and Sonoran Desert influenced the founding of the settlement here. The Gila River travels east-west across Arizona and has provided a historical route for travelers. Since ancient times there have been settlements at the bend of the Gila River to provide water and refuge for travelers following along the river. In the late 1870s, when the transcontinental railroad stretched across Arizona from California toward Texas, the Town was relocated several miles south of the river near the railroad right-of-way. While the railroad is still active through Gila Bend, the automobile has supplanted the railroad as the most influential force affecting the economy and development of Gila Bend today.

The presence of water in the Gila River established Gila Bend as an important destination dating back to ancient times. Two significant archaeological sites are located in close proximity to the Gila River at Gila Bend: the Gatlin Site and La Fortaleza. These sites demonstrate that the Gila Bend area was an important settlement point along the trade routes of the Hohokam, the prehistoric peoples of the desert southwest. These sites continue to play prominently in Gila Bend's story as the Town looks to protect and preserve them for the future.



The Stout Hotel (c. 1919), located on Pima Road.

Prehistoric ruins are only one piece of evidence of Gila Bend's role in shaping the history of Arizona. The Stout Hotel, located on Pima Road, was constructed in 1919. Although originally situated to open to the south on Murphy Street, facing the railroad station, it was later remodeled in 1923 to face Highway 80. The Stout Hotel is one of a number of individually eligible properties for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The NRHP is the official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant to American history, architecture, and culture. In addition to this property, there are a number of other historic structures located in Gila Bend.



The Daniel home (c. 1925), located on St. Louis Avenue in one of two areas recognized as potential historic districts in Gila Bend.

Construction of the Gillespie Dam was completed in 1921. Housing for migrant field workers was constructed at about this time on the south side of Gila Bend, with the first residential development coming on line around 1923. A 1999 historic study identified two potential historic districts that should be considered for future nomination to the NRHP (Ryden, 1999). These historic districts are identified on the Land Use Map.

Adoption of the Federal Highway Act in 1921 resulted in the building of the Yuma-Phoenix-Tucson-Douglas Highway, now known as US Highway 80.

Gila Bend saw tremendous development with the start of World War II. In July 1941, Gila Bend was selected as a location for a County airfield. In 1942, a second airfield was funded - the Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield. The Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield continues to serve as a major training facility, with two million additional acres of land to the south and west of Gila Bend reserved for a gunnery range. In 1986 the name of the Gila Bend Gunnery Range was changed to the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range. In 1999 an area was withdrawn from the Range by the Bureau of Land Management, resulting in a current area of approximately 1.7 million acres.

While the railroad industry continued in decline following the depression, increases in automobile and truck traffic through Gila Bend more than made up for the difference. Improvements to the transportation infrastructure during the 1950s created a sustained period of growth in Gila Bend. Gila Bend's population grew over 300 percent in the 1950s, from 580 in 1950 to 1,844 in 1960. Today, Gila Bend's population is estimated at 2,050¹.



The Gillespie Dam, Near Phoenix, Arizona.

Source: Penny Postcards from Arizona, <http://www.rootsweb.com>.

The Gila Bend Indian Reservation was established by the Executive Orders of December 12, 1882 and June 17, 1909. The reservation contains 10,297 acres and is divided by the Gila River. The reservation lies within the San Lucy District, a political subdivision of the Tohono O'odham Nation. In 1960, the Corps of Engineers completed construction of Painted Rock Dam on the Gila River ten miles downstream from the

reservation. In August of 1964, Congress adopted a law that allowed for the purchase of a 40-acre tract adjacent to the Town of Gila Bend where residents of the Gila Bend Indian Community who were flooded by the construction of Painted Rocks Dam and Reservoir, were relocated. Today, approximately 300 people live in the community.

I-8, south of Gila Bend, was completed in 1973, essentially removing all cross country travel between Tucson and Yuma from the Town, and changing transportation patterns. Today Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is developing plans to create a direct link between I-8 and SR 85 on the eastern side of Town. This will alter the traffic pattern through the community again and offers an opportunity to revisit the role of Pima Street, Gila Bend's commercial core.

¹ July 1, 2005 Population Estimates for Arizona's Counties, Incorporated Places and Balance of the County. Arizona Department of Economic Security, February, 2006.



Recent headline. Source: the Arizona Republic, December 26, 2005.

Today, Gila Bend has adapted to the changes in the transportation network. People are looking to locate in Gila Bend due to its combination of quality of life, proximity to the Phoenix metropolitan area, and its proximity to major destinations. A number of development projects have recently been proposed in Gila Bend, most notably the Merrill-Paloma Ranch development. This 10,000-acre mixed-use development features a range of low to high-density housing with several areas reserved for neighborhood commercial uses. The Sonoran Trails and Saguaro Ranch developments are also reflected in the Gila Bend Land Use Plan.

Demographics

Since 1990, Gila Bend has experienced an average of one percent growth annually. Significantly greater growth in the Phoenix metropolitan area and areas of Maricopa and Pinal County to the east, such as Casa Grande, is increasing development pressure on Gila Bend.

The Maricopa Association of Governments projects the rate of population growth for Gila Bend to be increasing exponentially with a 2025 projected population of approximately 12,500.

Table 1 Gila Bend Population Estimates

Year	Pop	Average Annual Percent Change
1990	1,747 ¹	
2000	1,980 ¹	1.3%
2004	2,030 ¹	0.6%
2005	2,050²	1.0%

Notes:

- 1 Source: US Census (2000). Population based on incorporated area.
- 2 Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security (2006).

The median age of Gila Bend residents is 29.3, up from the median age of 1990 (28.4 years of age), but significantly younger than that of Maricopa County (33 years of age). Nearly 60 percent of the Gila Bend population is of working age (18 – 64 years of age). The younger median age is reflective of the high household size, 3.0 persons per household. This is larger than that of Maricopa County as a whole (2.7 persons per household).

The total minority population in Gila Bend (65.3 percent) is nearly twice that of Maricopa County (33.8 percent). This is in large part due to the greater percentage of Hispanics, whom make up over one-half of the population, and the larger percentage of Native Americans relative to the County as a whole.

Table 2 Minority Populations for Gila Bend and Maricopa County

	<i>Gila Bend</i>	<i>Maricopa County</i>
Population	1,980	3,072,149
Minority Population	1,293	1,037,619
Percent Minority	65.3%	33.8%

Source: US Census (2000).

Median household income in Gila Bend is \$26,895 per year, approximately 60 percent of the median household income in Maricopa County (\$45,358). According to the U.S. Census, approximately 25 percent of the Gila Bend population is at or below the poverty level. At the same time, nearly one-quarter of Gila Bend households (24 percent) earned more than the Maricopa County median household income.

Land Use Background

While the location of most of Gila Bend's commercial land use is inexorably linked to transportation routes, other factors have had a considerable role in the Town's development.

The commercial uses that began with the railroad and blossomed with the coming of the automobile again have to adapt to changes in transportation routes as SR 85 improvements are being considered, which would cause the route to bypass Pima Street and the Town's commercial core.

The Gila River has provided a reason for people to populate this region for time immortal. The prehistoric Hohokam ruins of La Forteleza and the Gatlin Site are evidence of the long history of human activity. Agriculture continues to be important to the Town and a new influx of dairies and farms, forced out of Phoenix's East and West Valley by urban growth, are relocating to Gila Bend, where land values and attitudes are more conducive to these types of land use.



Looking west along Pima Road from the intersection with Butterfield Highway (State Business Route 8). The route is part of the Phoenix – San Diego and Rocky Point route and makes up the commercial core of Gila Bend.

Existing Land Use



The railroad continues to play a significant part of Gila Bend's future.

Residential and commercial development in Gila Bend is largely concentrated around the junction of the transportation corridors of SR 85 (Pima Street) and the railroad.

Agricultural operations are generally located to the north and west of the Town center. Table 3 summarizes the existing land use in the planning area.

The large area of vacant and agricultural land (over 160 square miles – 91 percent of the planning area) demonstrates the enormous growth potential Gila Bend offers.

Table 3 Gila Bend Planning Area Existing Land Use

<i>Existing Land Use</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Agriculture	37,268	33%
Transportation	1,025	1%
Commercial	156	<1%
Public/Quasi-Public Facilities	61	<1%
Residential	752	1%
Industrial	77	<1%
Passive Open Space	6,412	6%
Vacant	65,958	58%
Water	1,497	1%
Total	113,205	100%

Source: Maricopa Association of Governments (2000), HDR (2005).

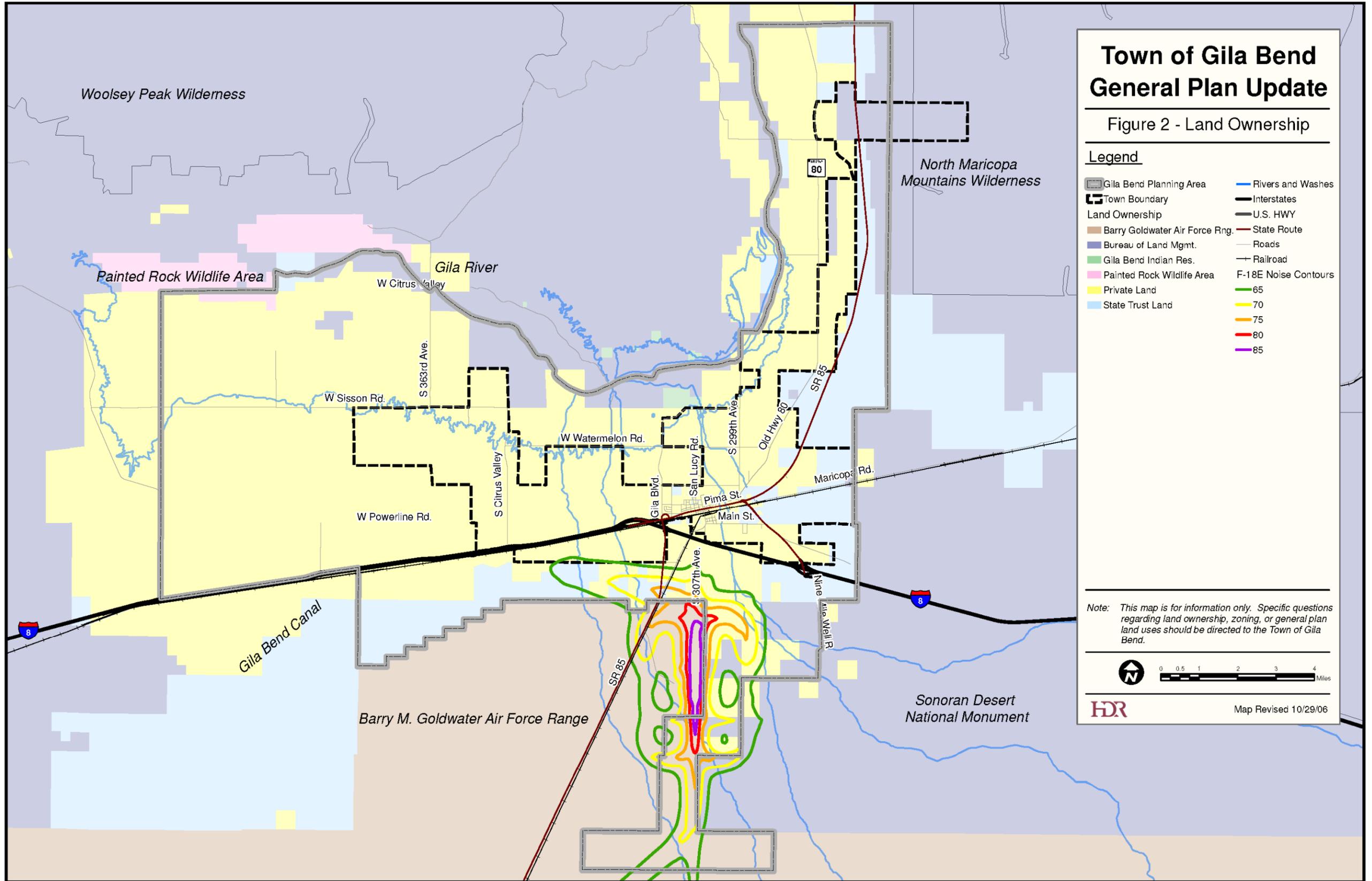
Land Ownership

Table 4 summarizes the land ownership in the Gila Bend Planning Area. Land ownership information is graphically represented in Figure 2. Land ownership patterns and the mission of many landowner entities will impact the Town's future growth and are described below.

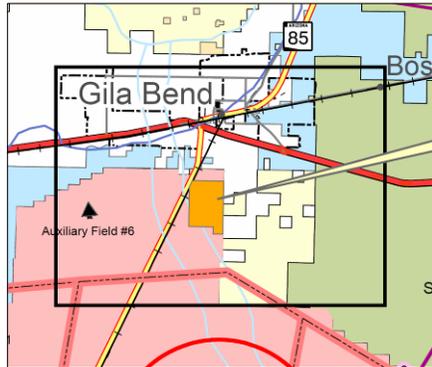
Table 4 Land Ownership, Gila Bend Planning Area

<i>Land Ownership</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Private Land	80,036	71%
State Trust Land	16,837	15%
Bureau of Land Management	10,571	9%
Barry Goldwater Air Force Range	5,078	4%
Painted Rock Wildlife Area	388	<1%
Gila Bend Indian Reservation	295	<1%
Total	113,205	100%

Source: Arizona Land Resource Information System (2004)



Arizona State Land Department



Excerpt from the Joint Land Use Study showing Arizona State land (in blue) in the area of Gila Bend and the Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field. Source: Department of Commerce, 2005.

The Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) administers the State Trust lands. These lands were granted to Arizona by the Federal government when the area was established as a territory in 1863, with additional lands conveyed to Arizona as it prepared for statehood under the Enabling Act of 1910. Arizona, through the creation of the State Land Department, accepted the responsibility of trust land management revenue production for the 14 trust beneficiaries as a condition of statehood. All uses of the land must benefit the trust, a fact that distinguishes State Trust land from the way public land, such as parks or national forests, may be used.

There are approximately 16,837 acres of State Trust lands within the Town of Gila Bend planning area, comprising 15 percent of the planning area. Growing Smarter Legislation of 1998 required conceptual plans for State lands in urbanized areas. The purpose of these conceptual plans is to graphically portray the Land Department's long term land use goals.

In October 2002, the ASLD issued a Conceptual Plan for Gila Bend. Recently, in coordination with the Joint Land Use Study initiated by the Arizona Department of Commerce, the State Land Department revisited the conceptual plans for the State lands in the vicinity of the Gila Bend Auxiliary Airfield to ensure compatible land use with the mission of the facility. The conceptual plans address approximately 9,800 acres located south and east of the incorporated town limits of Gila Bend.

Bureau of Land Management



Sonoran Desert National Monument Source: BLM

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), administers almost 10,600 acres, or approximately nine percent of the Town's planning area. While the BLM is authorized to sell land when it is specifically identified for disposal in their Land Use Plan, they currently lease land to various local agencies, organizations, districts, and governments for recreation and public purposes.

To the east of the planning area is the Sonoran Desert National Monument. The Monument contains more than 496,000 acres of Sonoran Desert landscape, the most biologically diverse of all North American deserts. The most striking aspect of the plant community within the Monument is the extensive saguaro cactus forest. Gila Bend is uniquely situated to provide a gateway to the Sonoran Desert National Monument.

Painted Rock State Park

Painted Rock State Park is located on the northern edge of the planning area and is administered by Arizona State Parks. *Painted Rock Petroglyph Site and Campground* was formerly a part of Painted Rocks State Park, but is now administered by the BLM. The petroglyph site is a well-known archaeological site that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The site is considered a “place of traditional cultural importance” by the Tohono O’odham Indians and remains a popular stopover for modern visitors traveling on I-8 between California and Arizona intrigued by the thousands of Hohokam rock etchings.

Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range



The Joint Land Use Study addresses the issue of development and compatible land uses in the vicinity of the Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field.

Source: Arizona Department of Commerce.

The Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range (BGAFR) occupies approximately 5,000 acres, or four percent, of the Town of Gila Bend planning area. In total, the BGAFR encompasses about 1.7 million acres of withdrawn public land and Department of Defense-owned land. The west side of the Range serves mainly as a Marine Corps training site, and the main user group is stationed at the Marine Corps Air Station, Yuma, Arizona. The east side of the Range serves mainly as an Air Force air-to-air and air-to-ground combat training site. The main user and range manager, the 56th Fighter Wing, is located at Luke Air Force Base, Arizona. The 56th Fighter Wing trains F-16 pilots for the Air Force and for other nations.

Also using the east side are the Thunderbolt II units from Davis-Monthan Air Force Base at Tucson, Arizona; the Army National Guard, flying helicopters out of the Western Army National Guard Aviation Training Site at Marana, Arizona; and Arizona Air National Guard’s 162nd Fighter Wing out of Tucson, Arizona.

Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field

The Gila Bend Air Force Auxiliary Field (Gila Bend AFAF) is four miles south of Gila Bend. The airfield encompasses 1,885 acres of land in the planning area.

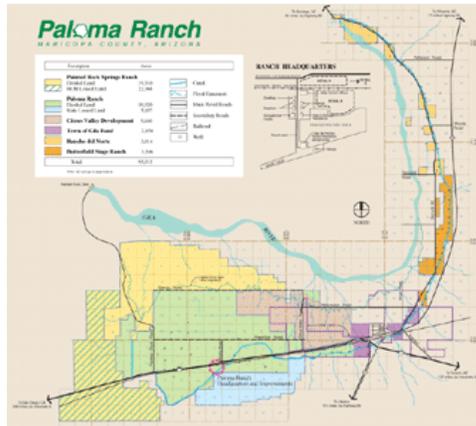
Its primary mission is to support the Barry M. Goldwater Range Complex. Military aircraft, primarily F-16s, A-10s and Army National Guard helicopters, routinely use Gila Bend AFAF for practicing traffic pattern and emergency simulated engine flameout procedures. The airfield is also used for emergency and precautionary recoveries of military aircraft that experience malfunctions on the range.

A Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) for BGAFR was completed in February 2005. The JLUS is part of the Arizona Military Regional Compatibility Project, which was conceived as a proactive approach to land use planning with the stakeholders around each base such as relevant jurisdictions, base personnel, landowners, and other interested parties. This study resulted in the following outcomes, 1) areas affected by high noise and accident potential based upon current aircraft and levels of operations at BGAFR were identified including the likely impacts of changes as future aircraft

and mission changes occur, and, 2) compatibility criteria that recognize the differences in risk and impacts from aircraft operations and from other operations at BMGR were developed.

The southerly tier of the Town's planning area, south of the Union Pacific rail line would have the greatest potential for issues of compatibility related to operations at BGAFR. Planned land use designations in the existing General Plan, south of the Union Pacific rail line, are primarily low-density residential (defined as 1 to 5 dwelling units per acre) along with Light Industrial along the rail line.

Paloma Ranch



The Paloma Ranch is a 10,000 acre planned development recently annexed into Gila Bend.

The Merrill-Paloma Ranch, located to the west of the majority of development in the Town, is planned as a 10,000-acre mixed-use development with a range of housing densities, neighborhood commercial areas, and an open space system. The Development Agreement for the ranch, approved by the Town in April 2004, includes a Land Use Plan as part of the Master Development Plan for the ranch. In the area south of I-8, which is the portion of the planned development closest to BGAFR, the proposed uses include a range of residential types with target densities from 10 to 16 dwelling units per acre, along with open space areas and areas for general business, neighborhood business, light industrial, mobile home, and recreational vehicle uses.

Additional Sites in the Gila Bend Planning Area

Two significant archaeological sites are located in proximity to Gila Bend. These early habitation sites provide testimony to the importance of Gila Bend's location along the Gila River. These sites demonstrate that Gila Bend was an important settlement for the Hohokam, as well as a significant point on their trade routes.

La Fortaleza

La Fortaleza was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1969 and is believed to have been a prehistoric Hohokam site that dates to 1000 - 1499AD. The site has significance in several areas including defense, domestic, funerary, as well as functioning as a fortification and burial site.

As early as 1965, the Tohono O'odham tribe examined the tourism potential of the La Fortaleza site. The Papago-Gila Bend Development Commission was formed in 1969 as a joint venture between the Town and tribe to develop the site as a tourist attraction. A development proposal was prepared in conjunction with the National Park Service in 1974, however, the plan was never acted upon.

Gatlin Site

The Gatlin Site was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, and is believed to have been a prehistoric Hohokam site that dates to 800 - 1200 AD. The

site has significance in its ceremonial and religious use as well as a farming and manufacturing center and gateway for travel and trade due to its location along the Gila River.

In the 1980s the site was acquired by the Town, hoping to develop an archaeological site closer to Gila Bend. In 1985, plans were developed in coordination with the Museum of Northern Arizona in Flagstaff.

Preparations are underway to open the site as a regional cultural park for public visitation and education. Park development will also help to preserve the 110 acres of open space of native desert and its associated wildlife, and provide opportunities for hiking, picnicking, and camping.



The Gatlin site interpretive trail, an Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund Matching Grant project was completed in April 2005.

Source: www.gilabendaz.org

A new round of site development began in 2004 when the Town was awarded an Arizona State Parks Heritage Fund Matching Grant. The project has provided needed site protection and stabilization. Construction of a one and a quarter mile interpretive trail was finished in April 2005, and will be followed by the installation of exhibits, signage, and a brochure. Other partners in the project are the San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation who has agreed to construct a historic O'odham house, the Arizona Archaeological Society, the Southwest Archaeology Team, the Gila Bend School District, National Parks Service, the Gila River Indian Community, and local organizations and donors.

Annexations

Incorporated in 1962, Gila Bend has strategically programmed its development course. Gila Bend's strategic approach, its annexation policy, and its location along I-8 have enabled the Town to grow to its current size of approximately 41 square miles. A number of annexations have greatly expanded the area of Gila Bend over the past two decades. Specific policies to ensure the Town of Gila Bend pursues a consistent and beneficial annexation program are included in Appendix A, Annexation Policy.

Land Use Element

Introduction

The purpose of this element is to identify the types and general locations of future land uses to meet the needs of Gila Bend residents over the next decade. The element is prepared in conformance with ARS §9-461.05 and §9-461.06 and contains a land use map; description of the land use categories shown on the General Plan map; goal, objectives, and policies; an explanation of the General Plan Amendment Process; and a definition of Major and Minor General Plan Amendments.

Planning Issues

The land use plan for Gila Bend looks to the future and addresses several key issues and opportunities identified by the Town during the development of this plan.

Specifically, these are:

- Identifying locations for new retail and employment uses appropriate to the community.
- Identifying future land uses for the entire planning area.
- Conserving open spaces and mountain views that benefit our community.
- Providing a variety of quality housing products which are necessary for Gila Bend residents and to attract and retain a diverse employment base.
- Taking advantage of opportunities presented by the planned improvements to SR 85, including the realignment of the section south of Sisson Road.
- Maintaining and enhancing the quality of the built environment, including neighborhood infrastructure.
- Ongoing coordination with state and federal agencies (such as the ASLD, BLM, and GBAFAF).

Land Use Map

The land use map on the following page provides the general location, intensity and density of existing and future development for the Gila Bend Planning Area. The plan takes into consideration the existing pattern of development and development plans that have been approved for the community. The plan also recognizes the Gila Bend AFAF and looks to guide development in its influence area such that incompatible land uses are avoided. The land uses shown on the map are not static. The map and this Plan are meant to be adaptable to opportunities as they present themselves to the community. The General Plan Amendment process outlines the steps necessary to amend this plan. It is not the intent of the General Plan Amendment process to be onerous, rather the Amendment process ensures that the community is involved in the process so that the Plan and map continue to be a reflection of the community's values and desires for the future. A description of the General Plan Amendment Process follows the Land Use Map and land use goals, objectives, and policies.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

The goals, objectives and policies of the General Plan are defined as follows:

Goals are desired conditions. They are supposed to be general, and speak to the basic needs that are to be addressed.

Objectives are a desired level of achievement or a measurable step towards achieving goals. They should be significant, quantifiable, and possible to maintain over the long run.

Policies are steps the Town can take to reach the objectives and achieve its goals.

GOAL 1 Provide quality residential areas for the residents of Gila Bend

Objective: Plan the development of an adequate mix of housing types at various densities for persons of all income levels and ages.

Policy: The Town shall encourage development of a variety of single-family, attached single-family, and multi-family housing.

Policy: The Town shall promote an orderly pattern of residential development through the utilization of administrative procedures, ordinances, policies and programs.

Objective: Maintain and strengthen established residential areas.

Policy: The Town shall protect residential areas from intrusion by commercial and industrial land uses through adequate buffering, site planning and design.

Policy: The Town should establish Neighborhood Enhancement Programs to ensure a clean and well maintained community.*

**Neighborhood Enhancement Programs have been initiated by many communities. They are grassroots revitalization efforts that target problems by channeling neighborhood interest and volunteer efforts toward solutions. Programs can be focused on code violations and often provide municipal support through funding and resources.*

Objective: Rehabilitate residential areas which are substandard and lack maintenance or community pride.

Policy: The Town shall continue methods to improve neighborhoods through community action, self-help and other techniques, such as the annual Town Cleanup.

GOAL 2 Encourage commercial activity that is economically viable and responsive to community needs

Objective: Promote the continued development and rehabilitation of commercial uses in the Town of Gila Bend.

Policy: The Town shall encourage the revitalization and expansion of existing commercial facilities on Pima Street.

Policy: Encourage the restoration and renovation of historic commercial properties.

Objective: Develop commercial districts which minimize potential adverse impacts on existing or planned adjacent residential areas.

Policy: Establish design guidelines for the Town to encourage the development of high quality business environments. Guidelines should address such issues as access, lighting, landscaping, signage, and building setback and orientation.

Policy: The Town shall work closely with existing and potential commercial developers to design site plans that emphasize efficient vehicular ingress and egress, provide sufficient parking, incorporate cohesive architectural and landscape treatments and provide buffering adjacent to residential land uses.

Policy: The Town shall limit commercial development to areas that are compatible with adjacent land uses.

GOAL 3 Encourage industrial development in Gila Bend that provides quality employment and other benefits to the community

Objective: Create stable, identifiable and functional industrial districts that are compatible with adjacent uses.

Policy: The Town shall use the General Plan to recommend areas appropriate for the establishment of industrial districts.

Policy: The Town shall designate sufficient land for the future expansion of existing and proposed industrial districts.

Policy: The Town shall continue to encourage economic development in areas that otherwise are not suitable for residential development (such as those impacted by the Gila Bend AFAF) and have proper access and available public services and facilities.

Objective: Encourage the development of industries which will not severely impact residential areas.

Policy: The Town shall develop and utilize design standards with provisions for buffering and screening of adjacent land uses from those uses that generate dust, noise or noxious fumes.

GOAL 4 Improve the image of the Community

Objective: Encourage future quality residential, commercial and employment development to occur in a planned, orderly manner.

Policy: The Town shall prepare and adopt a General Plan that includes Land Use, Public Facilities and Services, Circulation, and Housing elements with goals, objectives and policies for each plan element.

Policy: The Town shall review and revise the Zoning Ordinance and Official Zoning Map as necessary to be consistent with the General Plan.

Policy: The Town shall adopt the most recent Uniform Building Code to ensure that structures are constructed in a safe and quality manner.

Objective: The Town shall encourage the development of a land use pattern which considers existing land uses served by appropriate infrastructure extensions and public facility development.

Policy: The Town shall use the Land Use Plan as a guide in evaluating rezoning requests.

Policy: The Town shall use the General Plan as a guide to determine the appropriateness of development plans.

GOAL 5 Continue to support the mission of Luke Air Force Base and the role of the Gila Bend Auxiliary Field

Objective: Promote development that is consistent with the recommendations of the Gila Bend Auxiliary Field / Barry M. Goldwater Range Joint Land Use Study (JLUS).

Policy: The Town shall continue to participate in planning activities with the Gila Bend Auxiliary Field / Barry M. Goldwater Range.

Policy: The Town shall permit development within the proposed F-18 Noise Contours (as delineated in the JLUS) consistent with ARS §28-8481, Planning and zoning; military airport and ancillary military facility's operation compatibility; compliance review; penalty; definitions.

GOAL 6 Revitalize existing development in Gila Bend

Objective: Actively promote development which is served by existing infrastructure and public facilities within the Town.

Policy: The Town shall encourage infill development through the adopted General Plan and appropriate zoning regulations.

Policy: The Town shall explore developing a public information campaign targeting the development community which emphasizes the advantages offered by the Town.

Policy: The Town shall work with property owners and others to mitigate existing physical constraints on vacant or underutilized land parcels within the Town to encourage infill development.

Policy: The Town shall work with private property owners to remove all dilapidated, vacant, and abandoned structures unless they have local, state, or federal historic or architectural significance.

Objective: Designate the appropriate land use for the remaining vacant or underutilized land parcels within the corporate limits of the Town.

Policy: The Town shall use the General Plan when considering future land uses in the Town.

Because the land use policies of the plan are so intricately tied to, and reliant upon Economic Development, many of the goals, objectives and policies of that element of the 1996 Plan are brought forward from the that Plan.

GOAL 7 Create the organizational and management framework necessary to promote tourism, and to attract targeted housing and business/industrial development.

Objective: Identify funding sources, staffing needs, and facility locations to assist in the provision of housing and economic development.

Policy: The Town shall designate the Chamber of Commerce as the lead in attracting housing and business development in the Town.

Policy: The Town shall continue to support a paid position within the Chamber of Commerce to manage economic development efforts.

Policy: The Town shall activate its Economic Development Commission to work with the Chamber, and representatives from the Town Council,

Town management, the private sector, and community-based organizations to enhance future employment and sales tax growth.

Policy: The Town shall work with the Chamber to periodically report on development expansion opportunities to the Economic Development Commission, Chamber Board, Gila Bend Planning and Zoning Commission and the Town Council.

GOAL 8 Actively promote quality industries and business which will contribute to investment and development in the Town

Objective: Develop and implement a program to attract businesses which compliment the Town's business environment and economic resources, generate tax revenues, and provide employment opportunities.

Policy: Through the Chamber of Commerce, the Town shall establish contacts with the Arizona Department of Commerce, Arizona Office of Tourism, and the Arizona Public Service Company to take advantage of available resources to support economic development.

Policy: The Town shall ensure that adequate land is identified in the General Plan to accommodate the various types of residential, business, recreational, and industrial users to be recruited.

Policy: The Town shall work to ensure that adequate water and sewer facilities are available to accommodate an orderly pattern of future economic and residential development.

Policy: The Town shall respond to all requests for information regarding expansions, start-ups, or operating a business in the Town.

Policy: The Town shall establish a subcommittee of the Economic Development Commission made up of local business and industry to serve as a host site visitation committee to outside investors.

Objective: Work with the Union Pacific Railroad to establish rail access in Gila Bend.

Policy: Contract to have an economic market analysis prepared which identifies the potential for developing industrial properties with rail access in Gila Bend.

Policy: Work with Union Pacific Railroad to allow rail access in Gila Bend.

GOAL 9 Develop a successful tourism program for the community.

Objective: Make Gila Bend a more attractive and visitor-family tourist and travel focal point.

Policy: The Town, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, shall attempt to secure grants and other appropriate funds from the National Resource Conservation District (NRCD) and others for the development of the Gatlin National Historic Landmark.

Policy: The Town, in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, shall implement a strategy to attract a wider range of lodging accommodations to the community.

Policy: The Town shall establish, through the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and Town, a timetable to plan and develop a golf course within the Town.

Policy: The Town shall develop, through the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce and Town, uniform signs and attractive entry monuments to welcome and help direct tourists to points of interest in the Town and adjacent areas.

Objective: Continue to support the promotion of Gila Bends cultural resources.

Policy: The Town shall continue to support efforts to protect and preserve the Gatlin Site as a historic resource.

Policy: Encourage the development of and support the formation of historic residential districts as identified in the 1999 Historic Resource Survey of Gila Bend.

Policy: Develop a master plan for the revitalization of Pima Street as the commercial core of Gila Bend.

GOAL 10 Develop and maintain a wide range of information and literature on creating small businesses, and programs that assist them.

Objective: Prepare information which can serve as a resource to both existing businesses and new businesses contemplating locating in the Town of Gila Bend.

Policy: The Town shall contact the Federal, State, and County business assistance agencies each year to gather the most recent information available on their programs and policies.

Policy: The Town shall publicize the availability and location of business assistance information.

Policy: The Town shall work with the Maricopa Community College District and the Maricopa County Small Business Development Center to present periodic small business training programs in the Town and publicize the nature and content of the scheduled programs.

Policy: The Town shall develop unique marketing materials for distribution to visitors/tourists and targeted industries (Example: community profile prepared by the Arizona Department of Commerce).

GOAL 11 An adequate supply of trained labor, available to support existing and future local businesses.

Objective: Work to assure that an available pool of trained or trainable workers are available for employers.

Policy: The Town will work with private industry to identify workforce needs and the qualifications and type of training required to fill these jobs.

Policy: The Town will work with the Gila Bend School District and private industry to determine if technical and vocational training can be provided locally.

Policy: The Town will contact Maricopa County and other state, regional and local agencies to determine the full-range of employment and training opportunities available to businesses and residents of Gila Bend.

General Plan Land Use Categories

Residential Land Use Categories

Rural Residential, Rural (0 – 1.0 dwelling units per acre)

 This category is established to conserve and protect farms and other open land uses, foster orderly growth in rural and agricultural areas, and prevent urban and agricultural land use conflicts.

It is also intended that the Rural Residential category will serve as a transitional zone, in that, when governmental facilities and services, public utilities and street access are available, or can reasonably be made available, applications for change of this category to any single family residential zoning districts will be given favorable consideration.

Development in this category includes both farm and non-farm residential uses, farms and recreational and institutional uses. This category provides for areas of large-lot residential development. This residential category allows for densities of up to 1.0 dwelling unit per acre (du/ac). Residences in the Rural category are characterized by single-family detached homes on large lots of one acre or more.

Very Low Density Residential, VLDR (0 – 1.0 dwelling units per acre)

 This category provides for areas of large-lot residential development. This residential category allows for densities of up to 1.0 dwelling unit per acre (du/ac). Residences in the VLDR category are characterized by single-family detached homes on large lots of one acre or more.

This land use is generally located outside of the developed area of Gila Bend, where access to public facilities and services is limited. Areas impacted by the Gila River floodplain are also suitable for the low density development envisioned for this land use category.

Low Density Residential, LDR (1.0 – 5.0 dwelling units per acre)

 This category provides for areas where low density residential development is desired. This residential category allows for densities between 1.0 and 5.0 du/ac with lot sizes in excess of 7,000 square feet. Residences in the LDR category are generally characterized by one to two story single-family detached homes on large and medium sized lots. Single-family homes in the LDR category may include modular and manufactured homes on lots greater than 7,000 square feet.

Residential lots in this category may also be clustered if the goal of clustering is to protect open space or sensitive natural features. Appropriate locations for the LDR category include areas of the community where public facilities and services have existing or planned capacity to serve residences, in areas to transition from lower to higher density residential uses, and in areas where similar types of housing currently exist.

Medium Density Residential, MDR (5.0 – 10.0 dwelling units per acre)

 This category provides for areas of the community where higher residential densities are desired. This residential category allows for a range of densities from 5.0 – 10.0 du/ac. Housing types in this category could include housing types typically included in low density residential developments as well as townhouses, patio homes, and two and four-unit buildings.

MDR development may act as a buffer between low and high density residential development. Appropriate locations for MDR land uses include those areas of the community where public facilities have the capacity to serve residences and where similar types of housing currently exist.

High Density Residential, HDR (10.0 – 18.0 dwelling units per acre)

 This category provides for areas of multi-family residential development. This residential category allows for densities of up to 18.0 du/ac. This category is characterized by apartments and condominiums.

Appropriate locations for HDR land uses generally occur in those areas of the community where planned public facilities such as water, sewer, parks and streets are appropriately sized to accommodate HDR uses, and where planned or existing adjacent land uses are compatible with high-density residential uses.

Recreational Vehicle, RV (9.0 – 11.0 dwelling units per acre)

 This category provides for recreational vehicle parks. A recreational vehicle is a portable structure without permanent foundation, which can be towed, hauled or driven and is primarily designed as temporary living accommodation for recreational, camping and travel use and including but not limited to travel trailers, truck campers, camping trailers and self-propelled motor homes.

Appropriate locations for RV uses include high visibility areas where adequate vehicular access, water and sewer service exists or can be provided.

Commercial Land Use Categories**Neighborhood Business, NB**

 This commercial category provides for the development of smaller scale commercial areas serving adjacent neighborhoods. These uses provide for the sale of convenience goods as well as personal and business services for the day-to-day needs of the residents in the immediate neighborhood.

These uses usually draw anywhere from a distance that can be easily walked in five (5) minutes to areas within approximately one to one and a half miles, depending upon the density and character of the residential area. These uses can also be found within a more central area of a neighborhood.

The range of goods and services offered will generally be limited to convenience food stores, small professional offices, personal services, and public buildings.

Businesses will be designed to be aesthetically compatible with the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Business sites would generally range from less than one acre to three acres in size. Neighborhood Business uses are typically located between residential areas and more intensive commercial uses or along major thoroughfares, and are usually smaller than 50,000 square feet in area.

General Business, GB



This commercial category is established to accommodate a wide variety of businesses in the Town of Gila Bend. The General Business category encompasses the entire range of retail and service commercial activities including motels, auto dealerships, grocery stores, restaurants, offices, service stations that will serve the region, immediate community and the tourist/traveler trade.

Industrial Land Use Categories

Business Park, BP



This category provides for the development of areas where a mix of light industrial, office showrooms, retail sales and offices could be located. The Business Park area will allow the assembly of components manufactured off-site and the sale of these products after they are assembled on-site. Offices specifically related to the business are permitted on-site.

Light Industrial, LI



This category provides for employment uses such as warehousing, assembly and storage. Assembly of products should occur in an enclosed building from parts manufactured off-site. Warehouse distribution and sale of products assembled on-site would be allowed.

Heavy Industrial, HI



This category provides for the development of areas where businesses, because of the nature of their manufacturing or storage operations (highly volatile substances), appearance, traffic generation or other conditions may not be compatible with residential or retail, commercial, or business park land uses, or do not require visibility from arterial streets.

Appropriate land uses in the Heavy Industrial category are characterized by businesses that utilize raw materials to manufacture or fabricate goods on-site. These businesses generally require outdoor storage and proximity to major transportation corridors, accessibility to water and sewer systems and are incompatible with adjacent residential land uses.

Miscellaneous Land Use Categories

Public/Semi-Public, PSP



The Public/Semi-Public category denotes those areas (i.e., airport, recreational, educational and utility facilities) dedicated for public use. Other uses designated for this category include the Town Hall, healthcare, law enforcement and fire protection services. Other areas designated for residential or employment development may be utilized as public/semi-public uses if the proposed use does not negatively infringe upon the health, safety and general welfare of the surrounding area and is appropriately buffered from adjacent land uses.

Parks and Open Space, P/OS



The Parks and Open Space category denotes regional park and open space facilities that will be located within the incorporated area. Although the definitions for park and open space are sometimes used interchangeably, the two designations denote differing, but related uses. A park is a developed parcel of land that includes a variety of active (i.e. baseball/softball diamonds, football/soccer fields, court sports, etc.) and passive (i.e. seating areas, walking paths, view points, etc.) recreation areas. Open space constitutes any space or area whose existing openness or natural condition if retained, would maintain or enhance the conservation of natural or scenic resources and/or reduce adverse impacts from development.

Bureau of Land Management, BLM

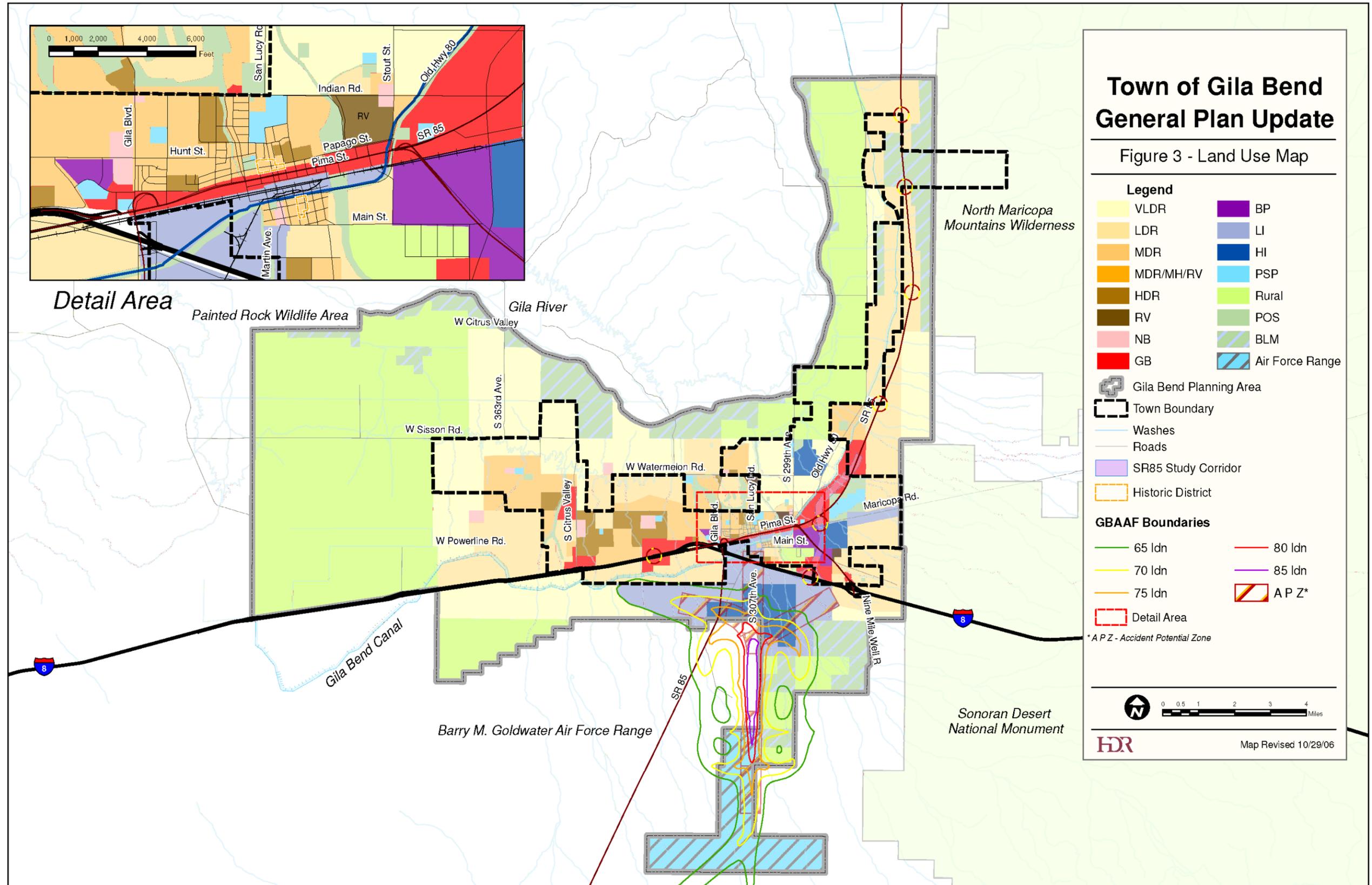


This category denotes BLM land within the planning area. BLM lands comprise nine percent of the Town's planning area. The BLM currently leases land to various local agencies, organizations, districts, and governments for recreation and public purposes.

Air Force Range



This category represents the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range. The Gila Bend AFAF is located within the planning area, approximately four miles south of the Town's incorporated area. While the Air Force plans for these lands, the Town is committed to land use planning in the vicinity of the Gila Bend AFAF that is consistent with the JLUS Recommendations.



GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT PROCESS

Major Plan Amendment

A major amendment to the General Plan will be accepted by the Town starting January 1st of each year and shall be considered by the Town Council at its meeting in April of each year. A major amendment shall be approved by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the Town Council (A.R.S. § 9-461.06 (G)).

The Plan Amendment process shall include a review, analysis, findings and recommendation for approval, denial or modification by Town Staff to the Town Council.

A major amendment is any proposal that meets any one of these criteria:

- A request for the introduction of a new land use category or a change to the intensities or densities of existing land use categories.
- A request to change the designation of any non-residential parcel of 40-acres or more to a residential land use.
- A request that would result in a contiguous developed area greater than one hundred-sixty acres not in conformance with the General Plan Land Use Map.

Text Amendments

Text changes to this 2006 Plan shall be considered major amendments if the Town Manager determines they are in conflict with, eliminate, alter or misconstrue the intent of any goal or objective. Text changes that change a policy or policies may be considered minor amendments if the goals and objectives are not directly or indirectly affected. Any change in the description of a residential land use category described in the General Plan that alters the intensity or density of allowable development in that category.

It should be noted that a designation of a proposal as a “major amendment” essentially affects the processing of the proposal and does not directly relate to the merits of the proposal.

Minor Plan Amendment

Any change that does not meet the above criteria defining “major” amendments shall be considered a minor amendment that can be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council in accordance with the regularly scheduled process as prescribed by the Arizona Revised Statutes.

Major and Minor General Plan Amendment Considerations

The recommendation to the Planning and Zoning Commission and Town Council prepared for each request for a major, minor or text amendment to the General Plan shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of how the proposed amendment furthers the goals of the General Plan and the following topical areas:

Water: How will the proposed amendment impact current and future water supplies?

Circulation: How will the proposed amendment impact the existing transportation system?

What is the extent to which new roads, non-vehicular transportation facilities and access and egress proposed as part of the development contributes to the Town's planned vehicular and non-vehicular transportation system and trails?

Open Space and Environment: What is the impact of the proposed amendment on the natural environment and open spaces identified in the Plan?

Recreation: What is the impact of the proposed amendment on recreation facilities and parks identified in the Plan?

Cost of Development: Does the proposed amendment affect the Town's ability to maintain its current level of service? Will this request require the Town to provide additional services?

Sewer: How will the proposed amendment impact current and future sewer capacities?

No rezoning requiring a General Plan amendment shall be considered by Town Council until a date after the General Plan amendment.

Circulation Element

Introduction

Gila Bend's setting at the junction of I-8 and SR 85 make it an important location for regional travel in the state. Currently, traffic traveling between SR 85 and I-8 use Pima Street. Private development plans introduced for the community as well as ADOT's plans to re-align SR 85 provide major circulation considerations and opportunities for the community.

Existing Conditions

Gila Bend is located approximately 65 miles southwest of the Phoenix metropolitan area. It is positioned along SR 85, which connects I-10 approximately 30 miles north of the community, with I-8, which bisects the community.

Recent annexations and planned developments make it critical that Gila Bend consider the development of a street system that ties these newly annexed areas and planned developments into a cohesive whole. The continuation of the Town's grid network as development occurs will ensure connectivity of new development with the Town core.

The Principal Arterials are all Federal and/or State highways and are maintained by ADOT. Current traffic is relatively unimpeded on these arterials. These roads typically consist of 110 to 200 feet of right-of-way with either a three or five lane cross section. Major intersections should be signalized, if warranted.

The Minor Arterials and Major and Minor Collectors are under the jurisdiction of the Town with their maintenance the responsibility of the Town. The Collectors provide linkages between the arterials and provide access to private residences and commercial areas. These roadways should have a right-of-way of 60 to 80 feet and have a paved section of 50 to 66 feet.



The SR 85 bypass route will connect I-8 with SR 85 on the eastern end of town. The purple-shaded area indicates the draft alignment corridor.
Source: ADOT Design Concept Report (2005).

State Route 85

SR 85 connects I-8 in Gila Bend to I-10 in Buckeye. This 37-mile corridor is classified as a principal arterial highway on the National Highway System. SR 85 is utilized by travelers with destinations such as Buckeye, Gila Bend, and Yuma. Traffic volumes on SR 85 are expected to double in less than 20 years.

Planning is underway to improve this route. Ultimately SR 85 between Gila Bend and the Gila River will be a fully access controlled rural divided highway with access control being achieved through the use of interchanges connected with frontage roads and/or a backbone roadway network.

Once improvements are completed, SR 85 between Gila Bend and the Gila River will operate as a rural divided highway with at-grade intersections in the interim condition. Generally, frontage roads will not be constructed. During this interim period, at-grade intersections with appropriate acceleration/deceleration lanes will be limited to locations of future interchanges. The at-grade intersections will require the cross road traffic to stop, allowing SR 85 to continue as a free-flow condition. Future developments will be encouraged to provide access to the future interchange locations.

Pima Street

Changes proposed for SR 85 will alleviate traffic along Pima Street in the future. The Land Use Plan anticipates that Pima Street will continue to be the commercial center of the Town. There is an opportunity in the future to rethink the role and character of this street through the heart of the Town. The existing 80 – 100' right-of-way provides sufficient width for a pedestrian-oriented three-lane street (one lane in either direction with a continuous center turn lane) with on-street parallel parking and landscaping.

Aviation Facilities

The Gila Bend Municipal Airport serves the Gila Bend area and Maricopa County and is owned by the Town of Gila Bend. The paved runway extends 5,200 feet. The facility is at a distance of about 2 miles from Gila Bend. The Gila Bend Airport is located in the eastern portion of the Town and is at an elevation of 778 feet. In the year 2006, more than 11,000 operations were reported.

This General Plan is consistent with the recommendations and policies identified in the Gila Bend Airport Master Plan, which is incorporated here by reference. Land surrounding the airport is identified as Parks and Open Space due to deed restrictions.

Table 5 Gila Bend Municipal Airport Aircraft Data

<i>Operations (reported)</i>	<i>Yearly Avg.</i>	<i>Daily</i>
General Aviation transient	3000	8
General Aviation Local	8000	22
Air Taxi	0	0
Commercial	0	0
Military	50	0

Functional Classification System Characteristics

The functional classification characteristics describe the service performed, typical trip lengths, access control and continuity of the Gila Bend roadway system. For transportation system planning, as well as specific design purposes, roadways are most effectively classified by function.

Roadways have two basic functions:

- To provide mobility from point to point.
- To provide access to adjacent land uses.

Roadway function establishes the type of transportation service that is provided. Directly related to the type of transportation service provided is the degree of access control. Increasing control of access allows traffic to travel in a more uniform manner, allowing design speeds to be increased. Table 4, Functional Classification System, illustrates the relationship between a roadway categories' primary function and the degree of access control.

Table 6 Functional Classification System

<i>Street Category</i>	<i>Right of Way</i>	<i>Primary Function</i>	<i>Degree of Private Access Control</i>
<i>Principal Arterial Street</i>	100'-200'	Mobility	Very High
<i>Minor Arterial Street</i>	84'-100'	Mobility	High
<i>Collector Street</i>	70'-84'	Mobility/Accessibility	Moderate
<i>Local Street</i>	60'	Transition Accessibility	None

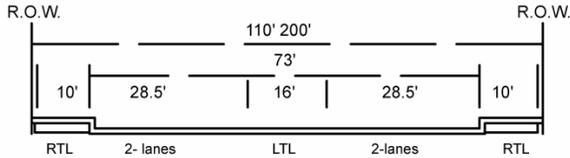
Source: Town of Gila Bend General Plan Update (1996).

The Functional Classification System categories comprise the hierarchy of functional roadway classes in Gila Bend and directly relate to the types and lengths of generated trips. Gila Bend's functional street classes, their associated right-of-way, primary function and degree of access control are shown in Table 6 Functional Classification System. Standard Detail Street Sections for each category are shown on the following pages.

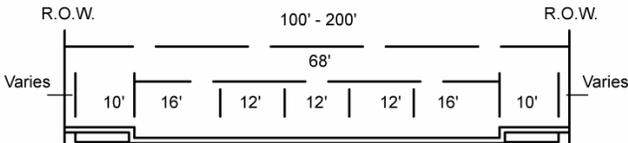
The alignments shown on the Town of Gila Bend Circulation Map will serve as a guide in creating the desired routes. Future alignments are shown along section lines or other established routes. Traffic impact studies may be required of development proposals to demonstrate that the project provides adequate circulation for the project and surrounding area. The final alignments may change based upon completion of the required engineering for the proposed alignment. However, the alignment must continue to promote the overall goal of creating a continuous east/west or north/south route.

Figure 4 Standard Detail Street Sections

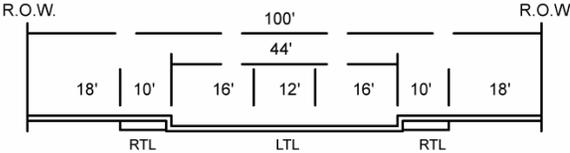
Principal Arterial
 Roadways serving inter-regional travel (I-8, Butterfield Trail, SR 85)



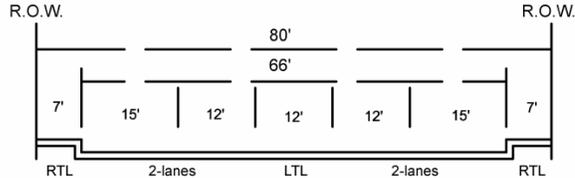
Minor Arterial (5 lane)
 A 5-lane undivided urban/rural section (no parking) with wide outside lanes for turning vehicles and bicycles



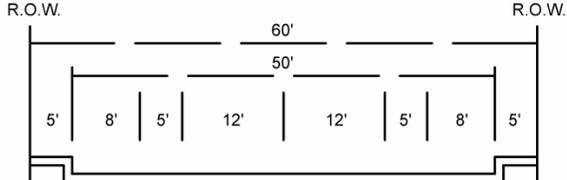
Minor Arterial (3 lane)
 A 3-lane undivided urban/rural section (no parking) with wide outside lanes for turning vehicles and bicycles



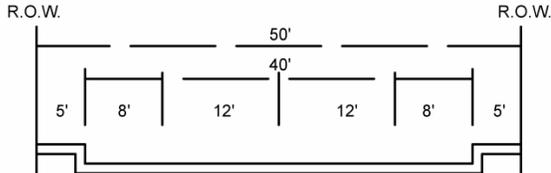
Major Collector
 A 5-lane undivided (no parking) roadway



Urban Collector
 A 2-lane undivided roadway with striped bicycle lanes and parallel parking



Local Street
 A 2-lane residential roadway or cul-de-sac urban section (parking permitted)



Note: These dimensions are presented as a guide, actual requirements may vary.

Planning Issues

The circulation plan for Gila Bend ties planned development into the existing grid street pattern. The circulation plan also incorporates the realignment of SR 85 and ideas for rethinking the role of Pima Street in the Town's future.

- Use of the adopted road standards for different classifications of roadways will allow consistent decisions with regard to required improvements.
- Developing a multi-use trail that takes advantage of the Gila Bend Canal and existing wash corridors to create an off-street trail tying together existing and planned residential development with destinations in the Town core.
- The flat relatively flat terrain of Gila Bend allows for the major circulation routes to follow a grid pattern.
- The proposed realignment of SR 85 provides an opportunity for greater employment uses along its length.
- Major interchanges every two miles along SR 85 in the northern portion of the Town are well situated to develop local serving commercial uses.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

GOAL 12 Develop a safe, convenient, and efficient circulation system to transport both people and goods to, and through the Town.

Objective: Continue to develop and maintain a municipal street system that provides appropriate access to all land uses, protects the integrity of Gila Bend neighborhoods and non-residential areas, encourages appropriate infill development, and promotes systematic, orderly municipal growth.

Policy: The Town shall encourage the development of a system of local, collector and arterial streets that provide efficient movement from residential areas to major activity centers without impacting neighborhood integrity or safety.

Policy: The Town shall establish on a regular basis, a needs assessment, which identifies street improvement projects, estimates costs, establishes timing, and identifies revenue sources for implementation.

Objective: Encourage development patterns which will improve the operational and efficiency of existing and future transportation system.

Policy: The Town shall encourage commercial services to locate adjacent to arterial roadways and low-density residential developments to locate away from arterial roadway intersections.

Policy: Require the construction of new street system segments on an orderly basis in coordination with the General Plan and new development.

Policy: The Town shall encourage efficient and creative street design in all new development.

Policy: The Town shall utilize land use intensity and density to determine acceptable levels of roadway capacity (by requiring traffic impact analysis for new development).

GOAL 13 Encourage the use of alternate modes, including non-motorized transportation.

Objective: Increase the use of alternative modes of transportation.

Policy: The Town shall coordinate with adjacent communities and the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) to initiate public transportation service.

Policy: The Town shall explore alternative methods (i.e., shuttle service) to provide transportation service to Phoenix for local residents.

Objective: Promote the use of non-motorized transportation throughout the community

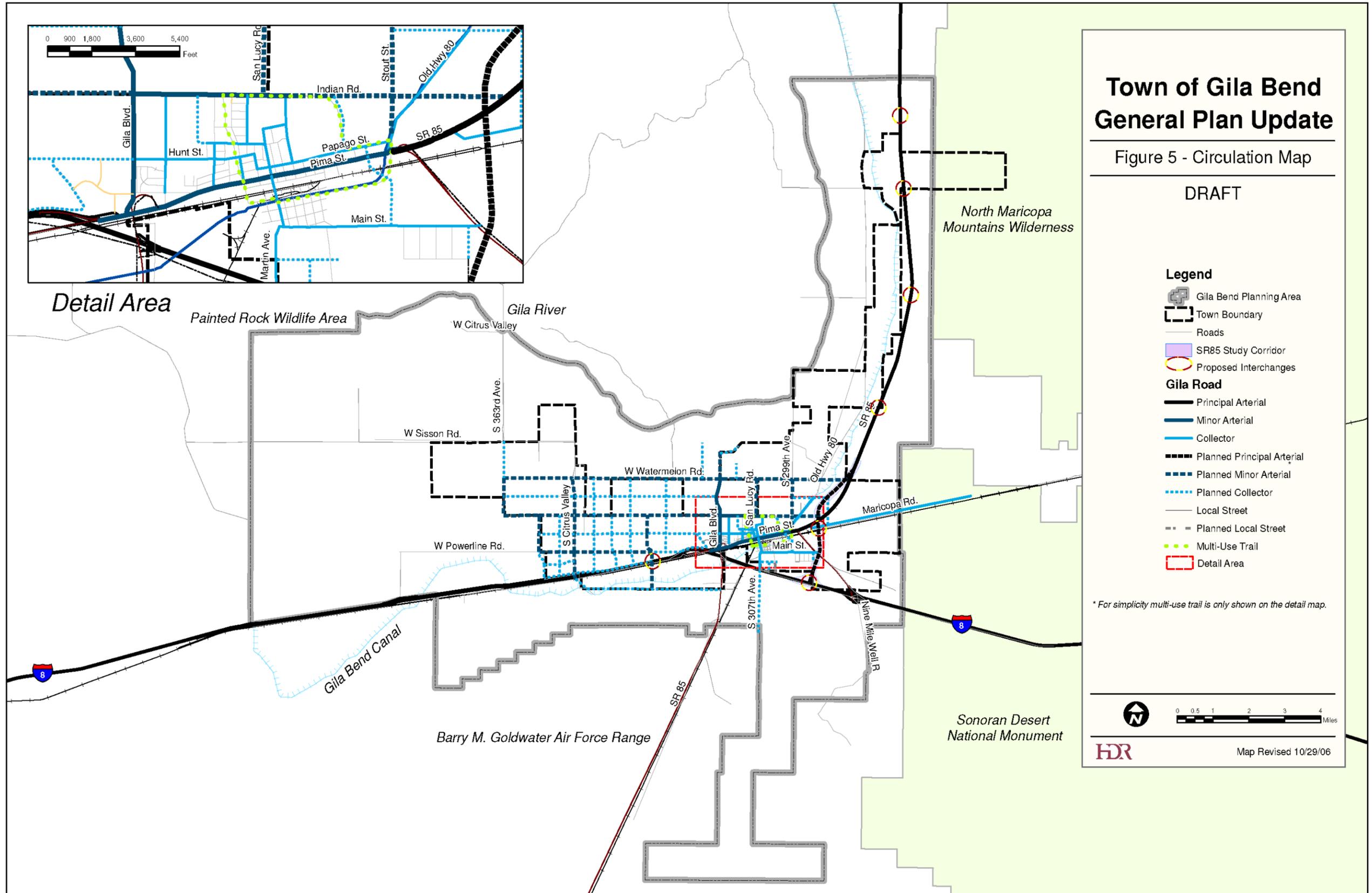
Policy: The Town shall utilize the General Plan to identify a local bicycle system in the community.

Policy: The Town shall require all proposed developments to include a trails plan that allows for off-street internal circulation and connections to regional trails as appropriate.

GOAL 14 Support the development of the Gila Bend Municipal Airport.

Objective: Continue to develop and upgrade the Gila Bend Municipal Airport, consistent with the Gila Bend Municipal Airport General Plan, to provide expanded access and enhanced economic development opportunities.

Policy: The Town shall continue to utilize all state and federal resources to upgrade the Gila Bend Municipal Airport to serve existing and future aviation-related needs.



Public Facilities and Services Element

Introduction

The Public Facilities and Services element of the General Plan lays out the Town's goals, objectives and policies with regard to the provision of infrastructure, public safety, parks and recreation, and municipal services to serve Town residents.

Existing Conditions

The Public Facilities and Services section discusses water, wastewater, parks and recreation, and public safety facilities and services.

Water System

Gila Bend receives all its potable municipal water from four municipal wells (Wells #4, 5, 6, and 7). Well #4 is dedicated to irrigation and construction. The wells have a combined capacity of approximately one million gallons per day (gpd); although the addition of one million gallons of storage (to be completed spring 2006) will double capacity. The well water is treated via reverse osmosis filtration. Currently, there are approximately 2.7 miles of transmission mains greater than 12-inch diameter.

The current Gila Bend municipal water system components include three wells and two reservoirs both with a capacity of one million gallons. Water is treated by a reverse osmosis plant. The Water Department operations include three vehicles.

Table 7 Water Demand Factors

<i>Current System Capacity (gallons per day)</i>	1,000,000
Average Gallons per Day of Demand	
Residential	300,000-800,000
Commercial	100,000-500,000
Total Average Daily Demand	800,000
Number of Customers	
Residential	800
Commercial	23
Total Customers	823

Wastewater System

The wastewater plant is located along Watermelon Road in the northwest quadrant of section 26. The facility has a capacity of 750,000 gpd, with active wetlands. Current treatment flows are in the vicinity of 150,000 gpd. Today, the Gila Bend Wastewater system has an excess capacity of approximately 180,000 gallons. At a conservative demand of 200 gpd for typical single-family residential uses, an additional 900 units can be served. Total plant capacity is estimated at 1,650 residential units (or an equivalent sum of non-residential uses).

The Merrill-Paloma Ranch has a phasing plan that identifies an anticipated 60,000 dwelling units at build-out. The development agreement reached with the Town specifies a number of different private and public options for the provision of wastewater and other infrastructure. Additional information may be found in the Development Agreement Merrill-Paloma Ranch, dated April 27, 2004.

Parks and Recreation

The Town of Gila Bend is set amongst an abundance of open space. Large areas of land owned by Federal and State entities and floodplains contribute to the Town’s substantial inventory of open space. To the north of Gila Bend are the Gila Bend Mountains and the Woolsey Peak Wilderness Area; to the east is the Sonoran Desert National Monument and the Maricopa Mountains.

At this time the Gila River is not a destination in Gila Bend, but may one day serve as a major attraction for Gila Bend residents and visitors alike. The Town has over twenty-five miles of Gila River shoreline which makes up the towns western and northern border. Projects like the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area, Rio Oeste, and Tres Rios projects are only several examples of riparian restoration projects that have rehabilitated riparian habitats while adding to a regions economic development.



The Town of Gila Bend Community Center is home to the Senior Center as well as the Gila Bend Branch Library and Community Park.

The Gila Bend Senior Center, operated out of the Community Center (described below) provides meals to seniors aged 60 years and older; aged 18-59 with disabilities and long-term care needs. The center offers health screenings and presentations, activities, and exercise programs each month.

The City has approximately 28 acres of community-wide parks, excluding smaller neighborhood parks. A common level of service standard for park space, endorsed by the National Parks and Recreation Association is three acres of community parks for every 1,000 persons. Gila Bend’s park inventory of 28 acres will, therefore, support a population of 9,333 persons.

As development projects are proposed for the community it is important to consider the recreation amenities that they provide – as well as opportunities to provide non-motorized access between recreation amenities and destinations.

Parks and recreation facilities in Gila Bend include the following facilities:

Community Center Park



Location: Euclid and Hunt Street.
Size: Seven acres.
Amenities: The Community Center park consists of a ballfield, basketball court, playing field, ramadas and picnic tables, and a large playground area. The site is also home to the Community Center and Library building (described below).

Gila Bend Branch Library



Location: Euclid and Hunt Street
Size: 2,108 square feet.
Amenities: Approximately 20,000 volumes. The Gila Bend Branch Library is part of the Maricopa County Library District. The branch's bi-lingual collection features books, videos, and internet accessible public computers, and bi-lingual programming.

Rotary Centennial Park



Location: Martin Avenue and Locke Street.
Size: Two acres.
Amenities: Ramada, picnic tables, barbecue stands, playground equipment, lights, basketball court, and a (proposed) Little League field and restrooms.

Burleson Park



Location: Indian Road and Logan Avenue.
Size: Six acres.
Amenities: Ramadas and playing field adjacent to Municipal Pool (see below).
Note: The playing field and tennis courts located immediately north of them are the property of the Gila Bend Elementary School.

 Burleson Park area

Municipal Pool



Location: Indian Road and Logan Avenue.
Size: 5,000 sq. ft.
Amenities: Swimming pool, facilities building with changing rooms, restrooms, and showers.

Heritage Park



Location: Indian Rd, and St. Louis Ave.
Size: Seven acres.
Amenities: Playing fields.

Rodeo Grounds



Location: ½ mile east of Town Core off of Old Hwy 80.
Size: Seven acres.
Amenities: Rodeo facilities with lights, spectator seating, ample parking.

Shooting Range



Location: South of Wood Road off SR 85.
Size: 40 acres.
Amenities: Target stands (at 25, 100, 200, 300, 400 and 500 yards), dirt berms (at similar distances), steel gongs (at 200, 300, 400, 500 and 600 yards), and wood target frames are available.

Police

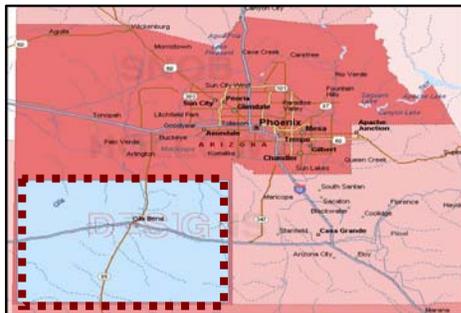
Gila Bend has an agreement with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department to provide law enforcement services for the Gila Bend area. This contract is for approximately \$340,000 per year and provides two police cars with the necessary equipment and officers to patrol a single police beat.

The Town wishes to start its own police force within the next five to ten years. A large public safety facility would not be needed in the near term. According to the Sheriff's Department, communities of similar size require five patrol cars to provide around-the-clock coverage.

Fire



Engine 381 is the largest vehicle in the Gila Bend Fire Department fleet, grossing over 50,000 pounds.



The Gila Bend Fire Department's response area is approximately 1/3 of Maricopa County.

The Gila Bend Fire Department is an all volunteer department that serves the Town of Gila Bend as well as the surrounding area. The Gila Bend Fire Station is comprised of 2,400 square feet of building area. The Fire Department maintains 13 active vehicles. An early fire truck, Engine 1 (a 1915 Robinson pumper) was purchased from Globe in 1940, can be seen at the "Hall of Flame Museum " in Phoenix.

The Gila Bend Fire Department's primary response area is within the corporate limits of the town. However the Fire Department holds a certificate of need from the Maricopa County Health department that covers an area west to the Yuma county line, south to the Pima county line, east to the Pinal county line and north to a line running east and west thru milepost 135 on highway 85 North. The Fire Department also has a mutual aid agreement with the GBAAF.

Based on the size of Gila Bend and its current fire service facilities, the community has excess capacity to serve additional homes and businesses within a five-minute response time.

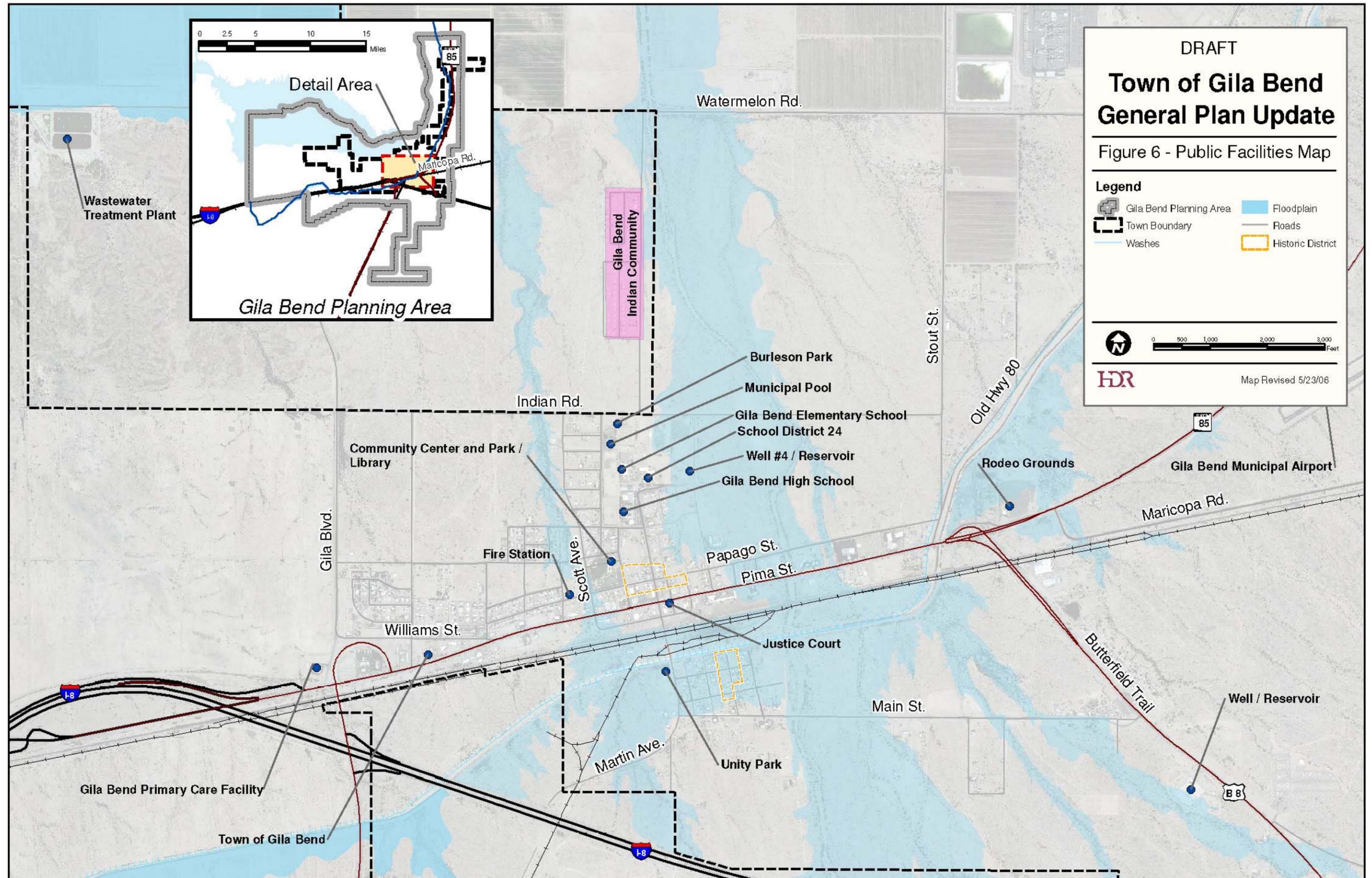
As additional residences and businesses are built in Gila Bend the Fire Department will need to grow as well to maintain an adequate response time. Development in any of the outlying areas of the planning area will require the Town to consider response times and the potential for a second fire station or auxiliary facility.

Emergency Services

The Town of Gila Bend provides Basic and Advanced Life support services year-round. The Town's ambulance service is comprised of several ambulances, EMT's and Paramedics serving approximately 2,400 square miles and 6,000 residents. The service area extends from Gila Bend and includes 30 miles west to Sentinel, 30 miles east on Interstate-8 to the Maricopa County line, and 14 miles north and 32 miles south on State Route 85. Backup emergency services are provided by the Towns of Buckeye and Ajo. This service area was established in conjunction with the Arizona Department of Health Services through a Certificate of Necessity (CON) during the early 1980s. There are no other ambulance service provider's operating in the area.



The Gila Bend Fire and Rescue Ambulance.



Planning Issues

Major public facilities and services issues to be addressed include:

- Expanded healthcare and emergency services for the community.
- General locations for public facilities to serve new and existing residents need to be identified.
- A plan for establishing cost-effective law enforcement protection for the Town.
- Expand and upgrade fire protection facilities including future facilities south of the Southern Pacific Rail Road.
- The need for a comprehensive storm drainage program to minimize flooding problems.
- Relocation of the Town Hall and Council Chambers to a new municipal campus.
- The establishment of a new and expanded History Museum.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

GOAL 15 Establish a functional, efficient and cost-effective system of public facilities and services

Objective: Develop public facilities which are adequate in terms of services offered, location and size at a reasonable per capita cost for acquisition, development, operation and maintenance.

Policy: The Town shall encourage the extension of wastewater facilities in an orderly, planned and cost effective manner.

Policy: The Town shall require private developers to install all public utilities and facilities to state and municipal standards.

Objective: Continue to develop and maintain an adequate, efficient and economically viable wastewater system to provide safe disposal of liquid waste from homes, businesses and industrial sites.

Policy: The Town shall encourage development in areas where public services and facilities exist or can be extended in the most cost-effective and efficient manner.

Policy: The Town shall actively seek to utilize all local, regional, state and federal resources to improve and upgrade the existing sanitary sewer system.

Policy: The Town shall require that all residential, commercial and industrial structures within the Town limits be connected to the municipal wastewater system.

Objective: Continue to develop and maintain a safe and plentiful water supply system to service the community.

Policy: The Town shall ensure that an adequate supply of potable water is treated and delivered to all municipal users.

Policy: The Town shall require that all water lines be standardized to ensure adequate water pressure and fire flows.

GOAL 16 High quality educational opportunities and facilities.

Objective: Encourage the continuation of a high quality educational system offering a full range of educational opportunities for residents of Gila Bend.

Policy: The Town shall explore with the Gila Bend School District and Paloma School District the development and use of joint educational and recreational facilities.

GOAL 17 A parks and recreation system that meets the current and future needs of residents.

Objective: Improve and expand existing parks and public open space in proximity to residential areas.

Policy: The Town shall prepare a Parks and Open Space Plan to guide the improvement and expansion of existing parks and recommend the construction of new parks.

Policy: The Town shall establish criteria and standards to upgrade existing parks and provide new parks in accordance with the Parks and Open Space Plan.

Objective: Develop new park facilities and public open space as determined by population growth, composition and user demand.

Policy: The Town shall promote the development of parks in areas where existing facilities do not meet the needs of the neighborhoods.

Policy: The Town shall promote school/park facilities joint use for recreational opportunities.

Policy: The Town shall promote participation by the private sector in the dedication of park lands and the construction of open space, and park and recreational facilities in coordination with private development.

Objective: Develop regional recreational facilities to aid tourism and improve the quality of life for residents.

Policy: The Town shall explore the feasibility of developing a golf course to serve both the residents and the tourist trade.

Policy: The Town shall consider increased utilization of its existing recreational facilities and archaeological/historical resources.

Policy: The Town shall identify natural drainage washes to create a lineal open space corridor linking residential and community facility land uses.

GOAL 18 Continue to provide a safe and peaceful living environment for Gila Bend residents and visitors

Objective: Provide adequate law enforcement protection within the Town of Gila Bend.

Policy: The Town shall encourage the cooperation of San Lucy District of the Tohono O'odham Nation, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

and the Arizona Department of Public Safety with the Town of Gila Bend to provide an effective network of public safety services.

Policy: The Town shall investigate the provision of a local police force to serve the residents of Gila Bend.

Objective: Provide adequate fire protection to protect residents and property.

Policy: The Town shall encourage coordination between the Fire Department and future development at locations where the existing and planned level of fire protection will adequately serve both the population and programmed community facilities.

Policy: Promote the personal safety of residents as an integral element in the development of site plans and construction documents.

Policy: The Town shall continually update its zoning regulations and building codes to meet accepted fire insurance requirements.

Policy: The Town shall make efforts to improve its insurance rating through the provision of adequate service to its residents.

Policy: The Town shall continue to support training for volunteer fire fighters in order to maintain a certified corps of fire fighters in the Town.

Objective: Expand healthcare facilities to ensure that adequate and efficient service is available to all residents.

Policy: The Town shall work with the Gila Bend Primary Care Center to ensure that adequate medical personnel and equipment are available to serve the needs of the community.

Policy: The Town shall work with the Gila Bend Primary Care Center to minimize the need for residents to rely on Buckeye and Phoenix area medical facilities and staff.

Policy: The Town shall continue to support reliable, stable and functional ambulance service for Town residents through public and/or private enterprise

GOAL 19 Provide fire and emergency services protection that meet or exceed the NFPA standards

Policy: Identify the Fire Department's objectives and programs.

Policy: Continue to involve the Fire Department in land-use decisions that impact fire protection, prevention, and emergency medical services.

Policy: Ensure there is adequate fire protection and emergency medical services availability for future annexations.

Policy: Maintain or obtain equipment and facilities to meet NFPA standards.

Policy: Review requirements for personnel, equipment, and fire stations on an annual basis (at a minimum).

Policy: Provide community-wide fire and emergency safety education and prevention programs, inspections, and fire code enforcement.

Policy: Maintain and update Fire Protection and Emergency Medical Services Master Plan.

Housing Element

Introduction

The Housing Element provides for the improvement of housing quality, variety, and affordability. It is also designed to provide for the housing needs of all segments of the community regardless of ethnicity, income or disability.

Providing safe, decent, affordable housing is critical for the well-being of individuals, families, neighborhoods, and the community as a whole. A number of factors will combine in the coming years to increase demand for affordable housing: 1) approximately one-quarter of Gila Bend's population is by definition in poverty; 2) 46 percent of housing units in Gila Bend will be 50 years old or older by the year 2010; 3) Gila Bend's economy is primarily based in trade and services, which are associated with lower wage jobs; and 5) housing needs for the elderly will increase tremendously over the next several decades as the baby boom generation moves into the retirement years. Population trends are important indicators of future housing needs.

Some important population trends include increases over time in target populations such as the elderly, near homeless, single-parent households, and non-family households. These growing population segments, which have historically used affordable housing, show the need for a variety of affordable housing options.

Gila Bend housing needs are more reflective of many rural areas of the State than they are of Maricopa County averages. The median age is much younger than that of the County, and more than half the population is of working age. And while household sizes are larger on average than Maricopa County, median household incomes are lower.

Existing Conditions

The percentage of owner-occupied housing units in Gila Bend (58 percent) is somewhat lower than that of Maricopa County as a whole (67.5 percent). Nationally, the home ownership rate (defined as the number of units that are owner-occupied divided by the number of units occupied as primary residences) was relatively stable, around 64 percent, but increased significantly after 1995 and is now at 68.6 percent. While Gila Bend is lower than the County and National rates, the percentage of owner-occupied units in Gila Bend has increased significantly from the 50 percent reported in 1990.

Table 8 Housing Units and Tenure

Number of Housing Units	766	
Occupied	659	86%
Owner-occupied	384	58.3%
Renter-occupied	275	41.7%
Vacant	107	14%
Seasonal/Recreational/Occasional use		2.3%

Source: US Census (2000).

The housing vacancy rate in Gila Bend of 14 percent is significantly higher than that of Maricopa County (9.4 percent).

Gila Bend residents reported a longer tenure in the Town, with slightly more than 57 percent reporting they lived in the same residence since 1995, compared to only 42 percent of Maricopa County residents (US Census, 2000).

Housing Inventory

Table 9 Gila Bend and Maricopa County Housing Types

	<i>Gila Bend</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Maricopa County</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single-family, detached	397	53.7%	739,330	59.1%
Single-family, attached	4	0.5%	81,868	6.5%
Duplex	22	3.0%	14,733	1.2%
Multi-family	78	10.6%	317,328	25.4%
Mobile home	217	29.4%	90,494	7.2%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	21	2.8%	6,478	0.5%
Total	739	100.0%	1,250,231	100.0%

Source: US Census (2000).

Table 9 shows that the majority of housing units in Gila Bend are single-family detached (53.7 percent), only slightly lower than that of Maricopa County. Only 10.6 percent of Gila Bend's housing units are multi-family, compared to Maricopa County where over 25 percent of the units are multi-family. Manufactured homes also make up a large proportion of Gila Bend housing (29.4 percent) compared to Maricopa County (7.2 percent).

As can be seen from Table 10, three-quarters of Gila Bend's housing units (75 percent) were built prior to 1980.

Table 10 Permitted Housing Units in Gila Bend

<i>Built Date</i>	<i>Permitted Units</i>	<i>Percent of Total Housing Units</i>
1999 to March 2000	18	2%
1995 to 1998	33	4%
1990 to 1994	12	2%
1980 to 1989	123	17%
1970 to 1979	212	29%
1960 to 1969	116	16%
1950 to 1959	107	14%
1940 to 1949	73	10%
1939 or earlier	45	6%
Total	739	

Source: Arizona Regional Multiple Listing Service (2006).



Figure 15 High-end custom homes such as this one located off Butterfield Trail in Gila Bend are becoming more common.

(four times as many units sold as the same period last year) with a median sales price of \$78,500.

The median housing value in Gila Bend for owner-occupied housing is \$55,900. This is approximately 43 percent of the Maricopa County median housing value (\$129,200). New homes coming on the market in Gila Bend are priced significantly higher than the median housing value noted above. For the third quarter of 2005, there were two home sales reported in Gila Bend with an average sales price of \$100,500. During the first quarter of 2006, ten home sales were reported

There are numerous vacant lots within the incorporated area of Gila Bend. Most of these lots have adjacent infrastructure (streets, electricity, gas, water and wastewater) already in place. It is important to recognize that these vacant lots offer an ideal opportunity to promote infill development. The Town should investigate the possibility of acquiring a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to buy land, extend utilities and pay closing or down payment costs to enable low-income households to buy into the community at affordable prices. Programs are already in place to assist communities in taking advantage of these funds (such as Neighborhood Housing Services of Southwest Maricopa County, whose service area includes the Town of Gila Bend).

Summary of Housing Characteristics

Gila Bend's diverse population of young families, active adults, and retirees requires an equally diverse mix of housing types. Single-family detached housing still represents the American ideal of home ownership, and a range of single-family housing styles should be offered to accommodate a range of family types and incomes. Multi-family housing generally offers a lower housing cost and flexibility for people not yet ready for home ownership, unable to meet the financial commitment, or uninterested in the maintenance and upkeep of private home ownership.

The lack of multi-family housing in Gila Bend (only 22 units), which often represents affordable housing in a community, is offset somewhat by the number of affordable manufactured homes that are available in Gila Bend. It should be noted, however, that many of the available manufactured homes in Gila Bend were built prior to June 15, 1976, when the Department of Housing and Urban Development promulgated manufactured housing standards, and are therefore considered substandard.

Housing affordability is directly related to income. In general, the accepted measure for determining affordability is whether a person can afford to pay no more than 25 – 33 percent of the gross household income on housing costs. In Gila Bend, housing

affordability is defined as paying no more than 30 percent of a household’s income for housing costs. According to the 2000 Census data for Gila Bend, 25 percent of renters and 20 percent of homeowners pay 30 percent or more of monthly gross income for housing. A goal of the General Plan should be to address the need for adequate affordable housing for all segments of the population.

Based on the 2000 Census median household income of \$26,895, the maximum affordable monthly housing expense is \$672. Assuming a down-payment of \$10,000, and a 30-year loan with an 8 percent interest rate, a family making the median family income would be able to afford an \$81,600 home, approximately the average cost of all homes sold in the first quarter of 2006 (new and used units).

This Housing Element identifies strategies and programs that focus on: 1) preserving and improving housing and neighborhoods; 2) providing adequate housing sites; 3) assisting in the provision of affordable housing; 4) removing governmental and other constraints to housing investment; and 5) promoting fair and equal housing opportunities.

The following table lists some of the federal and state programs that area available to Gila Bend residents.

Table 11 Housing Assistance Programs

Program Name	Description	Eligible Activities
Federal Programs		
Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) and HOME funds	Flexible grants awarded on a formula basis for housing and/or community development activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquisition • rehabilitation • home buyer assistance • homeless assistance • public services
Section 8 Rental Assistance	Rental assistance payments to owners of private market rate units on behalf of very low-income tenants.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rental assistance
Section 811	Grants to non-profit developers of supportive housing for persons with disabilities, including group homes, independent living facilities and intermediate care facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acquisition • rehabilitation • new construction • rental assistance
Section 203(k)	This program provides a long-term, low interest loan at fixed rate to finance acquisition and rehabilitation of property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • land acquisition • rehabilitation • refinance existing debt
Mortgage Credit Certificate Program	Income tax credits available to first-time homebuyers to buy new or existing singlefamily housing. Local agencies (County) make certificates available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • home buyer assistance

Program Name	Description	Eligible Activities
Low-income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC)	Tax credits are available to persons and corporations that invest in low-income rental housing. Proceeds from sales are typically used to create housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • construction of housing
Farm Labor Housing Loan and Grant	Capital financing for farmworker housing. Loans are for 33 years and 1% interest. Housing grants may cover up to 90% of the development costs of housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • purchase • development • improvement • rehabilitation
Supportive Housing Program (SHP)	Grants for development of supportive housing and support services to assist homeless persons in the transition from homelessness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • transitional housing • housing for the disabled • supportive housing • support services
State Programs		
Neighborhood Housing Services	<p>Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of Southwestern Maricopa County is a partnership of residents, business, and government leaders who develop and promote affordable housing opportunities and other activities designed to revitalize neighborhoods and rural communities.</p> <p>The organization serves the entire Southwest Maricopa County (including Gila Bend)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • housing rehabilitation • infill development • new home construction • manufactured home repair/replacement • fencing loans • septic systems loans • air conditioning and evaporative cooling loans • homebuyer education • financial literacy education • resident leadership development • homeownership case management and counseling
Arizona Fair Housing Act	The purpose of the Act is to take steps to eliminate discrimination in housing because of an individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, handicap or familial status. The Act identifies unlawful housing related practices and establishes a statutory scheme to resolve housing discrimination complaints as the local level in a timely, cost efficient and effective manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refer to the Town of Gila Bend FHA website at www.gilabendaz.org (select "fair housing")

Planning Issues

Housing issues to be addressed include:

- Numerous vacant infill lots are available
- Home ownership rates in Gila Bend are lower than Maricopa County overall
- Older manufactured homes (predating the 1976 HUD standards) may provide sub-standard housing for residents.
- There is a relative lack of multi-family housing in the Town.

Goals, Objectives, and Policies

GOAL 20 Provide decent, safe and sanitary housing for all members of the community.

Objective: Promote housing that is decent, safe and sanitary.

Policy: Consider adopting the most up-to-date national uniform building codes for Gila Bend.

Policy: Develop strategies to ensure that mobile homes (all manufactured housing built prior to June 15, 1976) are in compliance with applicable building and safety codes.

Policy: Seek out programs (such as Neighborhood Housing Services of Southwestern Maricopa County) that will assist low- and moderate-income residents transition to a safer unit when rehabilitation of an existing unit is unfeasible, or rehabilitation will make the unit unaffordable to the current residents.

Policy: The Town shall encourage the construction of affordable, energy-efficient housing.

Objective: Maintain and enhance the existing housing in Gila Bend.

Policy: Encourage and support federal, state, local, and private programs that provide resources for those in need of safe affordable housing.

Policy: In order to maintain existing housing stock in a safe and habitable condition, enforce compliance where code violations exist in residential structures.

Policy: Seek cooperation from local lending institutions in pursuing low-interest loan programs targeted to rehabilitation of and improvements to older residential structures.

Objective: Continue to work with Maricopa County, state and federal government, nonprofit organizations, private developers, and lending institutions, to increase affordable housing opportunities.

Policy: Seek funding for community development need other than housing, such as public facilities, infrastructure improvements, public service, accessibility, etc., when such projects/programs would make the affected neighborhood a safer and more affordable area in which to live.

References

Arizona Department of Commerce, Community Development Division, *Gila Bend Community Profile*, May 2005.

Arizona Department of Commerce; *Luke Air Force Base Auxiliary Field #1 Gila Bend Air force Auxiliary Field / Barry M. Goldwater Range Joint Land Use Study, Part Two: Gila Bend Air force Auxiliary Field / Barry M. Goldwater Range Arizona Military Regional Compatibility Project*, February 2005.

Arizona Department of Commerce, Office of Housing and Infrastructure Development, *The State of Housing in Arizona 2000*.

Arizona State land Department, *Conceptual Plan for Gila Bend*, 2002 (Amended 2005).

Ryden, Don W. 1999. *Historic Resource Survey of Gila Bend, Arizona*. Phoenix: Arizona, 1999.

Town of Gila Bend, *Gila Bend Master Plan Update*, 1996.

ANNEXATION POLICY

Purpose

Well-planned growth and annexation is a priority for the Town of Gila Bend. This document is to be used as a guide and reference for consideration of all annexations to the Town of Gila Bend whether voluntary or involuntary. This policy serves as the foundation for the additional research necessary to guide decisions regarding each annexation. Groups such as the Planning Commission, Town Council, and Town Staff will use this policy when considering annexation petitions.

Introduction

While Gila Bend has not experienced significant growth in the past several decades, it has experienced slow and steady annual growth of approximately one percent per year. It is anticipated this will change as development pressures have been steadily increasing with growth in other parts of Maricopa and neighboring Pinal Counties.

Anticipated growth cannot be sustained without thoughtful expansion of the Town's boundaries in the coming years. One of the Town's goals is increased homeownership. Many towns that have not regularly pursued annexation have experienced slowed or no growth, and thus have stagnated or even declined due to increased costs for the provision of services and lack of additional landowners to share those costs.

It is important that the Town of Gila Bend enact policies that will ensure that the Town continues to thrive, while increasing its share of desired development. In addition to an increased tax base, the Town would enjoy other benefits such as more efficiency in the provision of services, more logical boundaries, the inclusion of more urban area within its borders, as a result of carefully pursued annexation of contiguous territory. This could be accomplished through influence such as planning and development decisions and land use controls. The growth of the greater Gila Bend area depends on the services, facilities and institutions located within the Town.

This document details many of the considerations for annexation including conformity with Arizona law, as well as a list of general policies with regard to annexation, and finally it suggests next steps and identifies areas for further study.

Roles of Town Administration, Staff, Plan Commission and Council

Each of these individuals/entities has a specific role in the process of annexation.

Town Mayor

- Sets the overall Town goals and objectives including this policy. The Town staff takes in petitions for, or initiates annexation of, areas based on these objectives.

Town Council

- Begins the process of review involving another public hearing following the adoption of the fiscal plan.
- Vote to approve or deny the annexation ordinance as introduced.

Town Staff

- The Town staff submits the action to be recorded with Maricopa County,
- Appropriate Town departments amend all applicable documents and notify the appropriate agencies, individuals, etc. as to the property being incorporated into the Town.

Local Documents/Studies pertaining to Annexation

Gila Bend General Plan

The General Plan is a blueprint for the future development of the Town. It is a policy document that is used to help guide future decisions regarding land use. It is suggested that this document be reviewed and revised every five years. The Planning Commission and the Town Council use it as a roadmap to identify and promote the land use and development goals of the Town.

Maricopa County 2020 Eye to the Future (2002)

Maricopa County 2020 Eye to the Future is Maricopa County's Comprehensive Plan. Like the Gila Bend General Plan, it is a tool to implement the County's overall land use priorities. The goals and objectives as well as land use suggestions contained in it are a useful reference for Town and County officials to use when making decisions regarding annexation. Like the General Plan, it should be reviewed and revised every five years. All areas under consideration in the annexation study area are described by this plan. Parts of this plan are consistent with those of the Town, and some are different. Conflicting opinions on land use should be addressed through intergovernmental cooperation and exchange of ideas. It is the policy of Maricopa County to defer to the Town of Gila Bend for land use issues within the Town's planning area.

State Annexation Statutes and Timelines

Arizona Code (A.R.S. Section 9-471) clearly delineates the process for annexation. It details the statutes and timelines for voluntary and involuntary annexations. In Arizona the annexation process follows the following order:

1. The Town files a blank petition with the County Recorder describing the boundaries of the territory to be annexed.
2. During the 30-day period following the filing of the blank petition, the Town holds a public hearing, duly noticed and published, to discuss the annexation proposal.
3. During the period beginning 30 days following the filing of the blank petition and ending one year from that date, a petition, identical to that

already filed with the County Recorder, must be signed by the owners of one-half or more in value of the real and personal property within the territory to be annexed and more than one-half of the persons owning real and personal property in the territory to be annexed. The properly executed petition must be filed in the office of the County Recorder within the one-year period.

4. In order for an annexation to become final, the Town Council must adopt a formal ordinance annexing the territory. Following such formal adoption, there is a 30-day period in which any actions may be brought before the Superior Court, setting forth the manner in which it is alleged that the annexation procedure was not in compliance with the requirements of the law.

Why Annex/Not Annex?

Why Annex? – Positive aspects of Annexation

Annexation allows the Town of Gila Bend more opportunity to guide growth and development at its fringe. The Town can extend sound planning principles including transportation planning, environmental preservation, code enforcement, urban zoning with stricter development standards, etc. into surrounding areas.

Annexation offers opportunities for controlled growth and development as well as potential for new economic development areas. Through annexation, the Town can better control how and where new development that relies on municipal services takes place. Annexation can also be a chance to incorporate areas of strategic importance to the Town.

Annexation also provides an opportunity for the Town to maintain order and identity in and around its boundaries. Annexation allows the Town to incorporate fringe areas. The opportunity for sensible growth management and the progress toward a more logical Town boundary also presents itself during consideration of an annexation petition.

One of the benefits of annexation is the realization of an increased property tax base and income-based taxes subject to levy caps. This spreads the cost of services over a larger number of taxpayers and gives some relief to the existing Town residents and business owners. It also results in a more appropriate sharing of this responsibility and tax equity situation.

Outlying areas, if not annexed, benefit from the Town's services and facilities, and contribute to Town needs/problems (traffic, parks, drainage, etc.) without contributing to the Town's financial health. Annexation gives fringe residents a voice and responsibility in the Town in which they live/call home. At the same time, the Town can benefit from additional residents for filling volunteer positions, appointments, elected positions, and for new ideas, participation, etc.

Finally, each petition allows a chance for the preservation of quality of life for Town residents by extending community's identity and values to the new area. The Town

can often provide superior services (municipal sewer and water) to residents in fringe areas; thereby further enhancing quality of life. Another positive attribute of annexation is it allows for the protection of Town interests and investments – For example, it may allow the Town to ward off potential encroachment from other entities, such as utilities, and compatibility with conservancy districts, etc. in areas that should logically be served by the Town.

Incorporation of additional land may also facilitate provision of Town services thereby allowing the Town to decide when and where to extend their services. The Town tends to allow a denser development pattern, which could lead to increased efficiency in the provision of capital services such as sewer and water. It should also be noted that many State and Federal grant and matching fund programs are population or area based, thus annexation may result in additional opportunities for the Town.

Why Not Annex? – Possible negative issues to consider

Cases may arise in which it is not appropriate or desirable for the Town to annex a certain area. Some scenarios in which this may be the case include those areas that would demonstrate an unacceptable cost/benefit for the Town, whether short or long term in nature. If a proposed annexation would lead to a larger burden on existing Town taxpayers, it should be avoided except in cases where extenuating circumstances or threats to public health exist. The same should be true if it would be difficult to provide utilities to the properties. Finally, the area included in the annexation may not be desirable for a number of reasons, such as low assessed value, the existence of a large number of code violations including poor property upkeep and maintenance, and substandard infrastructure. As a last consideration, it may be that the property is not strategically important to the Town's priorities and goals.

Annexation Policies

The following is a set of policies for use in considering a petition for annexation. It is strongly suggested that careful thought be given to each of these statements, and that substantial compliance with the statements be required for the best interest of the Town, its residents, and those included in an annexation area.

- A. All annexation decisions shall conform to State statutes.
- B. The following three areas of priority exist in order of importance:
 1. Areas of undeveloped land for commercial, industrial growth located adjacent to existing Town limits that meet contiguity requirements.
 2. Areas currently served by Town water and/or sewer not within the corporate boundary.
 3. Areas of strategic importance or deemed desirable not connected to Town utilities.
- C. Guidelines for prioritization of annexation should include consideration of the following major items in order of importance:
 1. Ability to meet State contiguity requirements,

2. Infrastructure capacities and feasibility of provision of services,
3. Exploration of cost/benefit ratio through a detailed fiscal plan,
4. Undeveloped areas in close proximity to existing Town limits, and
5. Importance of control of entrances to the Town.

D. The following points of policy should be considered:

1. Incremental growth is suggested near existing Town limits as municipal utility and departmental capacity permits. Annexation should be considered based on the availability of utilities.
2. One of the goals of annexation is a reduction in the tax burden upon existing property owners in the Town. All annexation should have a positive impact on the Town financially. Areas of the county that are considered a liability for any reason shall be avoided unless they are of strategic priority or that benefit the Town in some fashion that mitigates the financial impact.
3. Waivers of remonstrance shall be required for the extension of Town utilities in the event that a property cannot or is not desirable for annexation to the Town (such as lack of contiguity). These waivers shall be recorded for the subject property, and shall remain with the property rather than a particular owner. Actual annexation should be obtained as soon as practicable if contiguity is the only obstacle to annexing property.
4. It should be a goal of the Town to annex all areas served by the Town utilities not located within the Town limits within ten (10) years of adoption of this policy.
5. Annexations of larger than five acres are strongly encouraged in order to avoid smaller piecemeal annexations of single parcels. This encourages the collection of a number of parcels for annexation at one time.
6. A regular review of this policy shall take place in conjunction with a review of the General Plan in order to maintain its effectiveness and appropriateness as the community continues to evolve and develop.

The Fiscal Plan

The fiscal plan is perhaps one of the most important pieces of information and its contents should be seriously considered with all annexation petitions. At a minimum, a fiscal plan shall include: background data and statistics related to the proposed annexation area, revenue analysis including a description and detail of one-time revenues as well as an accounting of annual or recurring revenues generated by properties in the proposed annexation area, and a detailed cost analysis including consideration of one-time costs and annual or recurring revenues. Finally, all other considerations should be investigated, and a clear and concise summary including a review of State and local requirements, and cost/benefit breakdown, and an overall assessment of impact of the project to the Town.

In addition to the above standard components of a fiscal plan, consideration should be given to specific departmental and financial impacts. Sources of revenue for financing required infrastructure or service improvements must be identified, and a

timeline for these improvements must be included. Proof of adherence to State requirements for provision of services must be provided. Specifically these requirements are that any annexed territory be provided with the same services as any similar area of the Town as warranted by development and as Town resources allow.

Components of the Annexation Petition

In order for Town staff to properly process an annexation request, all applications shall include the following materials as a minimum:

- A fully executed annexation application
- Plan for extension of Town utilities – proof of sufficient capacity for Town utilities
- Proof of no significant negative impact on Town systems, facilities, etc.
- Complete and accurate legal description of annexation area
- Map of proposed annexation area including detailed dimensions and comparison to existing boundary and surrounding lands
- A zoning Plan, including proposed and existing uses and zoning on the property