



Executive Summary

Rivers Master Plan



Cella Barr Associates, Inc.

Neill/Vecchia & Associates, Inc.

A025.911

City of Peoria Rivers Master Plan Executive Summary

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CITY OF PEORIA

Rivers Master Plan

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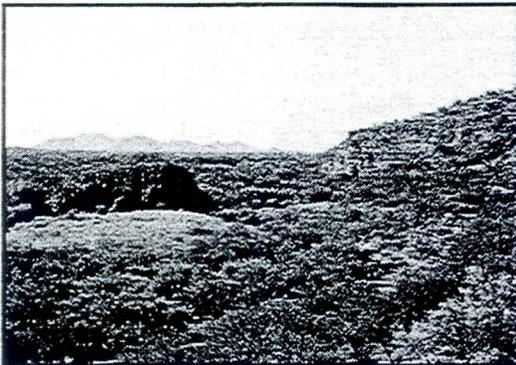
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March 1999

2.0 Inventory and Analysis

A comprehensive internal and external review and research effort was undertaken to collect and synthesize citywide and regional secondary source data. The intent was to determine the needs to upgrade and improve existing facilities and to determine preliminary alignments and access points for connecting corridors to community nodes. The need also existed to identify those land uses that would compliment natural river corridors, determine areas that were underserved by certain types of facilities and identify potential areas and types of new facilities.



From a regional perspective, it was very important to understand the direction the City and adjacent communities have taken to establish new development adjacent to and within the river corridors. The evaluation of existing development and key master plans containing policy criteria and recommendations assisted in establishing the approach for alternatives to provide a cohesive and integrated facility development plan for the river corridors. These documents included the City of Peoria General Plan, City of Peoria Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan, and Maricopa Association of Governments Desert Spaces Plan. The evaluation of the Agua Fria River, New River and Skunk

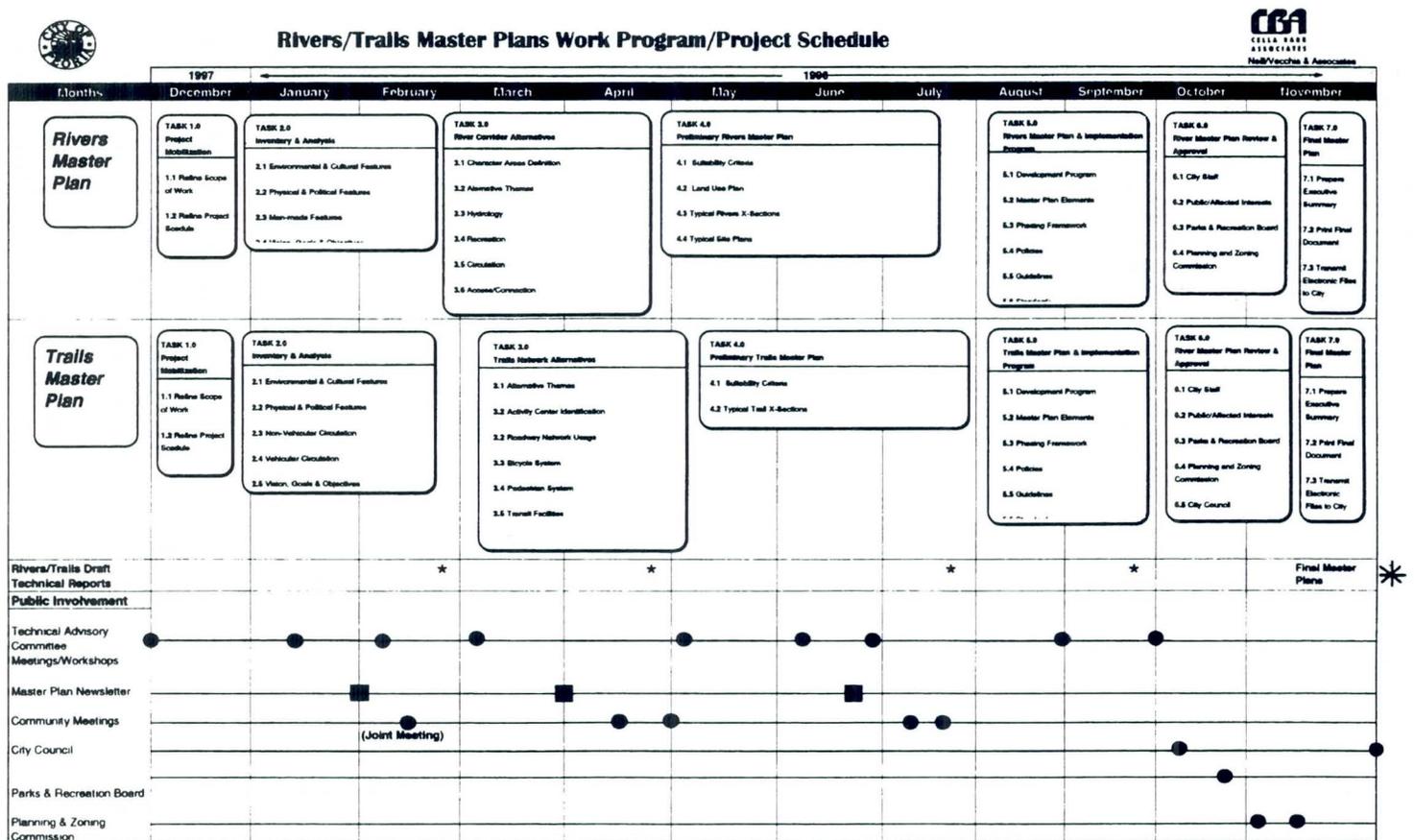
Creek in terms of their environmental, physical, and flood control conditions also played a key role in the determination of future character areas and their boundaries. Based on the interrelatedness of the trails master plan, the evaluation also included existing trails and their characterization as urban, suburban, rural, or remote/wilderness and their connections with the City of Glendale, City of Phoenix, and Maricopa County. Internally, the review of environmental, cultural, and physical conditions also played a key role in the determination of river character areas and their boundaries. The northern area of the City is located within the Palo Verde-Saguaro plant community and is rich in prehistoric resources. The presence of 100- and 500-year floodplains, geological features and connecting or bisecting waterways, transportation and utility corridors, and existing developments provided both opportunities to leverage, and constraints to mitigate development within and adjacent to the river corridors.

The potential and compatibility for recreational facilities, trails and bank stabilization and flood control improvements are important components of a successful rivers master plan. The assessment of land use, zoning and comprehensive planning quantify the amount and spatial distribution of existing, permissible and recommended development that played an important role in determining the location and type of recreation, trail, land use and flood control improvements at the alternatives phase of the project. The assessment of land ownership provided knowledge as to the presence of public or privately held land with an eye toward the use of easements, and lease or purchase land to locate recreational facilities and assess trails access.

3.0 Public Involvement

A wide variety of opportunities were provided at key milestones during the planning process to gather public input. An informal survey was conducted of public meeting attendees to determine existing and future recreational and land use needs of City residents. Numerous contacts and interviews were conducted with pertinent regional, state and federal agencies as well as specific user and special interest groups addressing such issues as planning activities, potential connections, uses, and user conflicts and intergovernmental-user group coordination. A total of three public meetings were held at various locations

throughout the City at the visions, goals, and objectives; alternatives; and preliminary plan points in the project. Focus groups were utilized during these meetings to gain insight, provide ideas and critique the draft plan components. A very valuable component of the public involvement process was the selection of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) of key City staff. The TAC served as the primary conduit of information between the City and the public and included representation from the Community Services, Community Development, Public Works/Engineering, and Utilities Departments.



4.0 Vision, Goals and Objectives

The foundation of a successful rivers master plan is predicated on the identification, refinement and consent for an overriding vision, supportive goals and realistic objectives. Early in the planning process values and issues were collected from the public, City staff, agency contacts and user groups. Values relate to elements of the rivers system that should be protected while issues relate to elements to be changed. The values were crafted into an overall vision and the issues were used to create goals. The preparation of objectives supported the goals. Key rivers values related to Lake Pleasant, the presence of open space and riparian areas, and parks and schools. Key issues related to compatibility, safety, lighting and parking. The draft vision, goals and objectives provided the foundation for the preparation of alternative concepts. Once the preferred alternative was selected, the draft goals and objectives were revalidated and enhanced with policies to determine the specific actions to be taken to implement the rivers master plan. The policies that correspond to the goals and objectives can be found in the adopted Rivers Master Plan document.

4.1 Rivers Vision

We envision the use and development within, and adjacent to, the Agua Fria River, New River and Skunk Creek as an integrated linear park/open space network connected with the trails system of the City. Our enhanced corridors also link other regional destinations within the northwest Valley of the Sun. The linear network incorporates both recreational and flood control facilities creating continuous north-south, non-vehicular access, mobility

and activity. The linear system has been incrementally implemented and maintained utilizing both public and private resources. Other benefits of the linear corridor include providing attractive recreational settings for our existing and new residents and businesses. These settings utilize a range of natural, riparian, suburban and urban improvements.

4.2 Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Create an aesthetic and continuous recreational corridor system linked to the citywide trails system.

Objective 1.1: Adopt the rivers master plan to identify and prioritize appropriate river corridor land uses and development.



Objective 1.2: Determine appropriate buffers between corridors and adjacent land uses.

Objective 1.3: Establish east-west linkages to neighborhoods, activity centers and preservation areas within and outside the City.

Objective 1.4: Protect adjacent low density residential parcels from potential corridor nuisances.

Objective 1.5: Designate the appropriate river corridor character areas and cross-sections based on existing and projected land use as defined in this master plan.

Goal 2: Create a system of linear activity nodes to enhance the quality of life in the City.

Objective 2.1: Utilize the improvement of the river corridors to re-orient future economic development, revitalization and redevelopment projects.

Objective 2.2: Establish employment nodes at strategic locations to balance jobs and housing proximity and increase City tax revenue.

Objective 2.3: Create cultural activities that compliment adjacent development and the City's park system.

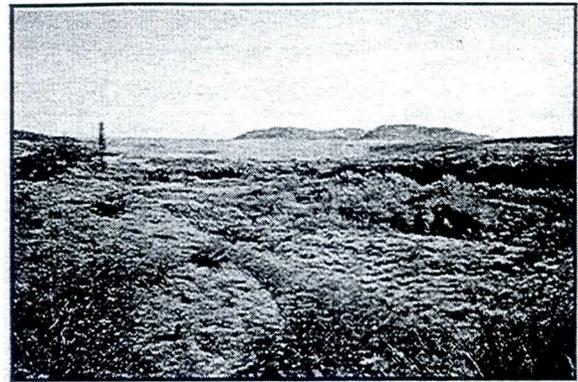
Objective 2.4: Create recreational activities that provide a variety of pursuits for many users.

Objective 2.5: Provide a functional vehicular and transit circulation system to balance the need for access and mobility.

Objective 2.6: Create environmental conservation areas to protect and sustain natural resources.

Goal 3: Create a coordinated and environmentally sensitive conveyance and bank protection system for stormwater.

Objective 3.1: Define the boundaries and depth of 100-and 500-year flood events to coordinate with proposed corridor improvements.



Objective 3.2: Determine appropriate, yet aesthetic, bank protection and stabilization treatments based on river corridor character and floodway requirements.

Objective 3.3: Protect existing and future land uses adjacent to the river corridors and provide continuous non-vehicular circulation.

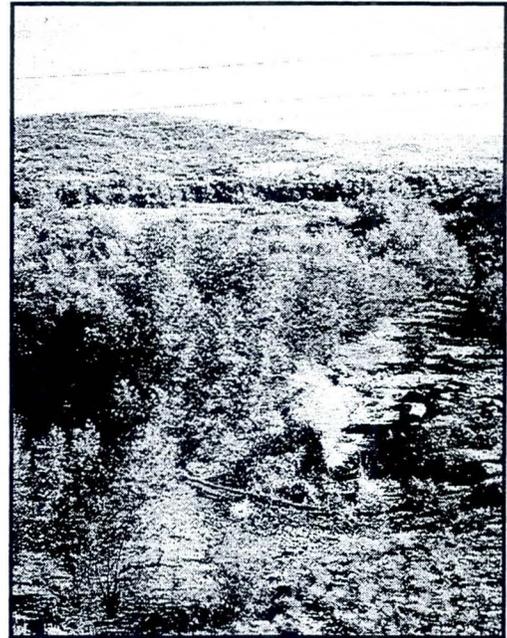
5.0 Rivers Master Plan

The *Rivers Master Plan* provides the City of Peoria and its citizens with a valuable tool to assist in planning for the future use of the New River, Agua Fria River and Skunk Creek corridors as shown on Figure 1. The master plan is intended to be a dynamic document, one that is updated and refined through time. However, it also provides significant recommendations for land use, development of recreational facilities and provisions of functional, yet aesthetic bank protection improvements that will enhance the lifestyle for all the residents and visitors to the City.

A key tenet of the master plan focused on the understanding that the natural function of the river corridors is to convey watershed drainage and flood events. The plan proposes alternative river cross-sections and uses based on the delineation of the 100-year flood plain as shown on Figures 2 through 7. The expansive width of the flood plain has prompted the designation of a significant amount of the study area for use as parks or open space. The plan identifies opportunities for continuous "greenway" corridors that offer the potential to link community and regional facilities, which promotes appropriate and integrated development adjacent to the river corridors.

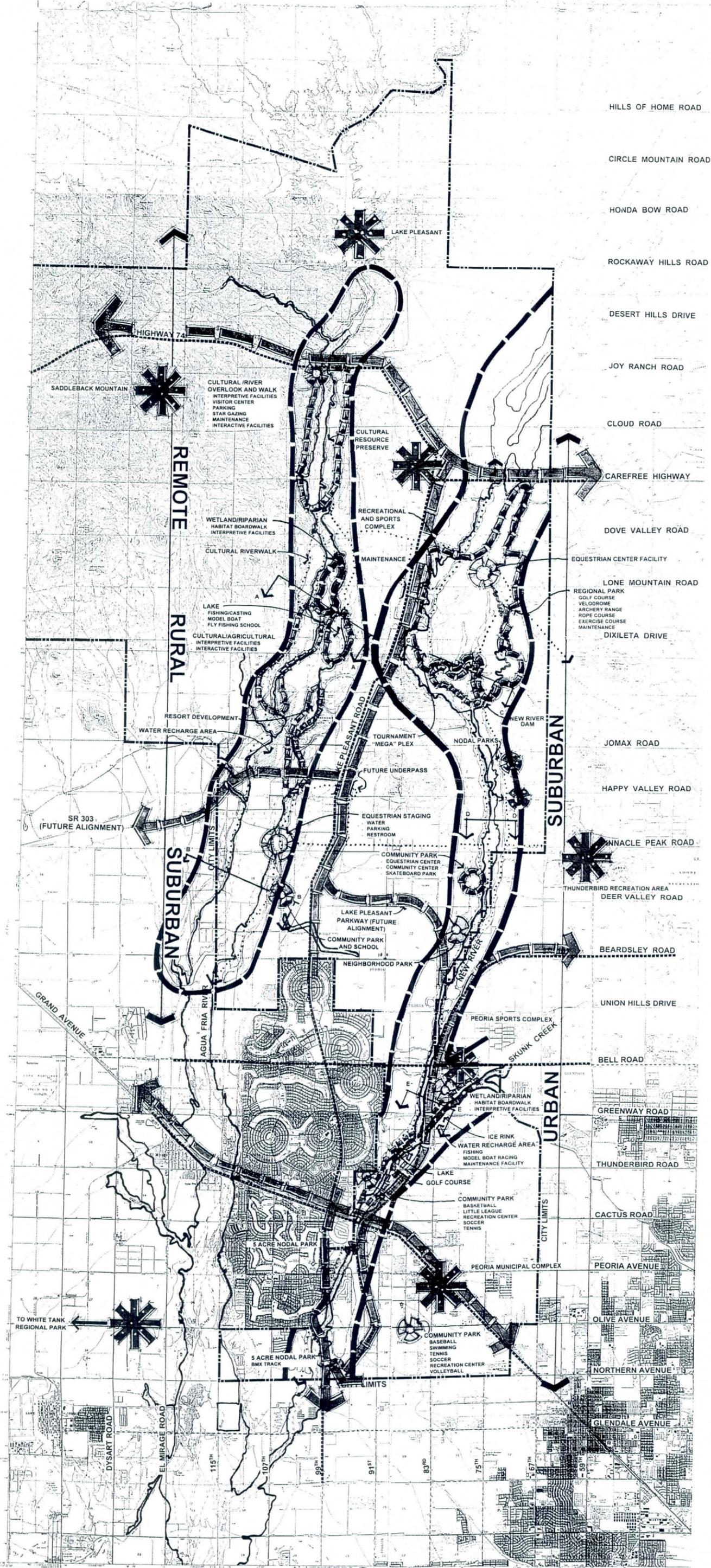
The Rivers Master Plan incorporates all of the City's current designated land use categories with respect to the unique character of each of the river corridors as shown on Figure 8, River Corridor Land Use Plan. The plan establishes the framework for balanced growth and development and recognizes the strong desire to preserve much of the natural character of the northern reach of the Agua Fria River corridor. The

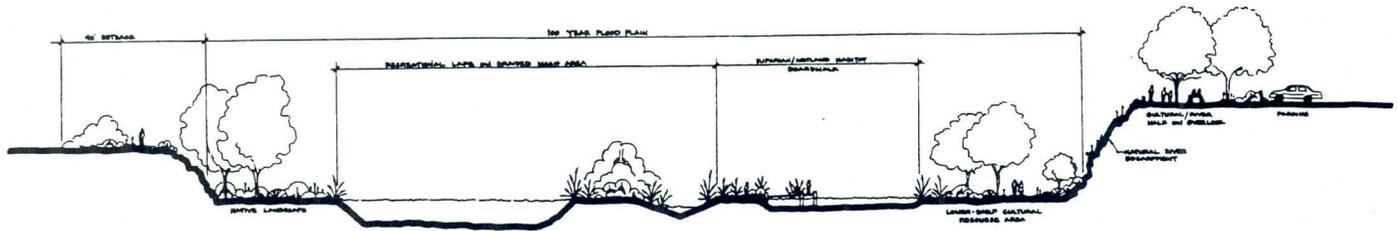
plan also provides an appropriate transition between the urban and suburban segments of New River and Skunk Creek. The plan recognizes that growth is inevitable and that the key will be to manage it effectively.





RIVERS MASTER PLAN

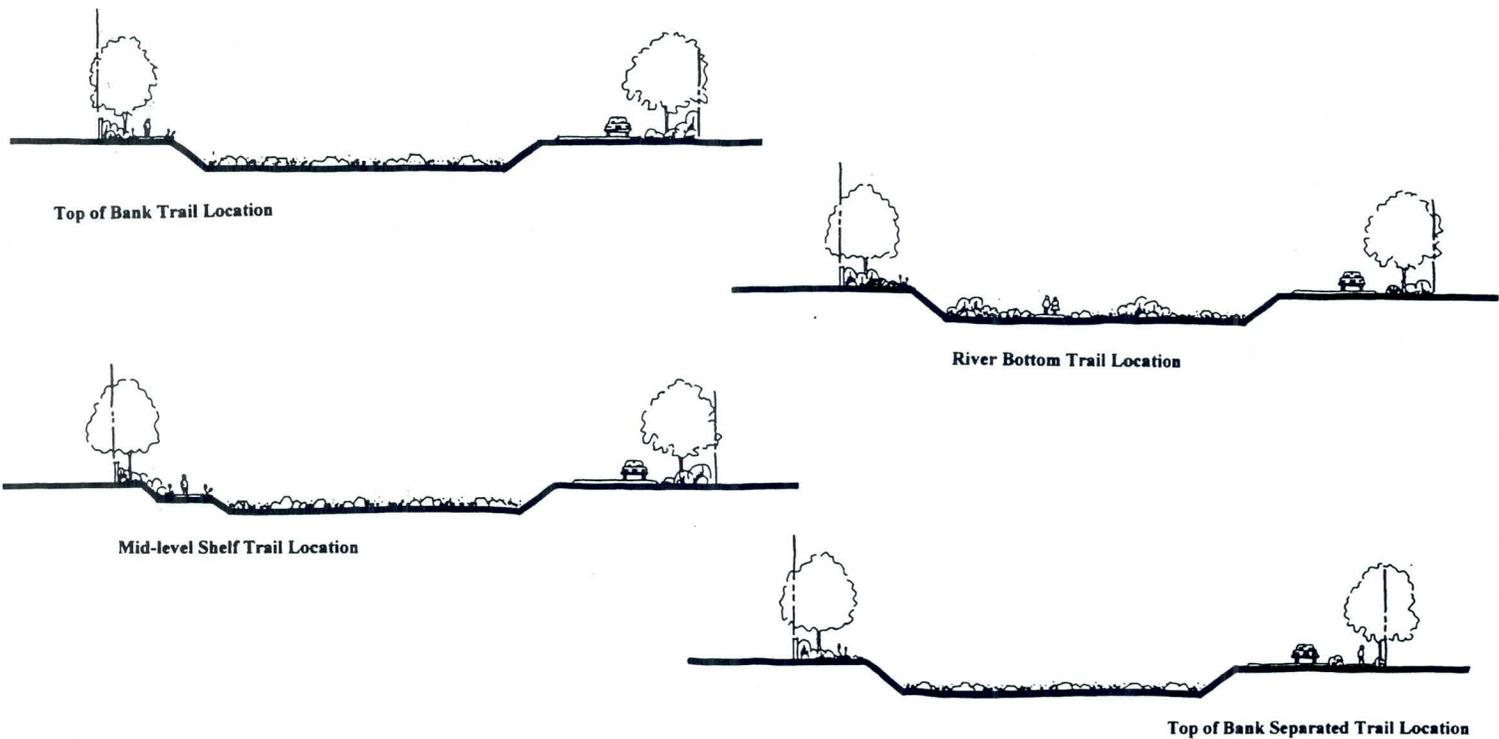




The Agua Fria rural/remote river corridor character is typically represented by the adjacent natural geographical and native habitat of the area. Channel character varies from wide alluvial drainages to steep escarpments with vegetation ranging from riparian habitats to sonoran desert. These edges typically allow informal crossings and internal uses dependent on natural topography, flooding, and other constraints. Opportunities for water-based recreation and habitats may be supported by water recharge projects. River overlooks and walks may interpret cultural, agricultural, environmental, and astronomical resources.

CROSS SECTION A-A'

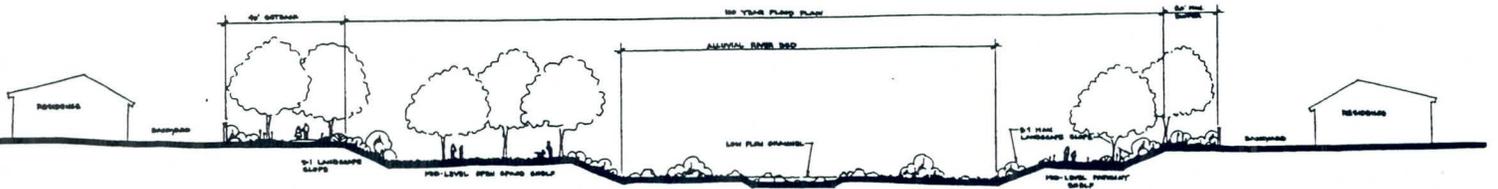
FIGURE 2



River trail character settings may vary from urban to remote cross sections with a variety of constraints and opportunities associated with each setting. Potential trail locations as shown above represent relative physical, expense, and maintenance conditions. For example, creating benches is more costly than a single slope, maintenance on a river bottom trail is more costly than a top of bank trail, etc.

CROSS SECTIONS

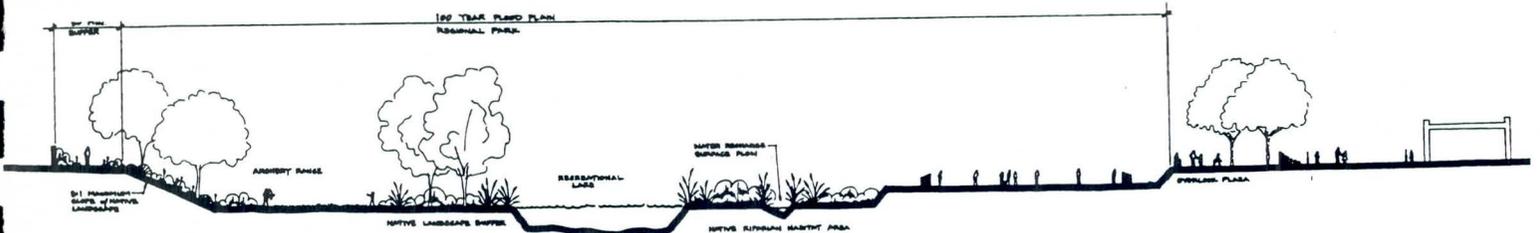
FIGURE 3



The Agua Fria suburban river corridor character is typically represented by wide flat flood plain with non-protected edges and adjacent undeveloped or agricultural lands. These edges typically allow unlimited informal crossings and internal uses dependent on natural topography, flooding, and other constraints. Low flow channels have a tendency to shift within the alluvial river bed while the mid-level shelves provide ample room for facilities requiring larger land areas than trail corridors. The wide cross section also allows natural sloped transitions between shelf levels.

CROSS SECTION B-B'

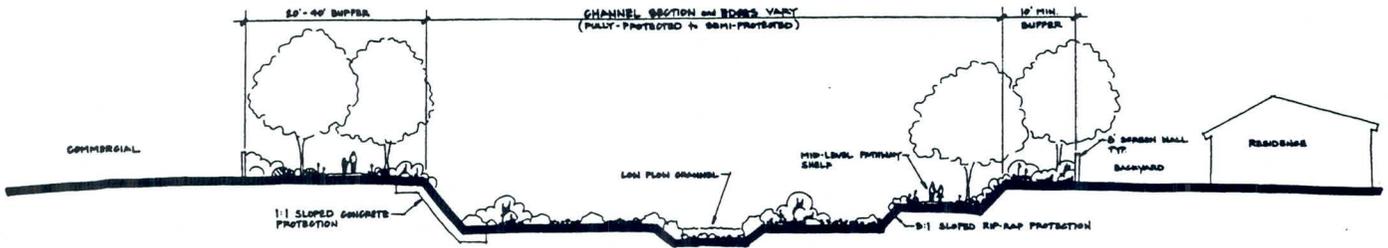
FIGURE 4



Suburban river corridor character is typically represented by wider, angled, semi-impervious channel edges with landscape buffers between the channel edges and adjacent land uses. These channel edges typically allow limited access for crossings and internal recreational uses. Wider flood plain areas provide a wide range of environments and opportunities for recreational facilities requiring large areas of land and minimal building development such as sports fields, ranges, courts, etc.

CROSS SECTION C-C'

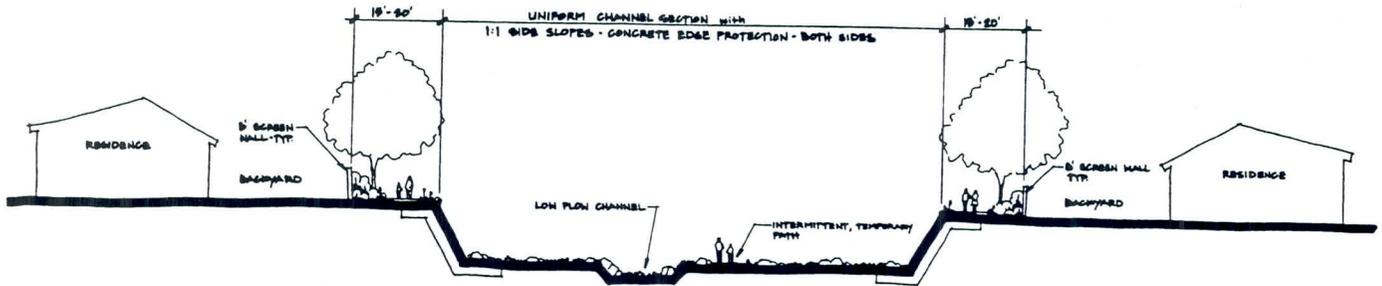
FIGURE 5



Some developed suburban river sections are uniform with 1:1 concrete side slopes in constrained areas, however most edges vary from fully-protected to semi-protected improvements. Suburban river corridor character is typically represented by wider, angled edges with mid-level benches and informal buffers between the channel edge and adjacent land uses. These sections with wider benches may allow opportunities for creating larger trail facilities such as comfort stations, overlooks, nodal parks, etc.

CROSS SECTION D-D'

FIGURE 6



Developed urban river sections and edges vary from fully-protected to semi-protected improvements. Urban river corridor character is typically represented by narrow, cement-clad, channel edges with a lack of or minimal buffer zones between channel edges and adjacent land uses. Historically these segments have provided a single use, flood control. The channel edges tend to have vertical drop-offs requiring safety rails, however some sections have been left undeveloped and may allow opportunities for creating mid-level benches for trail facilities. These corridors provide minimal access for crossings and/or internal uses.

CROSS SECTION E-E'

FIGURE 7

RIVER CORRIDOR LAND USE PLAN

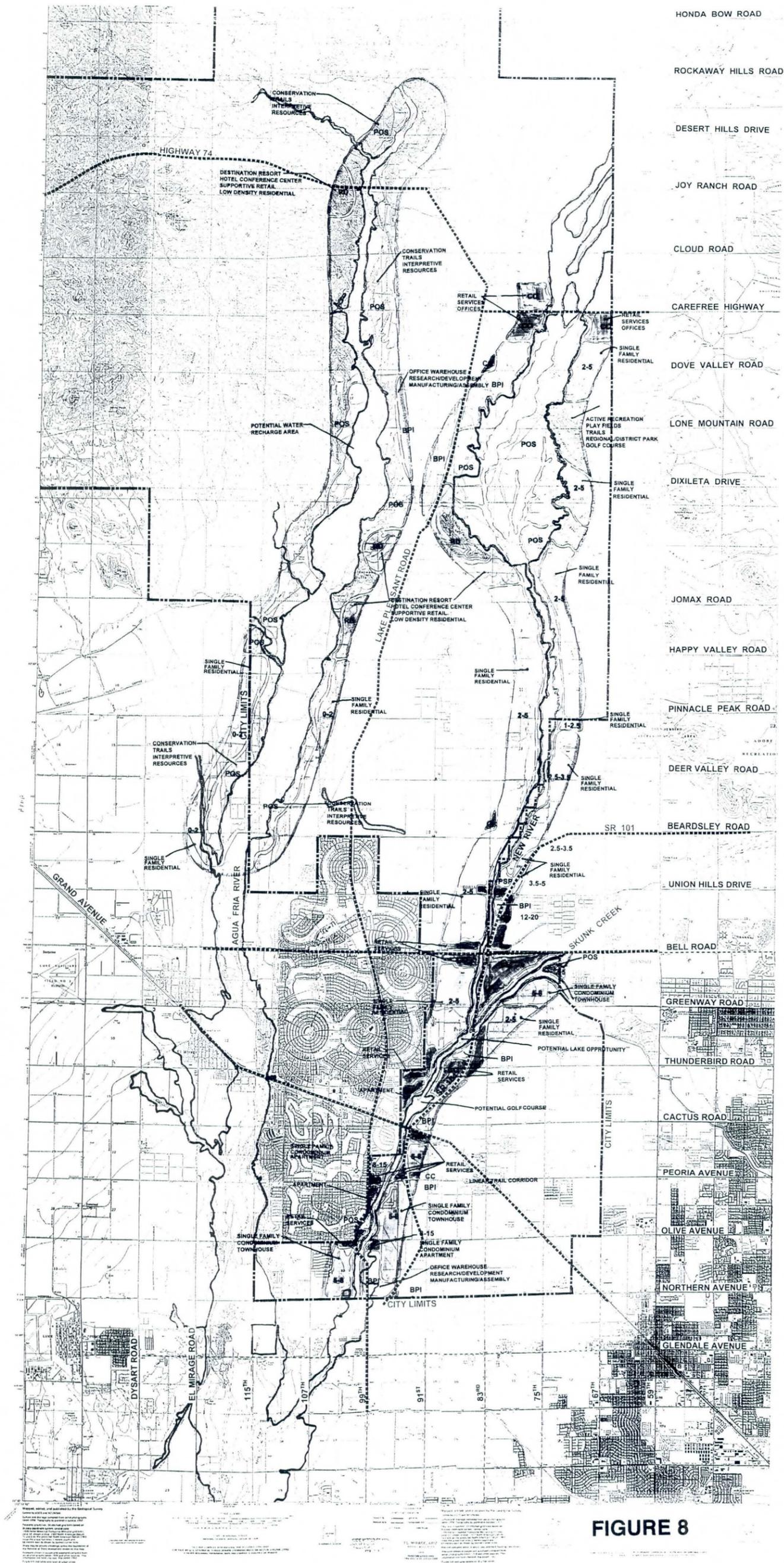


FIGURE 8

6.0 Implementation Program

The recommended implementation program recognizes the dynamic character of the City, its relationship to neighboring communities, existing development patterns, existing activity centers, relative population densities and potential growth characteristics. The implementation policies and phasing information presented herein is strongly based on a logical approach that will allow the City to balance land acquisition or lease with the development of recreational and flood control facilities. This approach will help conserve valuable environmental river resources while striving to meet the diverse recreational needs of a growing community. The implementation strategy recognizes existing recreational and community needs, particularly in the southern, urbanized portion of the City. Prioritizing the development of new multi-use trails along the river corridors will provide valuable community linkages with east-west routes and help complete connections between both City and other regional destinations. Diverse river corridor recreational nodes ranging from neighborhood parks to community and regional scale parks are also prioritized to meet existing needs and to position the City for future growth.

The most significant key to the implementation strategy is the cooperative and coordinated efforts of the appropriate City leaders, and departments. Each of the many projects and activities identified in this implementation chapter will require leadership and support using specialized expertise from different departments. Key responsibilities are identified for each implementation component.

Coordination and communication with agencies outside the City of Peoria such as Maricopa County Flood Control District (FCDMC), Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG), and the Cities of Glendale, Phoenix and Avondale will be instrumental in developing partnerships that can expedite land acquisition, funding and implementation of projects.

6.1 Phase I Implementation

Phase I Implementation identifies the activities and projects that will initiate the implementation of the rivers master plan and are shown on Table 1. Each of the items listed was assigned a priority based on the results of the public involvement process and a logical implementation sequence. The projects and activities included in Phase I represent planning, design and construction projects that will provide opportunities for the City to continue to plan for its future while developing recreation oriented facilities to meet current needs and interests. A critical component of Phase I implementation is the acquisition of environmentally sensitive areas along the upper Agua Fria River corridor. Based on the recent transfer of significant land ownership, it is critical that the City identifies opportunities to either acquire or lease or stipulate land dedications for conservation in partnership with private and public landowners. Opportunities that exist today to protect these valuable resources may be lost forever without expeditious action over the next few years. Ultimately, the recommended phasing is intended to respond to existing development patterns, ongoing first phase implementation activities, and anticipated future growth.

TABLE 1
PHASE I - IMPLEMENTATION (1999 - 2005)

PRIORITY	ITEM	LOCATION	COSTS *	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES **
1	Hire Strategic Rivers/Trails Coordinator to Implement Master Plan	Municipal Complex - Community Services or Community Development	\$40,000 - \$50,000 per year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Community Development 	General Fund/Department Budget
2	Municipal/Jurisdictional Coordination	New River, Agua Fria, Skunk Creek Right-of-Way	In-Kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria • Corps. of Engineers • Maricopa County Flood Control District 	Municipal Coordination/Incentives
3	Enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the Flood Control District of Maricopa County	N/A	In-Kind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria • Maricopa County Flood Control District 	Municipal Coordination/Incentives
4	Trail Segments (Paved Multi-Use Path)	New River - Skunk Creek Confluence, South to Grand Ave. (2 mi. +/-)	\$190,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA-21 • USEPA - Sustainable Development Challenge Grant • Trails Heritage Fund Grants • National Recreational Trails Fund • Public Access Grants • Municipal Funding Sources • Voluntary Land Owner's Tools
	(Equestrian Trail)	New River - Skunk Creek Confluence, South to Grand Ave. (2 mi. +/-)	\$158,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	
5	Pursue a Community Park	Loop 101 and Thunderbird	Land - \$600,000 Facilities - \$1,000,000 - \$1,500,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA-21 • USEPA - Sustainable Development Challenge Grant • Trails Heritage Fund Grants • National Recreational Trails Fund • Public Access Grants • Municipal Funding Sources • Voluntary Land Owner's Tools
6	Pursue Opportunities for Golf Course Development	New River Corridor - Between Skunk Creek and Grand Avenue	To be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Funding Sources
7	Acquire Land and Develop Nodal Park (5 acres +/-) (Skate Park, BMX, Play Equipment, Ramadas)	New River - East Side, Near 99 th Ave. and Northern Ave.	Land - \$250,000 Facilities - \$250,000 - \$300,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Improvements Program • Municipal Land Acquisition Mechanisms

* Opinion of Probable Costs

PEORIA RIVERS MASTER PLAN

Peoria, Arizona

TABLE 1

PHASE I - IMPLEMENTATION (1999 - 2005)

PRIORITY	ITEM	LOCATION	COSTS *	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES **
8	Trail Segments (Paved Multi-Use Path)	New River Corridor - Grand Ave. to Northern Ave. (3 mi.)	\$290,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA-21 • USEPA - Sustainable Development Challenge Grant • Trails Heritage Fund Grants • National Recreational Trails Fund • Public Access Grants • Municipal Funding Sources • Voluntary Land Owner's Tools
	(Equestrian Trail)	New River Corridor - Grand Ave. to Northern Ave. (3 mi.)	\$238,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	
9	Trail Segments (Paved Multi-Use Path)	New River - Skunk Creek Confluence, North to Union Hills (2 mi.)	\$190,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA-21 • USEPA - Sustainable Development Challenge Grant • Trails Heritage Fund Grants • National Recreational Trails Fund • Public Access Grants • Municipal Funding Sources • Voluntary Land Owner's Tools
	(Equestrian Trail)	New River - Skunk Creek Confluence, North to Union Hills (2 mi.)	\$158,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department ♦ Public Works Department 	
10	Land Lease Agreement	New River Dam (North Side) & BLM Properties	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Coordination/Incentives • Municipal Land Acquisition Mechanisms
11	Update Parks and Recreation Master Plan	City-Wide	Planning Fees \$30,000 - \$40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ Community Services Department 	General Fund
12	Provide a Dedicated Revenue Stream for : 1) Land Acquisition 2) Facilities Development	City-Wide	To Be Determined if Public Vote Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria ♦ City Manager ♦ Finance Department ♦ Community Services Department 	Municipal Funding Sources

* Opinion of Probable Costs

PEORIA RIVERS MASTER PLAN

Peoria, Arizona

TABLE 1

PHASE I - IMPLEMENTATION (1999 - 2005)

PRIORITY	ITEM	LOCATION	COSTS *	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES **
13	Trail Segments (Paved Multi-Use Path)	New River Corridor - Union Hills to Pinnacle Peak (3 mi.)	\$517,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Community Services Department ◆ Public Works Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA-21 • USEPA - Sustainable Development Challenge Grant • Trails Heritage Fund Grants • National Recreational Trails Fund • Public Access Grants • Municipal Funding Sources • Voluntary Land Owner's Tools
	(Equestrian Trail)	New River Corridor - Union Hills to Pinnacle Peak (3 mi.)	\$332,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Community Services Department ◆ Public Works Department 	
14	Upper Agua Fria Land Acquisition for Cultural Resources/Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SR 74 to Dove Valley (West Side, approx. 2.5 mi., East Side, approx. 2.5 mi.) • Dove Valley to Jomax (West Side, 2 mi., East Side, 2 mi.) 	To be determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Community Services Department ◆ Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA-21 • USEPA - Sustainable Development Challenge Grant • Local, Regional and State Parks Heritage Fund Grants • Urban Wildlife and Urban Wildlife Habitat Grants • Public Access Grants • IIAPM Grants • Growing Smarter Act • APT/Proposition 303 • Municipal Funding Sources
15	Update Rivers Master Plan	Agua Fria, New River, Skunk Creek within the City of Peoria	Planning Fees \$30,000 - \$40,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Peoria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Community Services Department ◆ Community Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund

* Opinion of Probable Costs

PEORIA RIVERS MASTER PLAN

Peoria, Arizona